

Retire

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nonprofit board members who have relied on the judgments of a longtime executive director and who may be only peripherally informed about the operations of the organization they oversee.

"Over time, a board can get very comfortable — too comfortable, sometimes — with an organization's leader. And suddenly, when that leader announces a plan to retire, the board has to get engaged again — or maybe for the first time," Wahlstrom said.

Succession planning is key

Scott Schnapp, executive director of the Maine Association of Nonprofits, is approaching 60 and plans to leave his position next June, after 21 years with the organization — 13 of those years at the helm. The Maine Association of Nonprofits provides professional development, management training, political advocacy and other

support to nonprofit organizations of all sizes from across the state.

Schnapp said the wave of boomer retirements and the need for succession planning affects the for-profit sector as well as the nonprofit sector.

"But businesses plan for it because of market competition; it's more hard-wired in the for-profit sector," he said. However, nonprofits, especially smaller ones, may be unprepared for both the destabilizing impact of a leader's retirement and the coinciding opportunity to re-evaluate future plans for the organization.

"A leadership shift can be a great opportunity to lead an organization forward," he said, especially if leaders and boards have worked together ahead of time to prepare.

Funders pay close attention

At the Maine-based John T. Gorman Foundation, which funds projects that support youth, families and communities, president and CEO Tony Cipollone, 62,

said changing leadership at a grantee organization is of great interest.

"We always want to know what it might signify in terms of a change in mission, philosophy, community programs or partnerships," he said. "We'll ask the board of directors if this is an opportunity to retool the organization or if it will move forward in the same direction, and we'll ask about the kind of person they're seeking, in terms of values, priorities, experience and leadership styles. All of this can change with a change in leadership."

Although Maine's population of ambitious young professionals isn't large, he's seen no shortage of young adults committed to issues of social justice and community improvement.

"These themes are common across the country," said Cipollone, who previously served as a vice president at the influential Annie E. Casey Foundation. "The challenge in Maine is how do we do a better job of grooming our next generation of leaders,

or how do we broaden the pool by bringing people in from out of state?"

At the Maine Community Foundation, recently installed president and CEO Steven Rowe, 62, who served as Maine's attorney general from 2001 to 2009, said the Maine Community Foundation works closely with grantees to ensure their preparedness for a change in leadership as well as for their overall health and sustainability.

Rowe pointed out that many capable leaders stay on the job well into their 60s and 70s and later.

"Some of the best and brightest CEOs work in the nonprofit sector," he said. "The most important qualities in a leader are knowledge, experience, skill and

creativity. And in many cases, these attributes increase with age."

Passing the torch at the Bangor shelter

Marble said his board responded well when he announced that he was thinking about retiring. It happened about a year and a half ago, at a daylong retreat for staff and board members. The topic was succession planning.

"To them, it was just an academic exercise," Marble said, "but then I raised my hand like a student and said, 'Actually, I am planning to leave within a couple of years.' That added a lot of focus to the day."

The board recently named Marble's replacement: Ro-

wena Griffin, 46, will be promoted to the top position after five and a half years as the shelter's program manager. Her official start date is Jan. 1, 2016.

She looks forward to the challenge, Griffin said, but doesn't plan any immediate changes at the shelter.

"As I see things that might work better, I'll make changes as they're needed," she said, adding that Marble and the board have been "incredibly supportive and helpful" during the transition.

And while Marble declined to specify how he expects to fill his days once he retires, he hinted that he would not stray far from the issue of homelessness that he has come to cham-

Meals

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about \$60,000 in state funding. Because of the surge in demand and the cost of home delivery in such a large geographic territory, the program racked up a \$50,000 deficit last year, Merrill said.

In recent years, Meals on Wheels has changed in an attempt to maintain services by streamlining how they provide their services.

"We used to deliver a hot meal to each senior's doorstep five days a week," Merrill said. "Now we deliver five frozen meals once a week."

But that hasn't been enough.

"We've just had to shut it down," she said. "No one new can come on until we fix the problem."

EAAA has launched a

fundraising campaign to help meet demand. According to the campaign website, the fundraiser has so far raised just \$1,342 toward a \$40,000 goal, but that is expected to get a boost from Brewer-based Darling's Auto Group.

"We look for charities to partner with to help out local communities," said company president Jay Darling. Darling could not immediately provide details, but said that each vehicle sold in the month of October generated a donation to Meals on Wheels programs throughout Maine. It wasn't immediately clear what the donation would be to the EAAA program.

"Our goal was to donate 30,000 meals statewide," Darling said.

Even with a generous donation from Darling's, more is still needed to bridge the shortfall.

"This is a wonderful

thing they are doing at a time when every meal helps," Crone said, "but it is a stopgap and does not change the need for local communities to step up and help take care of their senior residents."

It costs about \$1040 to provide meals for one person for a year. Crone suggested that individuals who want to support the program might "adopt" an eligible senior for the coming year by donating that amount. He also said that if each of the 136 municipalities served by EAAA were to sponsor just one client per year, "our problems would be over."

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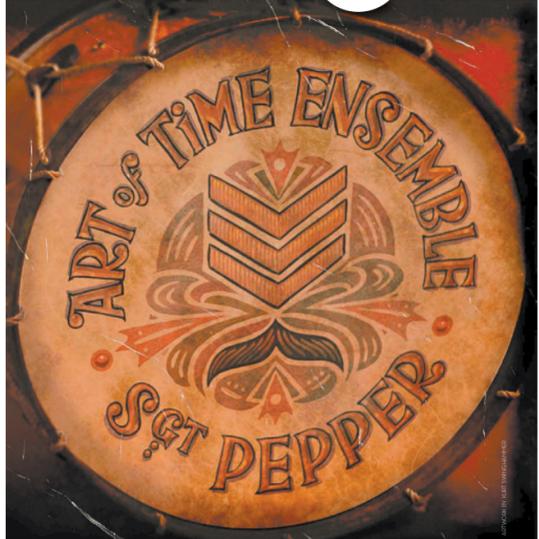
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