Whether desired or not, from time to time, the Board will be faced with the task of having to replace their Executive Director.

This transition can come as a result of three main reasons:

1. The Current Executive Director moves on to another Agency.
2. The Board Terminates the Executive Director’s employment with the agency.
3. The current Executive Director becomes unable to perform his/her duties or passes away.

If a Deputy Director were in place, with the Board’s approval, the DD could assume the Interim Position until the Board decides how they will refill the Executive Director position. If there is no Deputy Director, the Board should temporarily appoint one of the Department Directors as the "Acting Executive Director" for the duration of the transition.

# The Board would be well advised to consider the following:

1. Upon learning of the loss or separation of the Agency Executive Director, the Board should convene a closed Executive Session at a regular Board Meeting or Special Called Meeting to appoint an Interim or Acting ED. If the agency has no Deputy Executive Director and if the current ED is still employed, the Board may wish to ask the ED recommend a suitable Interim ED based upon his/her experience and knowledge of existing staff.
2. In the closed Executive Session, the Board should hold frank discussions of what professional traits they will be seeking in their new ED. Keep in mind that every applicant will possess unique skills, attributes, strengths and weaknesses. Prior to beginning their Executive Search, it is imperative for the Board to reach a consensus of what general professional experience, educational requirements and leadership qualities they seek in the successful candidate.
3. The Board must then decide what type of Executive Search they wish to conduct. Considering the financial condition of the agency, the Board will need to decide whether they will hire an Executive Search Firm to handle all the preliminary screenings, or if the agency will advertise nationally and have the HR Administrator review the applications for minimal experience and qualifications. In either case, the Board's desires identified in #2 above should be shared with the Search Firm or HR Administrator to build into the position vacancy announcement. Those candidates meeting the minimum qualifications would then be forwarded to the Board for their review and decision of which applicants will be interviewed.
4. It is usual and customary for the agency to pay for travel expenses incurred by the top two or three applicants being interviewed for the ED position, providing funds are available. It is not uncommon for a Board to conduct a preliminary telephone interview first with a larger group of candidates in order to decide which candidates will be invited for a final interview. (This process was used when I was hired, and it will save the agency time and a lot of money). The Board should also understand, due to the public nature of the agency, the media may request, and the Board must provide the names of the top finalists being considered for the position. It is not necessary or even advisable to publicize the names of all applicants but merely the top two or three finalists. This information should only be made available if and when the media request it.
5. It is imperative for the Board to understand and recognize that the decision of who they choose as the Executive Director rests solely with the BHA Board. The Mayor, Council, Special Interest Groups or even HUD cannot, and should, not try to demand, coerce, threaten, intimidate or require the Board to hire one candidate over another.
6. Prior to make their final selection, the Board should thoroughly check out the references and perform a thorough background check on the prospective finalists. You are not limited to check only those references provided by the applicants. Don’t just check their current references, check with previous employers to see if the references check out. Run national criminal background checks. Run credit checks as well. If time permits, a site visit to their current and/or previous Housing Authority may prove to be very enlightening. Find out which HUD field office serves the applicant's agency. Call and ask the Mayor or City Manager how well the candidates worked or cooperated with them. You might also speak with the agency staff for their impressions of the person’s performance. You can rest assured once the selection is made public, the media will investigate the new ED’s background. The Board do not want be surprised by anything discovered in the media’s background check of the new ED.
7. Starting salary, relocation benefits, and employment contracts are items that may be requested by the candidate. Such matters are dependent upon the budget and Board’s desires. Before scheduling the interviews, it is always a good idea to conduct a salary comparability study of similar sized agencies to see what their base starting salary is and how their cost of living compares to Beaumont. It is not uncommon to start a new ED at the entry-level salary, with a commitment to increase to the next step upon successful completion of his/her initial probationary period. Employment contracts can be sticking points and it is strongly encouraged to have Legal Counsel craft it or read through a proposed contract. Regardless of language in the contract, there should always be language in it stating that all of the terms and conditions are contingent upon satisfactorily completing the probationary period of employment with the agency. A vigilant Board will usually be able to determine satisfactory performance very easily within the first three to six months of employment.
8. The Board and the new Executive Director must always remember, during the initial probationary period, **ANY** employee may be released from employment without cause. This also applies to the new ED if the Board determines the agency and the new Executive Director are incompatible in the meeting the goals and directions desired by the Board.
9. Last, but certainly not least, the Board must always remember that once they hire the Executive Director and the probationary period is successfully achieved, the Board must provide the Executive Director the full power, authority and autonomy to run the day-to-day operations of the agency as s/he deems necessary. The Board’s first and foremost responsibility is to review, approve and adopt policy and budgets of the agency and to insure the agency overall is in compliance with all established HUD rules and regulations. Not to get involved in the day-to-day operations.