May 23, 2015

To Those Serving on the Women of Influence Selection Panel,

First, thank you for your time and commitment to this important recognition event. Being selected as a Woman of Influence elevates women within the community, infuses them with greater confidence and solidifies their willingness to give others a boost up. And the impact ripples across the community.

That brings me to the second topic and matter at hand. I am writing to nominate Sally Dix as a Woman of Influence. Sally Dix is the Executive Director for Bravo Greater Des Moines, a nonprofit organization that provides funding and support for arts, culture and heritage organizations in central Iowa.

Bravo’s revenue comes primarily from 16 local government partners who contribute a portion of their hotel/motel tax. Under Sally’s guidance, Bravo reinvests those funds in local arts organizations that are vital contributors to the region’s vibrant quality of life.

Following a national search, Sally joined Bravo in January 2014 and has lead the organization through transformative change. Some of the major organizational accomplishments during her tenure include:

* Completing a strategic planning process that yielded a revised mission statement and newly defined organizations vision and values
* Dissolved all previous Board committees and restructured to align standing committees with strategic plan priorities
* Redefined requirements for Board officer positions to be inclusive of both 28E and community representatives in leadership positions
* Updated policies to ensure high engagement of directors serving the community (shortened term limits, unified approach to requirements for all directors regardless of sector they represent.)
* Formally adopted Open Records requirements to enhance transparency and accountability
* Updated grant-making processes and considerations to be reflective of strategic plan priorities and enhance accountability and transparency for decision-making (how we determine available funds, rubric, reporting, etc.)
* Established a more sophisticated budgeting process that allows us to be more reflective of the work we do and our impact on the community

In addition to her work locally in support of the arts, Sally was asked to read funding applications for the Iowa Arts Council and for the National Endowment for the Arts. She was also selected to participate in the Americans for the Arts Executive Leadership Forum.

Prior to joining Bravo, Dix served for nearly 10 years as the Vice President of Communications for the Science Center of Iowa. As part of the leadership team, she led the planning, opening and launch of the new $62 million 110,000 square-foot facility that opened in 2005, overseeing every aspect of marketing and communications. She has also served as the first Executive Director of the Iowa Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure where she led strategic planning, board development and fundraising efforts to strengthen the Affiliate’s work in the fight against breast cancer.

Sally has an undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and a master’s degree from Johns Hopkins, both in Environmental Science and Policy. She also received her MBA from the University of Iowa.

Sally works directly with county supervisors, mayors, and city council people across sixteen Greater Des Moines communities. She is trusted by leadership and board members from Des Moines’ greatest arts and culture organizations. She administers over $3 million in grants annually, all while keeping husband Patrick in check and raising twin boys. I ask you – who is be more influential than Sally Dix?

Thank you for considering this nomination.

Best regards,

Michelle Book

CEO Food Bank of Iowa and Bravo Board Chair