

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

5:30-7:30 p.m. at Shelly Ridge

Mission Moment

Silver Award Girl Scout Parker V. from Philadelphia shared her project which focused on why many Black and brown communities have had limited access to swimming. She also promoted the importance of water safety and swimming as a life-saving skill. Finally, she told the Board that she appreciated having the guidance offered by the volunteer mentors in the Calling All Girl Bosses program.

Management Report

CEO Kim Fraites-Dow reported that with a week to go in Membership Year 2025, GSEP currently has 24,531 girls, which is 97.5% of the annual goal and is an almost 1% increase from the same time last year. Membership Year 2026 begins next week, and GSEP already has more than 13,000 girls and 10,400 adults registered. The Council reached 94% of its summer camp goal, with 3,332 girls attending camp.

Calling All Girl Bosses started its second year by expanding to include programs in Allentown and Reading as well as continuing to serve girls in Philadelphia. A troop-based pilot initiative was launched, using the same curriculum to determine if the program can be scaled up and offered at the troop level throughout the Council.

Chief Advancement Officer Gina Range reported that last month's Adult Camping Weekend raised a record \$26,000 for Graduating Senior Scholarships. The 4th Annual Golf for Girl Scouts was held earlier this month at Saucon Valley Country Club. Ninety-six golfers participated. The event surpassed its fundraising goal, with more than \$94,000 in revenue. Work on the 2026 Take the Lead events has begun. All three events will be held in new locations this spring.

Chief Mission Delivery Officer Molly Eigen shared her team's plans for the upcoming Membership Year. Girl programs run at all GSEP properties and with community partners every weekend. The goals for these programs are to drive girl outcomes, demonstrate the benefits of Girl Scout membership, and to increase visibility and engagement.

She further explained how the Council partners with schools and other organizations. For example, almost 900 girls were served in community troops in Philadelphia, Delaware County, Allentown, and Reading, with the MY26 goal to increase by 500 new girls with a focus on Norristown and Chester. Through series programming, we served approximately 2500 girls in MY25, and the goal is to work with 50% more girls in MY26. The success story in MY25 was our reinvigorated partnership with Philadelphia Parks & Rec this summer. Plus, the Mission Delivery team hosted more than a thousand girls in the late spring and early fall through the "Camp for a Day" program.

The Girl Experience team has also focused on four primary foundations for programs in MY26: 1) Outdoor Skills Challenge (a monthly highlighted outdoor skill to earn a “rocker” patch with a Council or troop or individual experience, culminating in a large event in the spring to earn the center patch); 2) Girl Scouts Only (giving girls access to opportunities they would not have otherwise; e.g., backstage at the zoo or a theater); 3) Signature Events (larger events open to members and non-members, including family and friends); 4) Leadership Pathways (such as Take the Lead, resume building workshops, etc.). Molly also offered other examples of innovations for girl programming, including Council Camporees; Crafting experiences in November (which sold out quickly!); and STEM programming. GSEP is also promoting the new Leadership Awards and Body Appreciation badges from GSUSA.

Finance Update

CFO Mike Vanic first presented the FY25 forecast as compared to the FY25 budget. Early estimates reflected that GSEP would end the year with a deficit, primarily due to the Cookie Program not meeting the goal. However, contingencies enacted in Q2, 3, and 4 and financial discipline by the staff are now indicating that the Council will end FY25 with a small surplus.

The FY26 budget was presented, starting with the key issues being defined. These include the goal to end the year with a large surplus; increases in contributed revenue; having a slight increase (5%) in girl membership; and the cookie program having a major increase over FY25, due to a purchase price increase of \$1 per box. Plus, expense assumptions include absorbing the Calling All Girl Bosses budget into the normal operating budget for FY26 (CAGB was funded by a Board-designated grant in FY25); adding the triennial costs associated with the 2026 National Council Session; and increasing the financial aid line due to the new membership fee of \$45 per girl (an 80% increase YOY).

Kim Fraites-Dow further explained that messaging around the Cookie Program to troops, volunteers, and families has emphasized the importance of participating in the program and that it should not be considered optional. Membership dues go directly to GSUSA, and cookie proceeds support the work, properties, and programs of the Council. The plan for a larger surplus this year acknowledges the cost of goods increases over the next four years, as well as the volatility of the market.

The FY26 Capital Budget was also presented. The staff are planning 16 projects, which address safety, repair, and replacement; and girl experience, operational issues, and needed improvements at camps and service centers.

The final piece of the FY26 Budget centered on the House Renovation project at Camp Mountain House. The renovation is expected to cost almost 50% less than the original new building project.

The Board vote to approve the FY26 Operating and Capital Budgets was unanimous.

Closing Remarks

Board Chair Nicole LeVine congratulated Ellen Iobst on the birth of her first grandchild and Diana Cortes on being named a Woman of Distinction by the *Philadelphia Business Journal*.

She also thanked Mary Beth Biddle, Ellen Iobst, and Kathy Killian for attending the Adult Camping Weekend; Bunmi Ojikutu and Diana Cortes for hosting the Calling All Girl Bosses volunteer trainings; Ashley Russo for co-chairing this year's golf event; and Girl Advisor Sydney V. for being a co-presenter for the girls-only Delegate training.

She then reminded the Board about the Fall Product Program; the upcoming Fall Delegate Council Meeting on October 16; a screening of the documentary about Frances Hesselbein (GSUSA's most well-known CEO) in Bethlehem on November 1; and the Volunteer Awards Ceremony on November 9.

Adjournment

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