

Board of Directors Meeting – May 19, 2016

The Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois  
met at Camp Liberty, New Liberty, IA at 5:00 pm.

**Present:** Andrew Abbott, Lee Mowers, Teresa Colgan, John Cummings, Scott Illingsworth, Sierra Pope, Rachel Jaeger, MaryTherese Gehrman, Kay Sackwell-Breuer, Jill Dashner, Anne Ryerson, Marika Jones, Nancy Franzen and Cherlyn Foster.

**Staff:** Diane Nelson, Shelly Wells-Cain, Doug Nelson, Nikki Habben, Mahlon Sibert, Hillary Blevins and Kathy Pinger.

**Absent:** Laura Hubbard, Carrie Rankin, Katie Wiedemann, Tracy Schwind, Nancy Dunkel, Laurie Hamen, and Theresa Dunkin

**Welcome & Introductions:**

Teresa Colgan welcomed those in attendance and declared a quorum.

**Consent Agenda: (see attached)**

A motion was made by Anne Ryerson to approve the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Nancy Franzen. The motion carried.

**Introductions:**

Teresa Colgan had each of the girl board members (Rachel Jaeger, MaryTheresa Gehrman and Sierra Pope) introduce themselves and share a little about their involvement in Girl Scouts. Each of the board members in attendance also introduced themselves.

**Property Discussion (see attached)**

The recommendation made by the Board in 2012 was reviewed

- ✓ Conestoga (now Camp Liberty) will be developed into new resident camp with modern and rustic elements
- ✓ Little Cloud will temporarily house troop equestrian programs and resident camp programs during Conestoga/Liberty development
- ✓ Transportation from Decorah, Waterloo, and West Burlington to resident camp will be provided at no cost to girls
- ✓ L-Kee-Ta and Tahigwa will be supported by volunteers and part-time staff for events and camping
- ✓ Land not needed for outdoor programming will be divested, with preference to buyers who will keep the land as natural as possible

The most recent data collection and analysis was provided by the council research analyst, Hillary Blevins. Analysis has been completed at Camp Liberty, and board recommendations regarding that property have been carried out. Year- round facility usage will begin this fall after resident camp is done, and will be shared in 2018.

Data collections for facility usage at Camp L-Kee-Ta and Camp Tahigwa have been completed through September 2015. For Little Cloud, council staff began tracking facility usage last fall, after the completion of resident camp, and it will continue to track for another 9 months before sharing that data early next year.

The focus for this board meeting was L-Kee-Ta and Tahigwa. Bar charts detailing the facility usage and financial totals for the fiscal years 2014-2015, were distributed.

In the two years GSEIWI collected data; L-Kee-Ta hosted a combined total of 213 rentals and 5,227 visits. This equates to a rental every 3 days, and an average daily usage of 7 people. Girl Scout group usage (troop, service unit, council) accounted for 80% of all visits. For the same time period, L-Kee-Ta revenue totaled \$55,643 and expenses totaled \$192,467, for a total loss of \$136,824, without facility improvements. This is a loss of \$187 per day over the two years and a 71% subsidy of facility expenses.

Camp L-Kee-Ta is in close proximity to a population center in southeastern Iowa and highways, and well-suited to the beginner camper, due to the centralized layout and limited program activities. An aerial map of Camp L-Kee-Ta, with parcel lines marked and dots representing the average annual usage for each building or permanent program area were also provided via chart. Portable program spaces—hiking trails, sports fields, and archery fields—were not marked, as they can be easily relocated as space and boundaries allow.

The majority (80%) of facility usage at Camp L-Kee-Ta comes from several service unit events and troop use, with only a few number of returning troops. Most of the non-Girl Scout usage is from family reunions and holiday parties. Over 2014-2015, there were 21 council-sponsored events and trainings held at L-Kee-Ta, and an additional 5 events were cancelled due to low registration or severe weather. (81% of planned events were held.)

In accordance to the board recommendation that the “land not needed for outdoor programming will be divested,” and the facility usage data from the last two years, shows that the two parcels in the top left and the parcel on the far side of the road could be divested with minimal impact to program offerings.

Discussion was held reminding everyone that we are still in the discussion and data collection stage. The board did feel that the possibility of divesting the parcel of land across the road at L-Kee-Ta would be worth consideration.

A motion was made and seconded that the staff make inquires to see if neighbors of landlocked parcels at L-Kee-Ta had any interest in purchasing the parcels so we would at least know if this was a direction that could be followed if decided. The motion carried. Any voting on divesting will be made at the August board meeting.

An aerial map of Camp Tahigwa, with parcel lines marked and dots representing the average annual usage for each building or permanent program area were also provided via charts.

The majority (54%) of facility usage at Camp Tahigwa comes from non-Girl Scout groups, especially weddings. Two annual events (Camptastic and Women of the Wild) are held there (serving approximately 75 people each), and troop use is limited to a handful of returning troops. Over 2014-2015, there were 13 council-sponsored events and trainings held at Tahigwa, and an additional 2 events were cancelled due to low registration or severe weather. (87% of planned events were held.)

Camp Tahigwa is undeniably scenic with its unique setting in northeastern Iowa. This same beautiful setting is also a limitation, as the camp is located in a large, remote, and sparsely-populated area, reached only by two-lane roads. The facility is popular with non-Girl Scout groups; however, their usage does not off-set the operating costs to an impactful degree. The large acreage, decentralized layout, and limited program activities (no pool or lake) makes this site best-suited to more-experienced campers looking for a rustic experience.

Tahigwa faces a combination of several challenges, many of which are outside the control of GSEIWI. Our primary customers are girls ages 6-12, with limited previous camping experience, who are interested in modern amenities and a wide variety of on-site activities. This lack of congruence regarding the available amenities, combined with the significantly low population density of the surrounding area (1/3 of the council's average) and the transportation challenges faced by Girl Scouts from outside the region, explains the sustained low usage of the property. Upgrading the property to meet the expectations of our customers would take a significant financial investment from GSEIWI, and would not eliminate the other challenges inherent with the property's location.

Research also showed that there are a number of camps/facilities within 15 miles of Tahigwa for girls to use or for GSEIWI to partner with to provide program and resident camp.

With these insurmountable challenges in mind, ownership of Tahigwa could continue to be a financial challenge to the GSEIWI's resources (increasingly as time goes by and maintenance needs increase) and could be divested in its entirety. Transportation from Decorah to Camp Liberty (per 2012 board recommendation, which is already in place) and partnerships with nearby camp facilities can provide enhanced outdoor programming to Girl Scouts in the northeast region of the council area.

Diane Nelson was previously charged with researching the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Iowa National Heritage Foundation. Both are interested in looking into the possibility of partnership. Both would keep the property natural. The board was in agreement that further research be done with these two entities.

Discussion continued about having a plan for the proceeds if the property was to be sold, other options for members in that area to have access to outdoor programming, finding out intent of any organization that does have interest in buying the property and how that would affect our members using the property.

A motion was made by Nancy Franzen and seconded by Andrew Abbott to have the staff continue working on the information requested at the last property committee meeting in regards to Camp Tahigwa and look into using other council camps for resident camp, outdoor program and council events. Motion carried.

Discussion was had regarding the Camp Little Cloud property and its usage. Hillary noted that research and data collection is still ongoing for that property. No conclusion has been reached at this time.

The next property committee meeting will be in person because of the significance of the decisions to be made and staff has been asked to be ready with a solid plan on how to roll out to the membership when decisions are made.

### **Strategic Update:**

An overview of the GSEIWI Strategic Choices was shared with the board. Each year, our council prepares a narrative report for our national organization, GSUSA, as part of our council charter. The Charter Review highlights successes and challenges experienced by the council. Our council's charter review for fiscal year 2015 will be submitted to GSUSA at the end of May 2016. Three areas were stressed:

#### **Successes**

- Market Share
- Customer Engagement Initiative
- Girl Scout Experience (Year of Service and Year of the Outdoors)
- Strategy Development
- System Implementation – CEI, Doubleknot, HR system
- Capital Campaign and Camp Liberty

- Capital Campaign – phase 2
- Marketing Strategy - unified camp campaign
- Communication – Sales Force Media Cloud (SFMC) weekly update, VINE

### Challenges

- Girl Retention/Membership Decline
- Lead Generation - ability to acquire and track leads and cultivate interest
- Leveraging Volunteer Systems and structure transition with CEI
- Federal Mandates – Affordable Care Act, underfunded pension,
- Cookie System Challenges – SNAP+ challenges
- Property Assessment/Divestment
- Staff-led opportunities – securing sponsor for funding for outreach sites
- Organization Impression – alignment to national brand campaigns
- Advocacy - share your voice, raise your voice, proximity to state capitols

### KEY PRIORITIES

**Girl Scout Experience** – Provide consistent and impactful experience relevant to girls and aligned with community needs.

**Leverage Financial Resources** - Expand financial resources to leverage the impact of the organization.

**Organization Impression** - Create an engaging impression of Girl Scouts that resonates with families, new leaders, and emerging volunteers.

### Presidents Report:

Teresa Colgan spoke to the board about the Charter Review. A motion was made by Lee Mowers and seconded by Jill Dashner to approve the strategic choices, as presented, to be submitted to GSUSA. The motion carried.

It was shared with the board that our council has made a change in the baker being used for our cookie sale this fall. We will now be partnering with Little Brown Bakers. Formally we used ABC Bakers. A meeting with Little Brownie Bakers will take place the end of May in which they will discuss our marketing and communication strategy.

Andrew Abbott made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30. The motion was seconded by Anne Ryerson and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Pinger, Executive Assistant to the CEO

Attachments:

Minutes

Financials

Strategic Choices

Property Maps & data

Consent Agenda Items