

WARREN WHITNEY & SHERWOOD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Scope of Engagement

The Garden Club of Virginia (GCV) engaged Warren Whitney & Sherwood to conduct an organizational review of the management of GCV with emphasis on the position of Executive Director. GCV has existed since the 1920s as a statewide volunteer run organization, including management and staffing. GCV has added staff over the last 10 years, but the position of the Executive Director has primarily been an administrative position without authority. The position has experienced regular turnover with mixed but unacceptable levels of satisfaction among members. Before making the next hire, GCV leadership decided to conduct a review of the position and its relationship to staff, board and members. In addition to the Executive Director position, it was necessary to analyze the interrelationship of other staff positions.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

For many years, the approach of relying heavily on members for leadership, management and staffing served the needs of the membership and saved GCV the expense of paying to staff management positions. In recent years, however, it has become clear that this model is no longer effective. It places too much of a time burden on the volunteer management; it does not allow consistent management because of the turnover in volunteer positions every two years; and it does not enable employees to perform their work functions optimally because of the varied reporting relationships and turnover.

Warren Whitney & Sherwood recommends moving to a paid, professional management model. Short-term ramifications of this model include raising the level of the Executive Director and changing the Administrative Assistant position to a full-time equivalent position, filled either by one or two people at the discretion of the Executive Director. The Executive Director will have authority to manage all staff, attend board and committee meetings, and carry out the day-to-day management of GCV according to its strategic plan and approved budget.

These changes carry additional salary expenses. It appears, however, that GCV has the resources to support the additional expenses for one to two years to allow the new Executive Director time to adjust revenue and expenses to cover the additional salary.

While this change comes with challenges and risks, we believe that the risks in making this change are less than the organizational risks that come with deciding to maintain the status quo.