



nelson  
**CARES**  
society

# Nelson CARES Society Board of Directors Orientation



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# Welcome to the Board of Directors

At Nelson CARES we want to live in a community that cares.

That is why we support the most vulnerable individuals in the community.

At Nelson CARES we:

- Create employment programs for adults with diverse abilities.
- Provide guidance on navigating legal systems and government bureaucracy for people living in poverty.
- Provide 24-hour care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Collaborate on projects that build community capacity.
- Provide emergency shelter for individuals in crisis.
- Own and operate affordable housing for seniors, single adults and families living in poverty.



# Our Mission



Through community collaboration and service excellence, Nelson CARES Society works toward a socially just society by providing programs and initiatives in advocacy, housing, employment, support services and environmental stewardship. Nelson CARES Society aims to be a reflection of the community it envisions.

Everyone is adequately and safely housed.

Everyone has access to support and representation when they need it.

Everyone has adequate means and resources to participate fully in community life.

Everyone takes responsibility for environmental stewardship.



# Nelson CARES Society Board Director Job Description

Board directors are elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting.

Directors serve for a two-year term.

Members participate in monthly board meetings, serving on a board committee, and attending annual events such as strategic planning sessions and the Annual General Meeting. This generally results in a time commitment of 6-10 hours per month.

# Board Director Job Description

## Authority and Responsibility

The Board of Directors is the legal authority for Nelson CARES Society. The Board has responsibility in four key areas:

1. Establish the mission, vision and strategic direction for the Society.
2. Ensure financial health and compliance with legal requirements.
3. Ensure sufficient and appropriate human resources, specifically through the appointment of an Executive Director and the development of a competent board.
4. Ensure effective community relations.

As a member of the Board, a Director acts in a position of trust for the community and is responsible for the effective, prudent and ethical governance of the organization.

### **Qualifications and Skills:**

- Committed to supporting the most vulnerable in our community.
- Knowledge and skills in one or more areas of Board governance (policy, finance, personnel, and/or Nelson CARES Society programs) is preferred.
- Community knowledge is also an asset.

# Board Director Job Description

## Requirements:

- Be informed of the services provided by Nelson CARES Society and be committed to the work of the organization.
- Willingness to prepare for all meetings and actively participate in discussions and deliberations of the Board, and to actively serve on at least one committee.
- Attendance at monthly Board meetings and the Annual General Meeting.
- A time commitment of six to ten hours per month (including preparation time for meetings).

## Major Duties:

- Govern Nelson CARES Society by the broad policies developed by the Board, and create additional governing policies as needed.
- Establish overall long and short-term goals, objectives and priorities for Nelson CARES Society.
- Demonstrate accountability to funders for the services provided and funds expended and ensure overall prudent financial management through approval and monitoring of the annual budget.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Nelson CARES Society through a regular review of programs and services.
- Prepare for and participate in the discussions and the deliberations of the Board.
- Foster a positive working relationship with other Board members, and Nelson CARES Society staff.
- Ensure an annual evaluation of the Executive Director is conducted, based on performance goals and measures.
- Be aware of and abstain from any conflict of interest.



# Introduction to Consensus Decision Making

# Consensus Decision Making

## What is consensus?

A process for group decision-making where an entire group of people can come to an agreement.

Inputs and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision acceptable to all.

Through consensus we not only work to achieve better solutions but promote the growth of community and trust.

## Consensus Versus Voting

Voting is a means by which we choose one alternative from several based on a win or lose model that does not take into account individual feelings or needs.

Consensus synthesizes many diverse elements with individuals working through differences to reach a mutually satisfactory position. No ideas are lost, with each member's input valued as part of the solution.

Consensus doesn't mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. It means that in coming to that decision no one feels misunderstood or that their position did not get a fair hearing.

We use consensus-based decision making because it generates better, more creative, solutions.

This often takes more time and skill, which creates deeper commitment to the decision, builds experience with new processes and strengthens conflict resolution skills.

This model works well when people share common values, skills in group processes and conflict resolution, commitment and responsibility towards a group and its members, and sufficient time for everyone to participate in the process.

# Consensus Decision Making

## Benefits

- Stresses the cooperative development of a decision and the active search for common ground rather than differences.
- Everyone's support is needed to finalize the decision, so softer or culturally undervalued voices are encouraged and attended to.
- The decision will usually garner greater commitment to follow through on a decision, because everyone was involved in making it.
- Both feelings and logical arguments are considered important.
- When a decision is not favourable to the whole group, the time is often taken to find creative and often better solutions.

## Disadvantages

- The group can be dominated by outspoken members.
- Sometimes it takes a bit longer – can lead to boredom and frustration if not facilitated properly.
- Individuals can block decisions to further their own power.
- Groups that have one person in charge and groups that have little in common or opposing goals may experience difficulty implementing consensus.

Consensus doesn't mean that everyone agrees with the decision, but that everyone is willing to live with it.

# Consensus Decision Making

## How does consensus work?

**Forming a proposal:** During discussions, a proposal for resolution is put forward, then it is amended and modified through discussion, or it is withdrawn if it appears to be a dead end. It is important to clearly articulate differences early in this process and for those who disagree to propose alternative solutions. The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their rights to speak and compromise. When a proposal is understood, with no new amendments or modifications, facilitators ask if there are objections or reservations. If none are heard, there can be a call for consensus. If there are still no objections, after a moment of silence the decision is considered adopted and will be repeated back to the group.

**Standing Aside:** if you do not agree with the direction that the group is heading in, but you are not willing to stop the rest of the group from going ahead with a generally accepted idea, you can choose to stand aside. This should only be done after you have clearly articulated your concerns and there has been discussion from the group about your concerns. If there are more than one or two people standing aside, it would be wise to continue to search for other ideas and compromises.

**Blocking:** one individual has the power to block a decision, even if it goes against something that the rest of the group agrees to. This should only be done after lengthy discussion, and only in situations where you feel that the decision is morally wrong and would harm the group or other people in some way.

# Role of the Facilitator

A Facilitator keeps track of what the group is talking about and how the group is talking about it by:

- Guiding an agenda using a check-in round.
- Reviewing and revising the agenda with the group.
- Monitoring time.
- Keeping the discussion on topic by pointing out tangents and watching for repetition.
- Reiterating the original goal of the discussion.
- Making it easy to function in the group by clarifying and rephrasing statements to check for accuracy.
- Sharing the role of facilitator so everyone knows what it is like to guide the group.
- Stepping back as a facilitator if they begin to become personally involved in a discussion or debate.



# Policy Governance Primer



# Policy Governance Primer

“Policy Governance is a model that describes the responsibilities and function of a Board of Trustees. It defines the work of the Board as “governance” and makes the distinction between governance and management.” (Ballantyne, 2006, Pg 1)

What does policy governance do?

- Clarify why we need a board and who is responsible for what.
- Provide a complete model for managing the operation that clarifies who does what (separates the role of the Board from the role of the ED)
- Define the Board – staff relationship
- Clarify the role of Board Members
- Provide principles that are internally consistent, externally applicable and logical (ensuring that we avoid a hodgepodge of practices, whims of individuals and capricious decision making).
- Provide an evaluation process that is both fair and rigorous.

Traditional Governance: Board tries to keep up with and direct management – it often ends up following management. The Board approves staff action plans and tries to exercise oversight often focusing on the details of the operation or micromanaging.

Policy Governance Boards: Determine what the organization must achieve and holds management accountable. The Board is clear about the required results (ends) and describes what means are not acceptable (ED limitations). The focus of the board is on revising desired results and means attending to the needs of the membership (owners).

# What is the Board's Job?

Boards are responsible for leadership and vision.

The Board represents and speaks for the interests of the community and keeps the Society accountable. It holds all authority until it gives specific pieces away (delegates). It cannot delegate the finances, or personnel policy of the Society.

The Board must speak with one voice, representing the values of the community, not as individuals. "One voice" doesn't mean a unanimous vote, but that everyone respects the decisions that the Board as a whole adopts.

- Operations are delegated to management. For management to be successful, it is important that the Board be very clear about expectations so it can determine if those expectations have been met.
- It is recommended that the Board use a single point of delegation to clarify its expectations (i.e. the Executive Director).
- The authority of the Nelson CARES board is granted to the Executive Director with limitations defined by policy.
- The Board only has one employee, the Executive Director, with all staff reporting into this position.

The board must be clear about:

- Expectations (ends)
- The assignment of expectations (policy)
- Determining if those expectations are met (evaluation)

# Ends Versus Means

**Ends** are the intended changes that clarify the organizations impact on the world and clarifies at what cost

**Means** are the actions/activities it takes to achieve the ends.

*“Thus, when we say a board is responsible that its organization works, we simply mean that the organization (1) accomplishes the intended results for the intended people at the intended cost or priority – expressed in the board’s Ends policies; and that it (2) avoids unacceptable methods, conduct, activities and circumstances – unacceptable means expressed in the board’s Executive Limitations policies.”*

(Carver and Carver, 2001, p. 7)

# Keeping Intentions Clear

**Ends:** The Board (acting in the best interest of the community) sets targets, explains the intended result, clarifies who should benefit, and the related worth (dollar values and priority).

**Executive Limitations:** Constraints, or unacceptable means, are defined as things to avoid, rather than direction as to what to do. Policies should not limit the choices a manager can make to achieve the ends. For example, the ED consulting with the Board before developing a workplan to achieve an end. The Board sets boundaries by identifying guidelines, risk, what is unacceptable, but doesn't limit the operational choices.

**Governance Policy (Board Means):** States the role of the Board Chair, Board Members and the nature and role of standing committees and special interest committees.

**Board-Staff Linkage (Board Means):** Defines the relationship between the Board and staff. There is often a direct link between the Board Chair and / or Board Treasurer and the Executive Director. It is important to understand the difference between advice and supervision. Individual executive members don't provide supervision, but may be important sources of wisdom and support to the Executive Director.

# Accountability

The Executive Director is accountable for achieving the vision articulated by the Board, based on the needs of the community, and the Board holds staff accountable to achieve the intended results.

*“Board members who expect that their role is to help with wise managerial advice, or who are good at spotting problems in financial sheets, or are accustomed to offering volunteer services, will find little application for their skills on a Policy Governance board. Board members leave their personal wants and visions for the organization at the door.”  
(Ballantyne, 2006 p. 3)*

**Evaluation is focused on whether the Board’s expectations are being fulfilled. It is related to the expectations defined by the Ends or the Board Limitations, and the ED is evaluated on the results, and not on other criteria.**

**Board’s must be responsible fo their own performance and therefore it is important to evaluate the board’s performance on a regular basis. Is it representing its members? Is it monitoring and developing policy and is it adhering to its governance processes.**

**Board Meetings** are an opportunity to learn, contemplate, deliberate and decide together. They are not for reviewing the past, being entertained by staff, helping staff do its work, or performing ritual approvals of staff plans. Meetings are used to address needs and may include learning sessions or joint meetings with other boards.

**Meetings need to focus on the identification of the Ends and the making of decisions.**

# Annual Report

Our 2024-2025 Annual Report is available for [download here](#).



# Strategic Plan

Nelson CARES utilizes a continuous strategic plan, which is a dynamic approach to organizational planning that involves ongoing and iterative updates, instead of relying on fixed annual or quarterly plans.

It emphasizes responsiveness to changes in the environment and allows for real-time adjustments to strategy and financial plans.

Our current strategic plan is available [here](#).



# Nelson Cares By-Laws

[Our Bylaws serve as the internal rules and guidelines](#) that define how our Board operates, its responsibilities and the relationship between the Board and other stakeholders.

They provide a framework for consistent and transparent governance.

Article	Title	Created	Revised
I	Membership	1974	2018
II	Termination of Membership	1974	2018
III	Obligations of Members	1974	2018
IV	Annual General & Special Meetings	1974	2018
V	Board of Directors	1974	2018
VI	Accounts	1974	2018
VII	Seal	1974	2018
VIII	Amendments	1974	2018

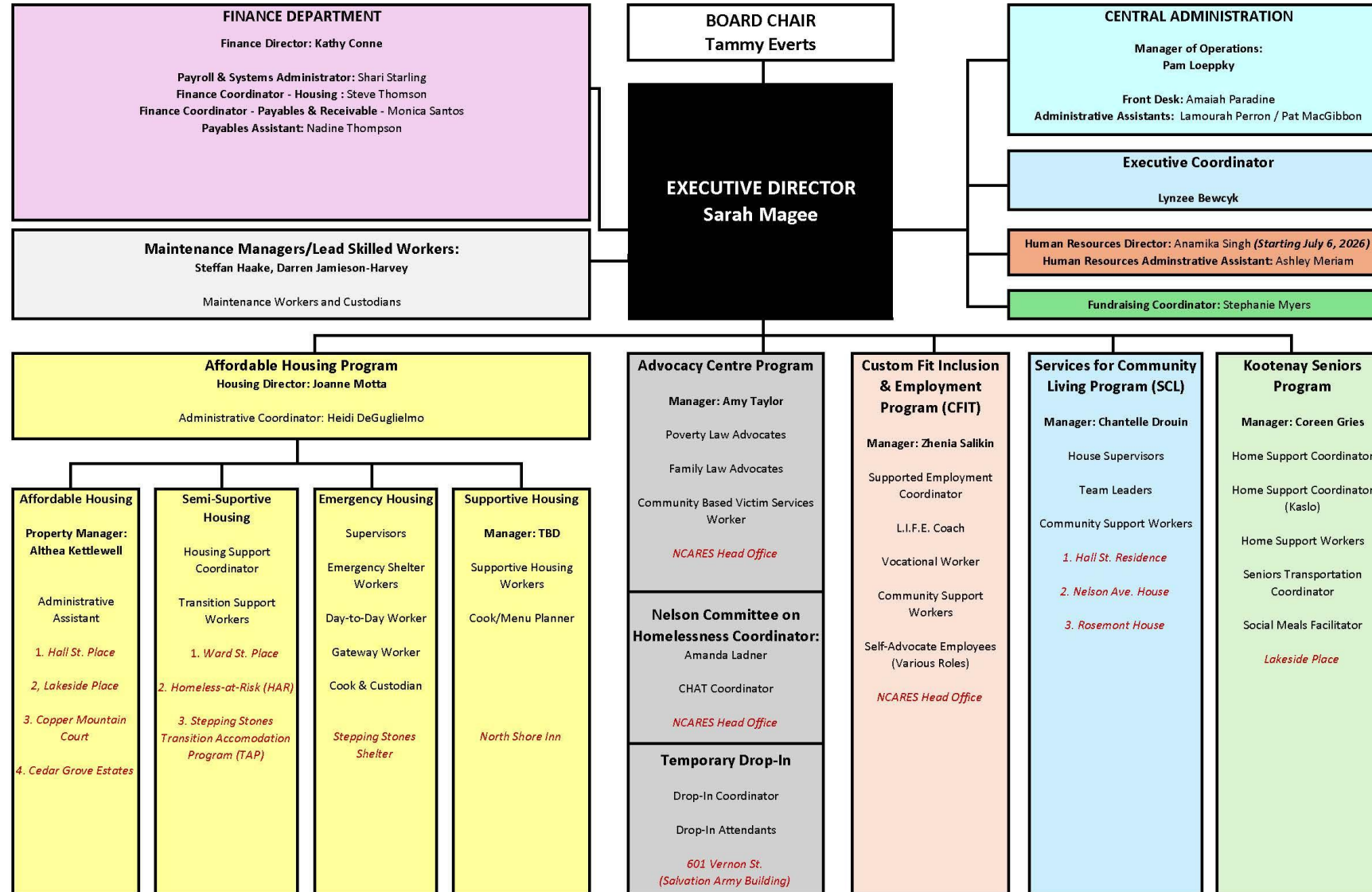
# Board Governance Policy Manual

This document provides the framework by which Nelson CARES is governed, identifying its mission, executive limitations, board-executive relationships, governance processes, and resource materials.

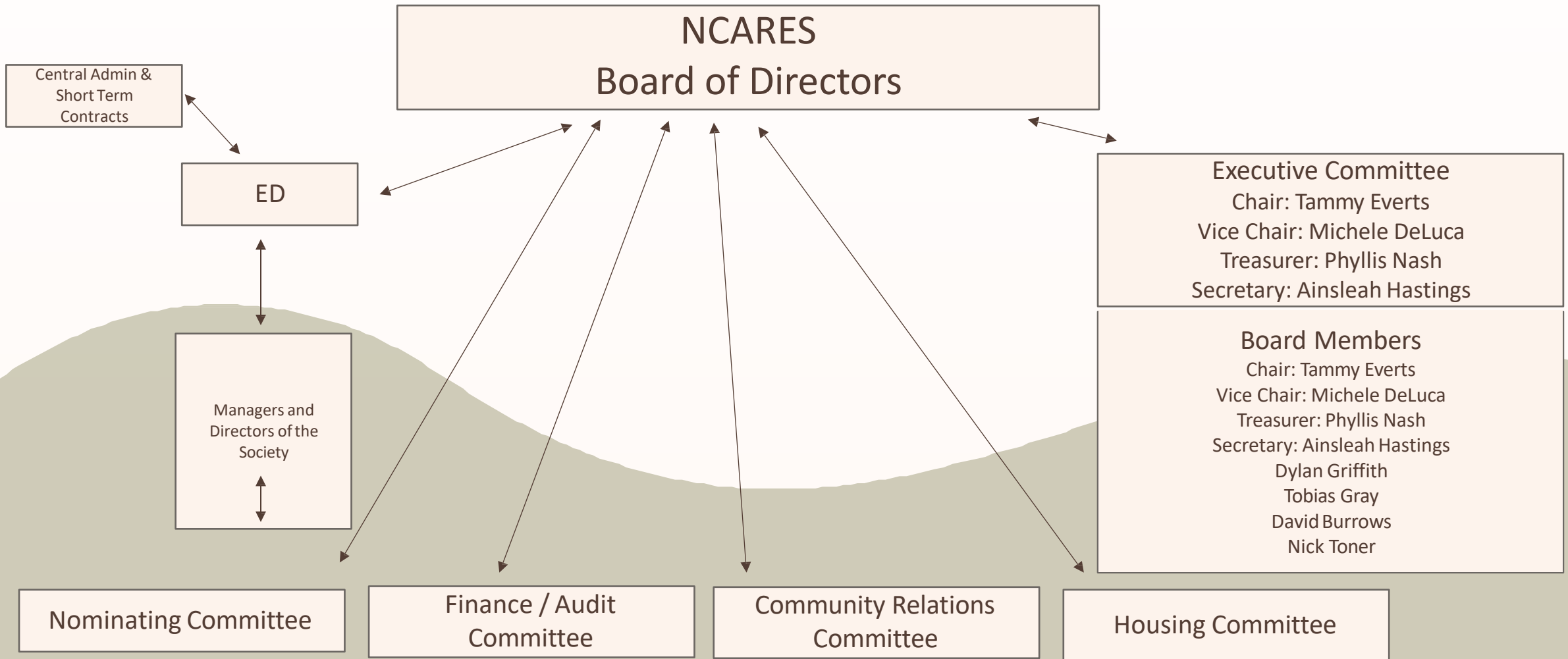
It is required reading for all Board Members and [can be found here](#).


# Staff Organization Chart

NELSON CARES SOCIETY ORGANIZATION CHART *(Revised May 11, 2026)*



# Board Organization Chart





Thank You for being a  
part of the Nelson  
CARES team.

We are all always striving to grow, please send any comments or questions on this presentation or any of the documents referenced within to:

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