BC Water and Waste Association
Board Policy

Policy Name: GP-1 - Governance Model Principles
Policy Type: Governance Process
Date Approved: May 26, 2008
Date Amended: April 5, 2012

BCWWA has chosen to use the Policy Governance® Model as a framework for governance and adheres to the following principles of that model:

1. **The Board governs on behalf of the Owners.** The authority and mandate of the Board is provided by the Owners and as such the Board governs on behalf of and is accountable to these Owners. It is incumbent on the Board to gather information from, listen to and understand needs and expectations of Owners.

2. **The Board speaks with one voice.** Diversity of perspectives and opinions is encouraged and is a valuable part of effective decision-making. However, once a decision has been made through a majority vote of the Board, all Board members are expected to support the decision recognizing that the authority to make decisions belongs to the Board as a whole. This principle also applies to authority over staff in that the Board as a whole, speaking with one voice, provides direction to staff, while individual Board members do not attempt to influence staff directly.

3. **Board decisions are primarily policy decisions:** The Board takes a proactive approach to governance rather than reacting to organizational issues. The Board states its expectations about the way in which the business of the organization will be undertaken through written policies in the categories of:

   a) **Ends Policies:** What results are to be achieved, for whom and at what cost

   b) **Executive Limitations Policies:** Sets the boundaries in which staff must work when carrying out their work.

   c) **Board-CEO Relationships:** Clarifies the way which authority will be delegated to staff and how the Board will evaluate staff performance.
d) Board Governance Process: The Board defines how it will conduct itself as a Board and specifies its own job which must include linkages with its members, policy development and monitoring executive performance.

Changes in the Board’s expectations or intents will be expressed by making changes to the written policies.

4. Development of Policy begins at the broadest level with detail added as needed. Policies are further defined to the extent that clarification is needed to ensure that the Board will accept any reasonable interpretation of that policy by the CEO. The CEO is empowered to act on such reasonable interpretation.

5. The Board will govern and staff will manage the organization: The Board’s primary focus is outside the organization. The Board is visionary and proactive in recognizing and identifying issues having potential impact on its Owners and the water and waste community. The Board’s internal obligation is to state expectations and to monitor performance. The CEO is responsible to manage the affairs of the organization through compliance with the Board’s stated expectations.

6. Ends determination is the Board’s most important job. The Ends state the reason why an organization exists. As such, most of the Board’s focus and time relates to Ends which requires an in-depth understanding of the needs and expectations of the Owners and knowledge of the issues. The Board spends time debating and deliberating on both questions and responses.

7. The Board controls Means by setting limits. The Board sets the boundaries in which the CEO must work. Instead of prescribing what must be done, the Board states what must not be done. Accountability is synonymous with authority. When the Board delegates Means to the CEO and holds the CEO accountable, the Board is also presumed to have delegated authority to make decisions about Means within the boundaries and limitations stated in the Board’s written policies.

8. The Board is responsible for its own products and processes. The Board, not the CEO, is responsible for determining what the organization must achieve and how the Board will carry out its own job.

9. The relationship between the Board and the CEO is one of respect, trust and mutual empowerment. While the roles of the Board and the CEO are different,
mutual respect, cooperation and a supportive relationship are of critical importance in enabling each to carry out its work.

10. **The CEO’s performance is assessed against established policy criteria.** The CEO’s work is guided by written Ends policies and Executive Limitation policies. As such, evaluation of the CEO’s performance includes monitoring of achievement of or compliance with these policies. Monitoring reports provided to the Board by the CEO are used by the Board in the assessment of performance.