Appendix 8-C[1]

Questions of meaning that arise regarding volunteerism

1. How do we build community and enhance the capacity of our community to identify and address its issues (called civic capacity of a community)? What role does volunteerism play in building community and enhancing civic capacity, and how do we use this resource?

2. What role does "growing the third sector" play in building community and enhancing civic capacity, and how do we go about this "growing"?

3. To what degree does volunteerism result from excess capacity (in a community, within individuals) and how do we maintain volunteerism during times of scarcity (e.g., economic downturn, change in the nature of family and work commitments, etc.)?

4. How does volunteerism add value to this specific organization? How do we measure the net benefit or return on investment of volunteers?

5. What benefits are there to professionalizing volunteerism, and how do we achieve these benefits without compromising the value of voluntary action?

6. How do we encourage colleagues in our organization to value volunteers?

7. What are the major challenges that staff members encounter working with volunteers and how do we prepare for, manage, and overcome these challenges?

8. How do we create opportunities for volunteers to feel engaged, successful, and effective?

9. To what degree does the staff understand why volunteers volunteer?

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[1] *Source:* Simone P. Joyaux, ACFRE, and students in the Master of Arts Program in Philanthropy and Development, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

10. How do we ensure that we understand what volunteers value—and where their interests intersect with our organization—in order to create a mutually benefit exchange?

11. To what degree can our organization—and our interaction with volunteers—fulfill their needs?

12. How do we allow volunteers to help define their roles with our organization, within the boundaries of what our organization needs and can use?

13. What is the difference between paid staff jobs and volunteer positions? What are the commonalities?

14. How do we help the leadership of our organization understand that paid staff are often volunteers within the organization?

15. How do we create processes and opportunities for people to self-identify as volunteers?

16. What is the process for finding the right volunteers; recruiting, placing, and retaining them; orienting and training them; assuring their satisfaction and that of the organization; and promoting and releasing them as necessary?

17. How do we value volunteers who may not share our values but wish to volunteer?

18. How do we help volunteers distinguish between acting as a board member and acting in a different volunteer capacity?

19. How do we allow volunteers to educate staff to listen and learn from the wisdom of volunteers?

20. How do we engage new generations and different cultures in volunteerism?

21. When is it appropriate to translate oral tradition into written policy and procedure, and how do we accomplish this so as to add value to the organization and its volunteers?

22. Why do we accept and tolerate behaviors from our own board members and other volunteers that we (and they) would not accept in an employment relationship? What effect does this acceptance and tolerance have on the organization, other volunteers and staff, those we serve, and achievement of our mission?

23. Why do we expect a certain level of performance, and more quickly take action to correct performance below that level, with financially compensated people than with volunteers?

24. Is volunteerism about labor or something else?

25. What obligation do we have to those who want to volunteer?

26. What liability and exposure does having volunteers create?

27. Are we creating community with and for our volunteers?

28. What is the history and experience of the organization, and how does that affect volunteerism there?

29. How would we use volunteers if we've never used them before?

30. To what degree do we actually value volunteers, and what does this valuing look like?

31. What does empowering mean? What is the risk?

32. What is the risk of engaging volunteers?

33. Do we look for people to fulfill a need or find a job for someone who wants to volunteer?

34. Is management ready to trust volunteers to provide leadership?

35. Are volunteers ready to be enabled, or should that be invisible?

36. Do we as leaders have an obligation to bring together volunteers and donors who typically do not connect and who exclude each other?

37. How much freedom do we allow our volunteers? Why?

38. *The really big question:* Are we prepared to change? Are we prepared for the conflict, chaos, and so on of true volunteer engagement?

About conversation and questioning

39. When communication breaks down between volunteers and management—or between volunteers (e.g., within the board)—whose responsibility is it to restart the conversation and facilitate resolution?

40. How do we create systems and processes that help foster new and useful kinds of conversation in the workplace?

41. How do we develop a more disciplined process of asking essential questions, questioning the assumptions and answers, and creating the optimum answers for our organization at this time?

42. How do we create ongoing and meaningful conversations between staff and volunteers (e.g., fund development volunteers, the board, etc.) about issues related to volunteerism, without moving into management?

43. What skills, knowledge, and personal qualities—within staff and volunteers—are necessary to support the collaborative, networked organizations of today and tomorrow? How do we develop these together?

44. How do we decide in which situations to engage which volunteers in what level of dialogue and decision-making?

45. How do we design, manage, and enable process and participation to secure advice from volunteers that our organization needs and can use?

46. How do we take the "parking lot" conversations (those that happen outside the authorized group, e.g., the board) and form alliances to effect positive change without forming cliques that cause damage within the organization?

47. How can we enable people to participate in larger community/organization conversations as well as small group conversations?