

Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, November 18, 2024

5 – 7:30 p.m. at Shelly Ridge

Mission Moments

Board Chair Nicole LeVine called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. She first announced that this would be Treasurer Marlene Beers' last Board meeting, as she is resigning due to other commitments. The Board wished her well and CEO Kim Fraites-Dow presented her with farewell gifts. Nicole then introduced Gold Award Girl Scout Anjali G., who shared her project on building foot swings for special education students in her school district in Chester County, as a tool to allow them to focus while expending energy.

Management Report

CEO Kim Fraites-Dow thanked Stephanie Vighetti, former Chief of Staff, who was recently promoted to Director of Girl Experience. Kim also welcomed Gina Range, our new Chief Advancement Officer. Gina then announced this year's Take the Lead honorees for each of the three events.

Chief Mission Delivery Officer Molly Eigen then introduced new staff member Phylicia Epps, the Head of Philadelphia Strategy & Partnerships. Molly shared that GSEP finished MY24 with 25,875 girls and 13,943 adults, which is a 2.77% growth YOY in girls and 6.98% increase in adults. Molly then reported on Girl Experience highlights for MY 24, including serving almost 4,000 girls via partner and GSEP staff programming throughout the year; having more than 4,000 girls attend summer camp; and 860 girls earning their highest awards (43 Gold, 117 Silver, and 700 Bronze). Volunteer Experience highlights included increased engagement at adult events and a refreshed Service Unit Manager Panel. Since she also now oversees the Facility Rentals team, she reported that 1,700 attendees enjoyed time during 14 camporees on our properties. Molly shared the Mission Delivery team plans for MY25, including reinvigorated partnerships with the School District of Philadelphia; redesigning girl programs (including camp) by learning what girls and families want and with an emphasis on Cadettes; building stronger volunteer support with a focus on new leaders; and concentrating on a year-round approach to recruitment.

CMO Stacey Moyers reported on the figures from the Fall Product Program, which just concluded the week before. Nationally, other Councils reported an 8 ½% decrease, but GSEP surpassed our goal by 14%. We also had almost 400 more girls participate this year. CAEO Sophia Lee offered a quick update on two property issues. Last month, GSEP initiated a lawsuit against the neighboring HOA of Camp Laughing Waters to finally settle the issue of seven disputed acres between us. Plus, Salisbury Township Board of Commissioners has given full approval to proceed with the new building at Camp Mountain House, which we are using as a platform to more easily negotiate our actual plans to renovate the new house.

Kim Fraites-Dow shared an overview of last month's Special National Council Session. The National Council Delegates voted to approved increasing girl membership dues to \$65 in MY 27, with an interim step up at \$45 in MY26 (next year). Annual adult dues will now be \$30, starting in MY26.

Calling All Girl Bosses Update

CAGB Project Manager Jenn Richards reported on the first few months of this pilot initiative. Currently, we have 209 girls registered (slightly over goal). This includes 79 girls who are new to Girl Scouting. Participants come from 93 different schools and 48 different zip codes. Plus, there are 81 adult volunteers registered.

The Kickoff was held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center (courtesy of a CAGB Advisory Committee member) in September. We hosted 146 girls, 52 adult volunteers, and 15 guest speakers that day. The next workshop was held on October 5 at the five local "hubs" around the city, and 95 girls participated in the sessions facilitated by 45 adult volunteers and eight guest speakers. Workshop #3 was held at the end of October, and it was a large gathering of all the girls at the Kroc Center (120 girls participated). The guest speakers included former Gold Award Girl Scouts from Philadelphia sharing the impact of their projects on their lives and their communities. Jenn then shared challenges and successes so far; overall, the feedback from girls and caregivers has been overwhelmingly positive.

The culminating event for CAGB is "GirlzDay," an all-day girl expo being planned for May 17, 2025, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. Girl Scouts from all over the Council (and non-members as well!) will be invited to attend.

Board Development Committee Report

BDC Chair Debbie O'Brien first thanked the Board for participating in the annual Feedback/Retention Conversations. Overall, members truly enjoy serving on the Board and are interested in more social networking opportunities. Debbie then presented a formal recommendation from the BDC for the Board to approve Jennifer Dempsey Fox as the new Treasurer; the Board vote was unanimously in favor.

Property Committee Report

Chair Ellen Iobst shared that the Property Committee approved resubmitting the Shelly Ridge Girls' Environmental Access Project (GEAP) to the Finance Committee for consideration, with the ultimate purpose of seeking final Board approval. The goal of the Access Project is to provide safe access and expended use of the southwest portion of Camp Shelly Ridge; this includes building a road, a pedestrian bridge, and a vehicular bridge over the stream that traverses the property. Plus, a high ropes adventure course across the stream is also planned.

Ellen provided the rationale and an outline of the \$1.53 million budget for the project, which includes preliminary funding already committed by State Representative Napoleon Nelson and the Timken Foundation.

Finance Committee Report

Chair Rick Perkins continued the GEAP discussion by stating that the Finance Committee is in favor of this project and requested that the Board approve. The Board took an official vote, and the funding request for the Girls' Environmental Access Project unanimously passed.

CFO Mike Vanic then reviewed the FY24 September Operating Results (pre-Audit). In the third quarter of FY24, GSEP was looking at a budget shortfall of over \$760,000, due primarily to the Cookie Program not meeting the goal. However, contingency plans were enacted in Q3 and Q4, with particular attention paid to decreasing expenses. GSEP ended FY24 with a six-figure surplus. Mike reported that the FY24 Capital Projects (14 of them) came in under budget. He also explained that GSEP is pursuing the federal Employee Retention Credit (two tax credits from the pandemic funding).

Board Chair's Remarks

Nicole LeVine thanked Ann Donley and Miriam Shou for facilitating workshops at the Fall Leadership Weekend; Ellen Iobst for being a presenter at a Democracy badge program for Daisies and Brownies at Camp Mountain House earlier this month; and Mary Beth Biddle and Myah Derer for attending the Volunteer Awards Ceremony

She then congratulated Ashley Russo, whose company received the Athena Organizational Leadership Award from the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's Women's Business Council; and Anne Baum (and her husband Brad) for being recognized as the Outstanding Philanthropists of the Year from the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

She also announced that Allison Green Johnson will be celebrated by the Main Line Chamber and the Society of Professional Women as a recipient of the 2024 Women in Leadership Award and Fusun Bubernack and her company are being recognized as an "MSP Titan of Industry" at the Titans Awards in Beverly Hills in December.

Nicole reminded the Board of upcoming events, including the Winter Delegate Council Meeting on January 14; Cookie Kickoff on January 16; and the next Board meeting to be held the morning of January 27.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.