

GIRL SCOUTS OF GENESEE VALLEY

Delegate Portfolio



GIRL SCOUTS®

REVISION
February 2006

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley, Inc. Bylaws
2. Talk to Your Council Suggestion Form
3. 2002 – 2006 GSGV Vision and Goals

Board/Delegate Communication Overview

To Communicate With Delegates Board Members:

Attend orientation - learn about the Council Delegate role and the importance of Board/Delegate communication.

Keep up to date on GSGV issues through meetings, mailings, delegate bulletins and, if possible, the website.

Prepare delegate bulletins to get delegate input and to report work of the board and its committees to the delegates.

While doing board business consider the ideas received from delegates in assemblies, delegate bulletin responses and Talk to Your Council forms.

Attend Assemblies, the Annual Meeting, and any special meetings that may be called

Attend Meet the Board sessions - held twenty minutes before each assembly meeting.

To Communicate With the Board Council Delegates:

Attend training - learn about the Council Delegate role and the importance of Board/Delegate communication.

Keep up to date on GSGV issues through meetings, mailings, delegate bulletins and, if possible, the website.

Share and discuss governance issues with service unit members.

Share the ideas of your service unit by speaking at assemblies, responding to delegate bulletins and completing Talk to Your Council forms.

Attend Assemblies, the Annual Meeting, and any special meetings that may be called.

Attend Meet the Board sessions - held twenty minutes before each assembly meeting.

OUR MISSION
Girl Scouting builds girls of
courage,
confidence
and character,
who make the world a better place.

OUR KEY ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

We believe Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley must provide an environment within which girls can develop their own:

- Ideals
- Decision Making Skills
- Beliefs
- Abilities
- Leadership Skills

We believe through Girl Scouting girls will learn to understand and value:

- Their own self-worth
- Others' differences
- Their own uniqueness
- Their potential in life

We believe that working in partnership with adult volunteers girls can become responsible citizens who are:

- Honest
- Accepting of others
- Tolerant
- Happy
- Competent

CONSTITUTION OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF THE U.S.A.

Founded by Juliette Low, March 12, 1912

Chartered by a special act of Congress

Preamble

The Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

The Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Beliefs and Principles

We, the members of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, united by a belief in God and by acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise and Law,

And inspired by the aims of the Founder of the Scout Movement, Lord Baden-Powell, and the Founder of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States, Juliette Low,

Do dedicate ourselves to the purpose of inspiring girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism, and service that they may become happy and resourceful citizens.

We believe that the motivating force in Girl Scouting is a spiritual one.

We affirm that the Girl Scout Movement shall ever be open to all girls and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

We maintain that the strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the voluntary leadership of its adult members, in the cooperation and support of the community, and in the affiliation with Girl Guide and Girl Scout Movements of other countries through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.¹

We declare that the democratic way of life and the democratic process shall guide all our activities.

We hold that ultimate responsibility for the Girl Scout Movement rests with volunteers. Reaffirming these our beliefs and principles, we do adopt this Constitution.²

¹ Blue Book, GSUSA, 2000 p. 7

² Blue Book, GSUSA, p. 8

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Council Delegate, A Member of the Council's Corporate Voting Membership^{*3}

Purpose: To participate in the Girl Scout democratic process; to assist the council in determining the direction of the Girl Scout program within its jurisdiction by bringing the concerns and needs of their constituency (Service Unit) before the leadership of the council; and to bring council considerations to the Service Unit for discussion and input.

Accountability: Elected by Service Unit as established by the Board of Directors and accountable to the Service Unit Manager.

Term of Office: Delegates shall serve for a term of two (2) years from the date of their election and serve until their successors are elected.

Responsibilities:

1. Complete training for the position.
2. Elect
 - the officers of the council,
 - the members-at-large of the council's Board of Directors,
 - the members of the council Nominating Committee,
 - delegates to the National Council of GSUSA, and
 - persons to fill vacancies among those delegates should they occur.
3. Determine general outlines of direction for Girl Scouting within the jurisdiction of the council by receiving and responding to reports and information from the Board of Directors.
4. Amend the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.
5. Bring important council considerations or questions to the Service Unit for discussion.
6. Take all other action requiring vote by the council corporate voting membership.
7. Bring suggestions and proposals to the Board of Directors of the council.
8. Attend:
 - Annual council meeting
 - Assembly meetings
 - Special Meetings of the Board of Directors
 - Geographic area and Service Unit meetings

Qualifications:

1. Member of the Girl Scout movement
2. Registered in the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley, Inc.
3. Fourteen (14) years of age or over

³ See next page for * explanation

Meeting Requirements as a Delegate:

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Council shall be held in November at such time and place as may be determined by the Board of Directors. Notice of the time and place of the meeting together with the slate of nominees for all officers or positions to be filled according to the Bylaws shall be mailed to each delegate not more than forty-five (45) days and not less than thirty (30) days before the meeting.

Spring and Fall Assemblies

Two regular meetings (Assemblies) of the geographic areas will be held as determined by the Board of Directors. Notice of the time, place and purpose of the meeting (assembly) shall be given to each delegate not less than 30 days before the meeting.

National Delegate Election

A meeting to elect National Council Delegates shall be held before November 15 in the year prior to the meeting of the National Council.

Special Meeting

If it is determined that there is a need for a special meeting, notice must be given not less than 10 days before the meeting.

Preparation Requirements:

1. Participate in initial orientation and periodic workshops.
2. Become informed about council goals, basic facts about the council's governance and management structure, membership plans, and the financial framework within which the council works.
3. Be familiar with the Girl Scout ideal goals and purpose and subscribe to the policies of GSUSA.
4. Become familiar with basic parliamentary procedure. (A resource will be provided at training.)
5. Act as information gatherers for the members who elected them.
6. Seek to understand the opinions of those who elect them and weigh own opinions and attitudes when acting as a two way communication channel to the Board of Directors.

***COUNCIL'S CORPORATE VOTING MEMBERSHIP**

Board of Directors
Council Nominating Committee
Delegates

REFERENCES USED:

- Council Bylaws (November 2005)
- The Democratic Process: The Role of the Delegate (GSUSA 1987)
- Decision-Influencing in Girl Scouting (GSUSA 1990)

DECISION INFLUENCING

A decision influencing process is a planned communication system designed to ensure broad based participation in the direction setting (governance) activities of the council. Being part of the decision influencing process is an investment of time and effort that results in achieving the GSGV mission. Participation in the process is a necessity in achieving Girl Scouting's full potential in serving the unique needs and interests of girls in our five county jurisdiction.

The goals of the decision influencing process are:

- To gather information from all levels
- To involve girls, parents and the adult membership as well as community representatives with the Board of Directors in an exchange of communications
- To use the expertise and informed opinions of a wide variety of people throughout the council's jurisdiction in the data gathering and data evaluating stages of decision making before the Board takes action

The decision influencing process creates a core of people informed about the decision making process who are able to interpret it to others throughout the council's jurisdiction. Girl Scouting in the community is strengthened by developing a base of community persons interested in and informed about the council and Girl Scouting in general.

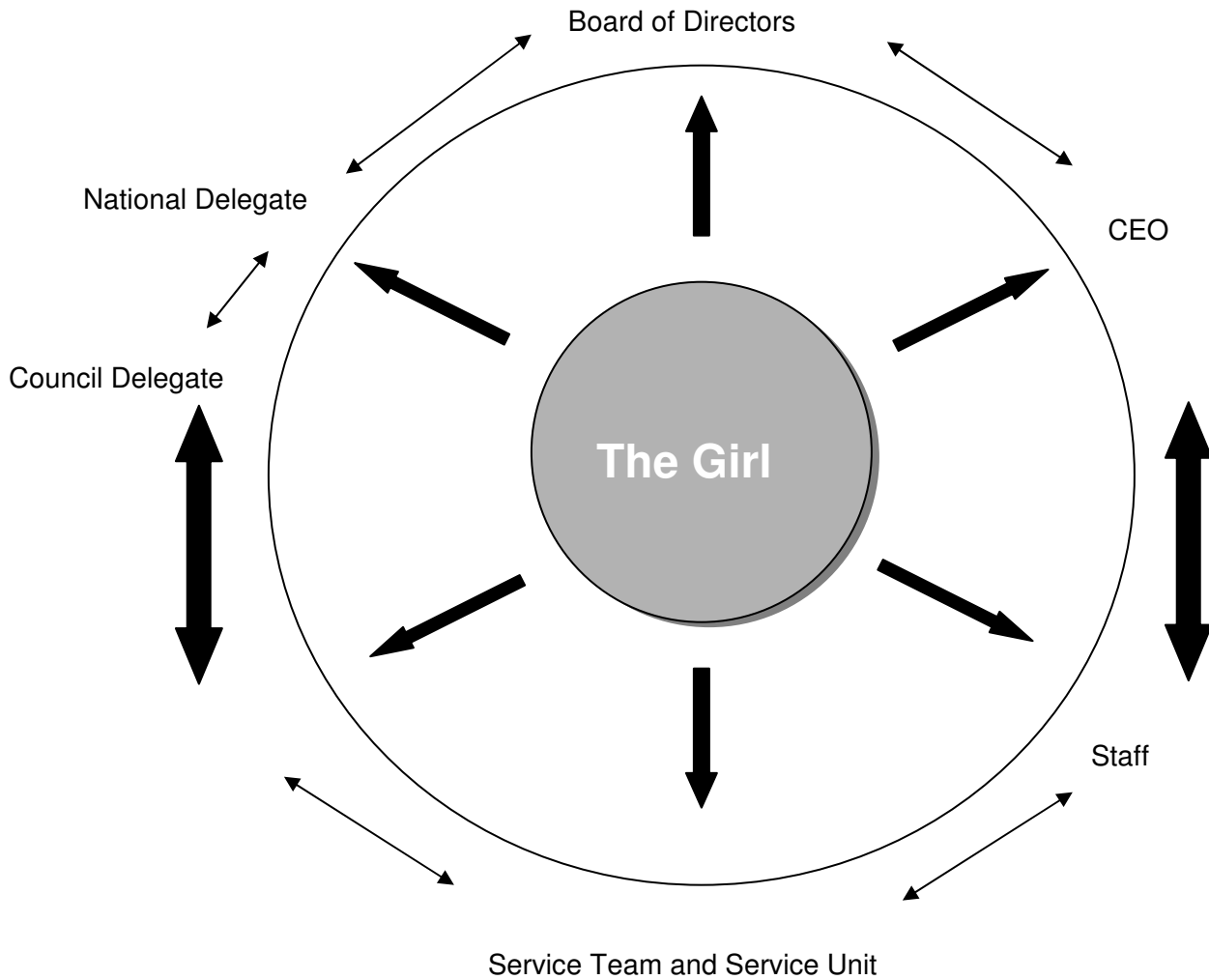
Council delegates are a vital part of the decision influencing process. Council delegates, along with members of the Council Nominating Committee and the Board of Directors provide the corporate structure of the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley and meet the requirements of incorporation in the State of New York.

The decision influencing process is more than a way to meet legal requirements of incorporation through a delegate structure. It is a way of work that shows commitment to the beliefs and principles as stated in the preamble of the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

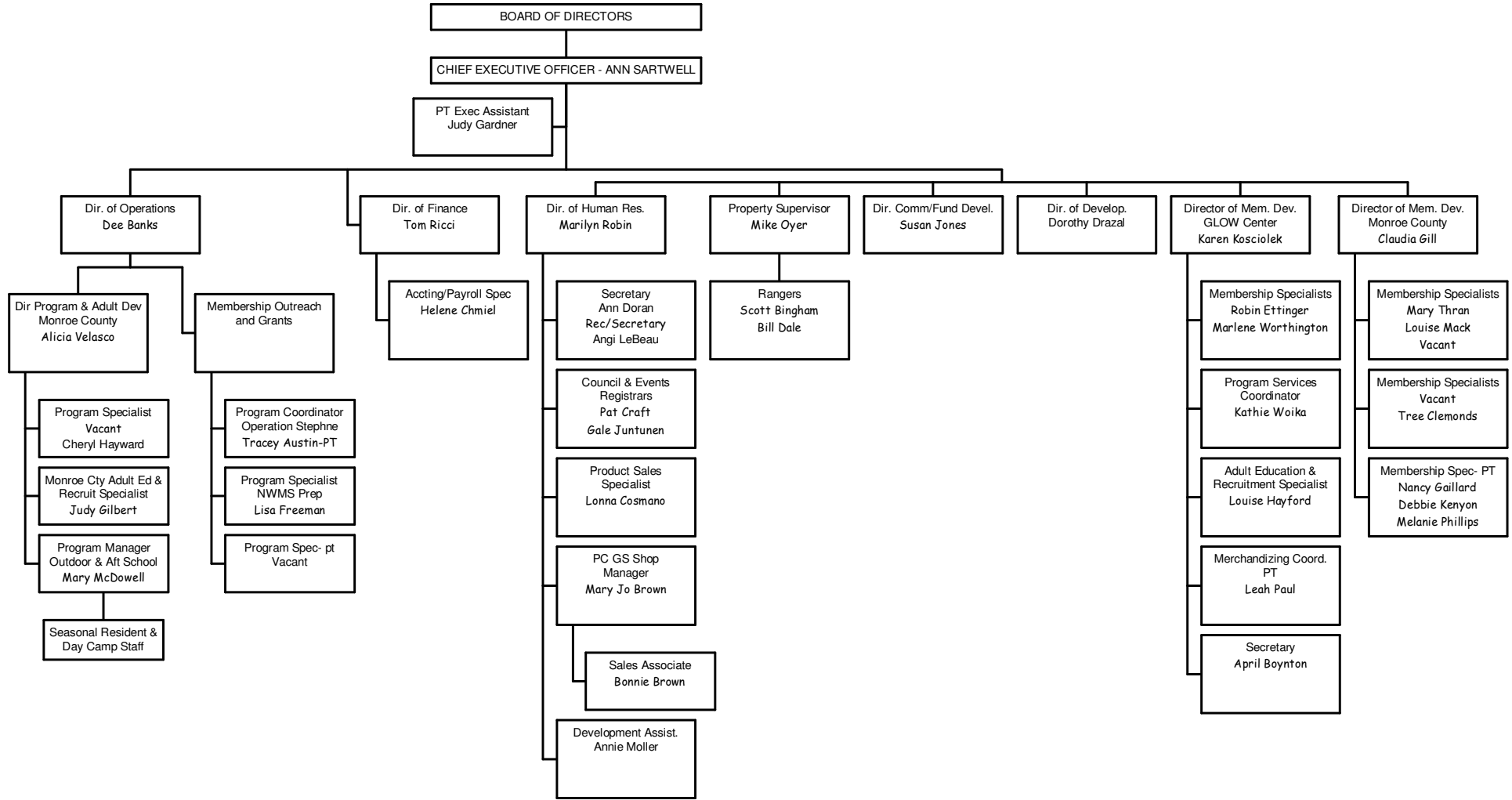
Voting at the annual meeting and special meetings of the corporation is only one delegate role. Other vital functions are:

- Council delegates are information gatherers;
- Council delegates are a link to the members who elected them;
- Council delegates communicate with the Board, the council membership and the community in general;
- Council delegates are decision influencers.

THE METHOD WE USE TO SERVE THE GIRL



Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley, Inc. Staff Organizational Chart 3-1-05



WHAT A COUNCIL DELEGATE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT GOVERNANCE

Ten Major Functions of a Girl Scout Board of Directors according to GSUSA:

1. Fulfilling Charter and Corporate Obligations
2. Policy Making
3. Selection and Performance of the Chief Executive Officer
4. Strategic Planning
5. Fund Development
6. Fiduciary Oversight
7. Interaction with the Community
8. Oversight of the Management Function
9. Review of the Accomplishments of the Board and President
10. Ensuring as system for policy-Influencing between the adult members and the board

The GSGV Board normally meets on the first Monday of each month no less than four times per year. Board agendas include updates by the President and CEO, budget reviews, and committee reports. Other agenda items vary. Issues of importance are brought to delegates for their input, unless timing or confidentiality prevents it, before a decision is made.

How can Council Delegates get an understanding of issues the Board deals with so they can ask appropriate questions and give input?

- Review the GSGV Goals, the Board Responsibilities, and the list of committee charges.
- Read Delegate Bulletins and the Financial Reports.
- Think broadly:
 - How is GSGV serving ALL girls and the whole community?
 - How is GSGV meeting the GSUSA Criteria and Standards for Effective Girl Scout Council? (found later in this portfolio).

Here are some examples of issues the Board either has dealt with recently, or would deal with if they were presented to it.

- Is there a part of our present goals that is being neglected?
- What direction do we want our next goals to go?
- Are we making good use of our property? How should we be using each of our properties?
- What capital improvements do our properties need?
- Should all our property be handicapped accessible?
- Should we sell a property?
- How well is our CEO doing her job?
- Are our staff (paid and volunteer) policies fair and equitable?
- How can Council Delegates take a more active part in our council?
- What information should be available for delegates on our website?
- Are there state or national issues regarding youth and youth groups we need to be aware of?
- How can we improve our fundraising?

WHY A DELEGATE IS SPECIAL

As a council delegate you act as a bridge between the operational functions of the Service Unit and the governance of the Council. By speaking at assembly meetings, responding to delegate bulletins and completing Talk to Your Council forms, you can present ideas and concerns of your Service Unit to the governing board of the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley. In this way, you assume part of the function of governance within council and help set the goals of the Council. If you don't always want to be reacting to a 'done deal', you must participate in the process! Your participation is beneficial within Council at many levels:

1. Benefits to Council:

- Gather ideas from the membership on critical issues.
- Submit a *Talk to Your Council Suggestion* form from your Service Unit. The board needs to be aware of problems and take appropriate action.

Examples of member influenced issues:

- Computer upgrades and changes to the website, such as online forms.
- Council response to gas exploration at Pinewood.
- Allocation of funds to upgrade the camps.

2. Benefits to your Service Unit:

- You present items under consideration by Council so that your Service Unit is heard.
- Issues important to your Service Unit can be brought to the attention of Council.
- You keep your Service Unit informed and give opinions back to our representatives to the National Assemblies.

Examples of member influenced issues:

- At delegate's request, our representatives to national assemblies are drafting a resolution to GSUSA that information comes to Councils and Service Units sooner so that we have time to comment on national questions being decided.
- Delegates will now be seated separately from non-elected Girl Scout members observing an assembly. Delegates only will speak, from microphones so all can hear.

3. Benefits to your Leaders:

- You are their voice for issues important to their troops - before they become finalized
- Leaders are kept informed of Council decisions in a timely fashion.

Examples of member influenced issues:

- Trainings are being combined and shortened.
- Delegates now receive meeting notices 6 weeks prior to assemblies in order to allow time to have discussion of issues within the Service Unit.

4. Benefits to the girls:

- You are a role model to girls as a participant in the governance processes of GSGV. Democracies exist only as long as the governed participate!
- You can encourage older girls to assume leadership as Council delegates. Girls 16 and older are eligible to represent their Service Units. Older girls are always invited to attend Assemblies and observe.

CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL

“The Criteria and Standards for and Effective Girl Scout Council are established by the National Board of Directors to delineate the ways in which Girl Scout councils are expected to manage their ongoing work and to fulfill their charter requirements.

The criteria and standards emanate from the major beliefs and principles of the Girl Scout Movement as expressed in the Congressional Charter and the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA. The *criteria* cover broad areas of a local council's responsibility and serve as broad categories of measurement.

The *standards* are developed within the context of each criterion. They are the foundation on which all the work of the Girl Scout council should be built and the prime resource for organizational review and appraisal. Essential to the chartering process, they are also an enduring point of reference for the desired level of performance.

Standards noted with an asterisk (*) are those designated by the National Board of Directors as the basis of the triennium minority audit.

Criterion I: Membership Extension and Access to Girl Scout Program

An effective Girl Scout council ensures that the Girl Scout program is delivered to girls in all segments of the population in its jurisdiction.

Standards

1. The membership within the council includes girls and adults from all racial, ethnic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic groups, and people with disabilities.
2. All program activities throughout every part of the council demonstrate the beliefs and principles of the Girl Scout Movement.*
3. Program activities throughout every part of the council's jurisdiction are based on a timely response to the identified needs and interests of all girls.*
4. Concern for the protection of the health, safety, and security of participants is an integral part of all program activities.
5. The council uses different organizational structures to support adults delivering program to girls, appropriate to the distinct needs of the various communities the council serves.*
6. The council retains Girl Scout membership reflective of all racial, ethnic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic groups, and people with disabilities.*
7. Through an adult development program, the council recruits, trains, and provides ongoing support to adults working directly with girls.*
8. The council maintains a systematic communications plan to keep all segments of the population within the jurisdiction well informed about the opportunities and benefits of Girl Scout membership.*

Criterion II: Maintaining Organizational Integrity

An effective Girl Scout council sustains the mission of the Girl Scout Movement by conducting its business through the democratic process, consistent with the charter requirements, policies, and standards of Girl Scouts of the USA.

Standards

1. The council board of directors ensures compliance with the binding policies of GSUSA as stated in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*.*
2. The council board of directors ensures observance of standards, guidelines, and procedures, as published in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* and other publications of Girl Scouts of the USA.*
3. The council acknowledges its interdependent relationship with GSUSA through participation in national meetings and the filing of essential reports.*
4. The council nominating committee annually presents a complete single slate of qualified candidates, reflecting the diversity within the council's jurisdiction, for election by the membership body.*
5. The council follows the democratic process in governing the corporation, and involves the membership in influencing major decisions made by the council board of directors.*
6. The council board fulfills its corporate obligations as required by local, state, and federal governments.

Criterion III: The Development and Stewardship of Resources

An effective Girl Scout council develops sufficient resources and assumes the responsibility for managing them, in order to ensure the continuation and expansion of Girl Scouting in the council's jurisdiction.

Standards:

1. The council board ensures increasing racial/ethnic presence and participation at all policy and operational levels.*
2. The council's human resources practices attract, develop, and retain volunteers and employed staff reflecting the racial, ethnic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic composition of the population, including people with disabilities.*
3. The council board ensures that adults assume the responsibility to raise the funds to support the council's work, using methods in keeping with the principles, policies, standards, and goals of Girl Scouts of the USA.
4. The council board carries out stewardship responsibilities for the council's fiscal assets, including real estate, in a responsible.
5. The council board has made financial provision to ensure the perpetuation of Girl Scouting within its jurisdiction.
6. The council utilizes an integrated corporate planning/management system to maximize resources.
7. The council receives support as a result of being actively involved in and recognized as a vital force in the community.⁴

⁴ Blue Book, 2000, p. 32-33

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Annual meeting - A meeting of the corporation held each year in accordance with state corporation laws and articles of incorporation and the bylaws, to ensure the legal business of the corporation is accomplished. The board is responsible for developing an agenda with substantive issues. Agenda items may include the elections of officers and members of the board of directors, the council nominating committee, and the delegates to the National Council session, amending the council bylaws, and financial reporting. Agenda items may also include decisions on major policy issues.

Assembly - A meeting of geographic areas to provide a means for members 14 and over to influence policy making, to initiate discussions of issues related to direction setting and policy making and to give input to the council board of directors regarding decisions on major issues.

Board of Directors - Elected by the corporate membership body and accountable to the membership for governance of the council and the stewardship of the council's critical resources; the board of directors of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. for compliance with charter requirements; and to the state of New York for adhering to state corporate laws. They are accountable to the federal government in matters of legislation affecting not-for-profit corporations.

Bylaws – Rules determining the governance of the council.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - The chief executive officer employed by and accountable to the board of directors. She provides leadership to the management of all operational work within the framework of the council's goals.

Corporation – A body created by law and authorized to carry out stated purposes. A Girl Scout council becomes a membership corporation when it is incorporated by the state. The membership of GSGV, Inc. consists of the delegates, members of the board of directors, and members of the council nominating committee.

Council Delegate – Any Girl Scout member, 14 years of age or older, elected to a voting position in the council. Delegates are elected by the structure outlined in the council bylaws.

Council Member – Each member of the Girl Scout movement 14 years of age or over affiliated with the council.

Council Membership – Voting members of GSGV consisting of council delegates, board of directors and nominating committee.

Council President - The council president is the chief corporate officer and is elected by the membership of the corporation. The president, as chair of the board and head of the corporation, leads the officers and the board of directors in the conduct of all corporate affairs of the council, leads the members of the corporation in its business meeting(s), and provides leadership to the council's fund development effort.

Decision Influencing - The process by which the opinions and feelings of a variety of groups are sought and considered by decision makers *before* the decision is made.

Democratic Process - This process has three primary functions: meeting the legal requirements of the corporation, providing effective ways to actively seek input from the constituency and encourage the free exchange of

concerns, issues, and ideas among all segments of the Girl Scout membership and community.

Employed Staff - Employed personnel who carry out operational assignments and are ultimately accountable to the CEO who is employed by the board of directors to manage the council.

Governance - Governance is the process by which the board of directors, under the leadership of the president and with the support of the chief executive officer, maintains the integrity of the mission and council goals. This is achieved by staying abreast of relevant issues, developing and reviewing policy and monitoring the performance of the organization.

Management - Activities required to carry out the operating objectives of the council. These activities are performed by operational volunteers and employed staff who are accountable to the CEO.

National Delegate – Any Girl Scout member, 14 years of age or older, elected to a voting position to the GSUSA National Council Session.

Operational Volunteers - Volunteers who carry out operational assignments. They are appointed and are accountable to the CEO.

Policy - An established course of action that **must** be followed.

Proposal - Items directed toward the fostering and improvement of Girl Scouting which are to be acted upon by

the local or National Councils.

Service Team – Volunteers working together to support the membership of their service unit.

Service Unit - A geographical subdivision of the council.

Strategic Guidelines - Projected governance strategies developed after the board's adoption of the goals. They are direct links between the goals and the board's strategic responsibility. They can be utilized as annual input to the board's work schedule.

Strategic Planning - The process of formulating and adopting long-range goals that support the *ideal goals* of Girl Scouting, and then developing and overseeing the implementation of an integrated strategy for the acquisition, allocation, and stewardship of critical resources to achieve the goals.

Tactical Planning - A major component of the corporate planning process that guides all operational work. It establishes measurable objectives that support the corporate goals and determines the detailed deployment of resources to achieve the objectives. Tactical planning includes the establishment of operating objectives, and the development of action steps and an operating and capital budget. The final, written plans cover a time span of one year.