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November 9, 2023

Greetings,

Thank you for your interest in our Board of Trustees and for participating in the nominee application process. Your dedication to our Unity community and your desire to contribute to its growth and well-being are truly appreciated.

All prospective Board of Trustee candidates should prayerfully review the Nominee Packet and submit the "2024 Nominee Form" and "Nominee Skill Assessment Form" by December 17, 2023. The Board Nominating Team will review your information and follow-up with you. Three board members will be elected, by membership vote, at the annual meeting on Sunday, February 18, 2024.

The role of a board member is a vital one, and it's important to emphasize the requirement for nominees to be active members. Active participation is a fundamental aspect of this role, as it allows us to work closely together, understand the dynamics of our congregation, and ensure that our decisions represent the membership and align with our values.

Please contact members of the Board Nominating Team (listed below) or the church office at 828-891-8700 if you have questions. You may request an electronic version of the forms at unity@unitync.net or download at www.unityblueridge.org.

Thank you for your willingness to offer your time, skills, leadership and support to our ministry. We appreciate you!

In love and service,

2024 Board Nominating Team

Linda "El" Ray

Jim Reed

Jennifer Hastings

Rev. Darlene Strickland

To All Prospective Board of Trustee Candidates

The greatest responsibility and opportunity one can have as a Board member is to hold the trust of the membership and organization. Board members are elected by the membership to represent them: to hold in trust, integrity and wellbeing their spiritual center, leaders and organization. Anyone who is elected to serve on the Board should recognize the honor and responsibility that comes with this role.

The Board is legally and ethically responsible for the organization's operations and standards of conduct. Board Terms are (3) year teams. If, due to extenuating circumstances, a Board member cannot complete their full term, the Board may appoint a replacement *or* have the membership elect a replacement to fill a partial term.

All persons elected to the Board of Trustees are required to be actively involved and supportive members of the ministry. They are asked to exemplify and demonstrate the following:

- Desires to serve on the Board and work as a team member to accomplish business for the highest and best interests of the church.
- Endeavors to live in accordance with the spiritual principles of love, truth, integrity and acceptance as taught by Unity.
- Has demonstrated spiritual maturity, leadership capabilities, a cooperative spirit, personal involvement and prayerful commitment to fulfill the duties and responsibilities.
- Understands and honors the employer/employee professional relationship with the Senior minister and staff.
- Is capable and willing to carry out the responsibilities and duties of a Board member.
- Furthers the work of the ministry through active personal interest, love and support.
- Is a dedicated, sincere and continuing student of Unity, supportive and conversant with its philosophy.
- Has no personal conflict of interest with the ministry/organization.
- Is able to maintain confidentiality as necessary.

All new Board members will be trained on board governance and the role of a Trustee.

By design, Board members come from the church membership (beneficiaries), so there can easily be a conflict of interest between what they personally want from the church or minister, and their duty of loyalty to the membership and organization as a whole. It is vital to give consideration to the various roles and responsibilities one assumes and balances as *trustee*, *beneficiary*, and *program volunteer*.

Board service requires the willingness to learn and honor the various role and responsibilities. It is an adjustment, but well worth it if you feel called and prepared to serve.

Board of Trustees: Understanding the General Roles and Responsibilities

Key Responsibilities - The Board is legally and ethically responsible for the organization's operations and standards of conduct. Board responsibilities include the following areas of responsibilities. Please review Unity of The Blue Ridge By-Laws for additional information.

- Governance and ensure Legal Compliance
- Hire and support the Senior Minister; working with Unity Worldwide Ministries as needed
- Organizational Strategic Planning and Funding
- Develop Policy and maintain current By-Laws
- Financial Planning, Resource Development & Accountability
- Manage Conflicts of Interest
- Risk and Liability Management; Protecting Ministry Assets
- Property & Facilities Management; Administer Real and Personal Property
- Advocate for Ministry, Minister and Membership; Communicate and bring all necessary business properly before the membership.

Being & Maintaining an Accountable Organization - Leaders in the non-profit sector are required to create policies, job descriptions and systems to ensure a viable, accountable organization.

Commitment & Attendance - A sense of commitment and accountability to fellow Board members, minister(s), and the congregation demonstrates true leadership.

- Preparing for Board and ministry team meetings by reviewing the information in advance.
- Being present for Board meetings, special meetings, and periodic ministry team meetings. A Board trustee serves as a liaison to the ministry team(s) as appointed.
- Participating in classes, programs and activities of the ministry; including leadership and/or Board training.
- Active member and financial supporter; exemplary member in good standing.

Teamwork - Understanding the Board serves as a team of elected trustees. The Board makes decisions based on prayer, sound information and open, honest discussion. Actions and decisions are recorded in the meeting official Board minutes. **The authority of the Board exists in the Board;** individuals do not represent the Board unless they are duly appointed by the Board for a limited, specific task.

Bylaws/Policies - Reading and understanding the bylaws and policies of the ministry; maintaining current bylaws and policies as needed.

Employee Relations – Working with the support of Unity Worldwide Ministries, the Board hires the Senior minister, supports the minister, sets salaries/benefits/employee contracts, provides oversight of the HR management practices, and ensures necessary resources are available. All other staff report to the Senior minister unless otherwise duly delegated.

Board Leadership and Spiritual Leadership Relations – The Senior Minister is a voting member of the Board of Trustees and is the only paid member serving on the Board. The Board functions in a Trustee capacity and the Senior Minister functions as the hired Spiritual Director and Executive Director. The Senior Minister is responsible to carry out or oversee the day-to-day business operations unless otherwise duly delegated. The Senior minister guides the spiritual direction of the Center: including the scheduling, programming, and content of services, classes, and all other activities that further the spiritual purpose of this ministry.

Statutory Requirements

- Maintaining complete and accurate Board meeting minutes and financial statements; retaining organizational records as legally required.
- Adhering to laws that govern nonprofit organizations.
- Verifying that state, local, federal and incorporation forms/fee are filed and paid. Paying withholding taxes and filing annual reports with Unity Worldwide Ministries. All other as required/ necessary.
- The Board has authority as an elected body. All power is vested in the Board, not in individual members. A member cannot represent the Board unless fully pre-authorized for a specific task and duly documented by the Board.

Ethical Standards - Observing high ethical standards by living and demonstrating the Unity principles. Maintaining active affiliations with Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Confidentiality

- Developing a level of trust that allows the Board and Minister to explore all viewpoints and make the best decisions for the ministry.
- Supporting all Board decisions once they are made - even if you personally disagree with the decision. The Board must speak as one voice; individual members convey the board decision(s) and not personal opinions.

When the members elect and delegate the board to act on behalf of all members, the delegation is to the Board, not to individual trustees. This means that the authority lies with the Board as a whole and is expressed by Board actions and decisions.

Speaking with *one voice* means that the Board and the individual members of the Board understand and agree to behave according to the principle of Board authority as a group rather than by multiple individual voices. To govern effectively, a Board must speak with one unified voice. Unless a Board masters the art of speaking as a unit, it has little power to lead effectively.

One voice does not necessarily mean that all Board members agree either before or after a Board decision is made. The Board can have unity without unanimity on all votes. In fact, one of the strengths of a Board is in the diversity of opinions and perspectives that different people bring to the Board. Board members have an obligation to bring diverse perspectives for the Board's consideration. Agreement for the sake of politeness or avoiding conflict can be a breach of responsibility.

While Board members do not need to agree with a Board decision, any individuals who may have dissented must abide by the presupposition that all the decisions, and only the decisions of the Board as a body, are binding. Any personal or public comments should include support for the integrity of the Board's process and its decision-making authority.

- Respecting the confidentiality of discussions at Board, personnel, and ministry team meetings. When in doubt, assume the discussion is confidential. Ask, before sharing information.
- Being transparent as a ministry by sharing with the congregation information that affects them in a timely and organized manner.