

MINUTES OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS (GSNI)

ANNUAL MEETING

April 26, 2025

Call to Order

The yearly meeting of the Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois (GSNI) membership was held on Saturday, April 26, 2025. The meeting convened at 9:06 a.m., Board Chair, Dana Vierck, presiding.

In Attendance

Members of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois and visitors. Girl Scout Gold Award recipient, Katie Hogan, was introduced as a guest speaker.

Pledge of Allegiance and GS Promise

Anna Bower, Associate Board Member, called attendees to attention, and asked that everyone recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the Girl Scout Promise.

Land Acknowledgement

Hilda Williams presented GSNI's Land Acknowledgement.

The Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois acknowledges that our Camps and Resource Centers are located on the ancestral lands of many Native Nations including the Fox & Sauk, Meskwaki, Peoria, Kickapoo, Ho-chunk, and the Potawatomi.

GSNI is dedicated to the preservation of traditional lands. We seek to support Native American heritage by paying our respects to Indigenous peoples and are committed to honor their connection and care for the Land.

Introductions and Welcome

Board Chair, Dana Vierck, welcomed attendees to the 2025 Annual Meeting and introduced GSNI CEO, Jodi Dahlke, First Vice-Chair, Jennifer Archer, Second Vice-Chair, Jessica Hirsch, and Treasurer, Scott McCleary. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to reflect on fiscal year 2024, elect our council board members, and elect our National Council Delegates and Alternates.

Community Partnership Awards

The board of directors established Community Partnership Awards to recognize businesses or organizations that have significantly supported GSNI to better serve our Girl Scouts and volunteers. The following partners were in attendance. A full list of Community Partners was included in the recognition program.

- Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum & Gardens
- Collins Aerospace
- Freeport First Free Methodist Church
- Fernando's Street Kitchen
- Calvary Church of Stockton

Teller's Report

Dana Vierck informed the attendees that according to our bylaws, a quorum must be present to conduct business. Our council has a "one member, one vote" governance system, meaning that all Girl Scout members 14 years of age and older are voting members of the council.

A quorum for the Annual Meeting is 75 members in attendance. There were 147 voting members in attendance at the meeting to establish a quorum. The Teller's Report was approved by consensus.

Dana Vierck noted that the meeting agenda is available by using a shared QR code. The meeting was conducted following *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

FY2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

Dana Vierck stated that using the QR code, a copy of the minutes from GSNI's 2024 Annual Meeting could be found.

MOTION: Scott McCleary moved to approve the FY2024 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented. Jennifer Archer seconded. Members were asked to raise their hand to cast their vote. 147 Yes votes were cast. **MOTION CARRIED**

Board Development Committee Report

The Board Chair introduced Jessica Hirsch, Second Vice-Chair and Chair of the Board Development Committee. She reported that the responsibility of the Board Development Committee is to identify and build relationships with potential board members and committee members. Information on each of the nominees was available using the QR code provided to the members.

Jessica Hirsch presented the slate for the Board of Directors.

Board Officer Nominee - 3-year term expiring in spring 2028

Jessica Hirsch, 2nd Vice Chair

Director-at-Large Nominees - 3-year term expiring in spring 2028

Dr. Magdalena Rivera

Vicki Weidenbacher-Hoper

MOTION: The Board Development Committee presented for approval nominations for election to the GSNI Board of Directors. No second is required. Our bylaws allow for a 2/3rds vote by affirmation. Members were asked to raise their hand to cast their vote. 147 yes votes were cast. **MOTION CARRIED**

The slate for the Board Development Committee to serve a 3-year term, expiring spring of 2028 was presented.

Michael Campbell

Emily Lenore

Angela Schmidt

Serene Taylor

Dana Vierck

MOTION: The Board Development Committee presented for approval nominations for the GSNI Board Development Committee. No second is required. Our bylaws allow for a 2/3rds vote by affirmation. Members were asked to raise their hand to cast their vote. 147 yes votes were cast. **MOTION CARRIED**

The board appointed Associate Director was announced. They will serve a 1-year term expiring spring 2026.

Quinn Blevins

The slate of nominees for National Council Delegates and alternates to serve a 3-year term expiring spring of 2028 was presented.

Girl Delegates:

Eleanor Hooper
Samantha Guffey

Adult Delegates:

Tracy Hooper
Emily Lenore
Lisa Musante
Dana Vierck
Jodi Dahlke

Alternate Delegates:

Lucy Berry, Girl Alternate Delegate
Hillary Blevins, Adult Alternate Delegate

MOTION: The Board Development Committee presented for approval nominations for the GSNI National Council Delegates and Alternates. No second is required. Our bylaws allow for a 2/3rds vote by affirmation. Members were asked to raise their hand to cast their vote. 147 yes votes were cast. **MOTION CARRIED**

Investiture and Rededication

Dana Vierck noted that the Investiture and Rededication part of the meeting is meaningful and reminds us how important it is to model our values and ideals to today's Girl Scouts and recommit our efforts to provide opportunities for them to develop leadership skills. Dana asked all newly elected Board members and continuing Board members, all Associate Directors, all Board Development Committee members, and all National Council Delegates and Alternates to participate in the ceremony.

Dana Vierck congratulated the re-elected members of the GSNI Board, committee members, and National Council Delegates and Alternates

State of the Council

The Board Chair, Dana Vierck, and GSNI Interim CEO, Kris Trusk, gave the report on the state of the council. Dana shared that we typically talk about the State of the Council by looking back at the past fiscal year October 2023 to September 2024. The State of the Council report included the following areas:

Membership Report

In 2024, GSNI recruitment staff noticed that families are being more intentional than ever when it comes to choosing activities for their children. As a result, the recruitment team focused their efforts on family engagement. GSNI Recruitment staff held recruitment events across the council resulting in over 2,500 new members.

Throughout 2024, GSNI staff completed an analysis of ways to grow membership while providing the best support for volunteers. It was identified that having three separate departments had led to disconnects in the recruitment, onboarding, and retention processes for members. In July 2024, the Member Engagement team was formed, combining the Recruitment, Member Support, and Community Program departments. This team provides end-to-end service to volunteers and families and allows Member Engagement Specialists the ability to focus on the communities they serve.

In September of 2024, GSNI was one of 14 councils chosen by GSUSA to partake in a school-based, paid facilitator pilot and grant. GSNI's history of working in schools, particularly in the Rockford area, has proven to be a model and a learning mechanism for other councils across the country. The grant has allowed us to provide Girl Scout programming to an additional 300 Girl Scouts so far in 2025.

Property Updates

The zipline at Mary Ann Beebe Center underwent recent improvements that included reinforcements to the zipline tower structure, ensuring long-term durability and stability, and new decking, providing a safer surface for takeoff. These enhancements not only boost safety and functionality but also help preserve this camp activity for years.

The Rockford Resource Center received a refresh last year. A vibrant and colorful selfie wall, a basketball hoop, and a small rock-climbing wall were added to the common area. These new additions create a more dynamic, welcoming environment where Girl Scouts can gather, play and grow together.

Several yurts have been donated to Camp McCormick. These circular shelters will provide a unique space that blends comfort with outdoor adventure. The yurts will serve as multi-use spaces for activities and overnights, all while keeping campers connected to nature. Their durable, weather-resistant design means troops can participate in overnight stays in new ways.

Fall Product & Girl Scout Cookie Programs

In 2024 over 2,500 Girl Scouts participated in the Fall Product Program, totaling sales at over \$860,000. On average, that is \$343 in sales per Girl Scout participating. In addition to an assortment of nuts and candies and a wide selection of magazines, customers also had the opportunity to purchase a Girl Scout themed BarkBox for their dogs.

Over 6,200 Girl Scouts participated in the Girl Scout Cookie Program selling 1,255,144 packages of Girl Scout cookies, which equaled over \$1,110,000 in proceeds for GSNI. That averages to about 200 packages of cookies sold per Girl Scout.

GSNI Belonging

GSNI's Belonging Team made strides in 2024. This team believes that creating a truly inclusive and welcoming space is more than just a goal, it's a commitment. That's why our Belonging Team, made up of board members, volunteers, and staff, continues to meet regularly to ensure that every Girl Scout feels seen, valued and empowered.

The LGBTQ+ subcommittee of the Belonging Team has developed inclusive messaging and specialized training for GSNI's volunteers to help them better understand the needs and experiences of the LGBTQ+ members. From using respectful language to creating troop environments where every identity is honored, these efforts are helping build safer, more affirming spaces across GSNI. This training was created in conjunction with Youth Outlook, a local social service agency solely dedicated to the support of LGBTQ+ youth.

At last year's Annual Meeting, we announced GSNI's Belonging Award. This award was made possible by a previous CEO, Fiona Cummings, who recognized that GSNI volunteers and Girl Scouts are innovative in finding ways to ensure that we are a welcoming organization. The first Belonging Awards will be presented later.

Resource Centers

GSNI's resource centers continue to be a hub where Girl Scouts are welcome to meet, pick up cookies during the cookie program, and peruse retail options. Our Resource Specialists sold almost 1,000 Say Yes to the Vest patches this past year, helping our members show their Girl Scout pride by wearing their vests that make their achievements known to the community.

GSNI's partnership with Build-A-Bear continues to be a success. Last year, over 2,500 Girl Scouts and customers created their own Build-A-Bear in our South Elgin location.

This year GSNI also purchased a trailer to be used as a mobile retail store, bringing the Girl Scout Shop directly to our members. Now shopping for Girl Scout gear and items is easier and more accessible.

GSNI Volunteers

GSNI is grateful for our Girl Scout volunteers. Because of their guidance, encouragement, and dedication, our girls have completed almost 66,000 hours of community service.

Additionally, thanks to our volunteers, 72% of Girl Scouts across Northern Illinois report discovering their sense of self, 69% say they have learned positive values, and 51% have participated in challenge seeking activities.

Special NCS Session

National Council Sessions represent our democratic process. In accordance with this process, more than 800 girl and adult members who were elected to serve as delegates from councils across the country came together for the Special 57th National Council Session held on October 19, 2024, and voted on the proposals submitted by the National Board regarding membership dues.

GSNI's 8 National Council Delegates surveyed our membership and met with volunteers, parents, and Girl Scout youth in late summer 2024 to garner feedback on the membership dues proposals. The Special 57th National Council Session resulted in a vote to invest in Girl Scouting by increasing annual membership dues for both girl and adult members. Girl membership dues will be \$45 for the 2026 membership year and \$65 for the following year. Adult membership dues will be \$40 beginning with the 2026 Membership year.

GSNI's Highest Awards

In 2024, GSNI recognized 119 Girl Scout Juniors with the Bronze Award, 39 Girl Scout Cadettes with the Silver Award, and 8 Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors with the Girl Scout Gold. Additionally, GSNI awarded 2 Gold Award Scholarships and 1 Ambassador Scholarship to graduating Girl Scouts.

To support our members striving to become a Gold Award Girl Scout, the Kelly McCleary Gold Award Scholarship Program was announced. Future Gold Award Girl Scouts can apply for this scholarship to provide funds for their Gold Award projects.

Treasurer's Report

The Board Treasurer, Scott McCleary, reviewed the financial report for the 2024 fiscal year, which ended September 30, 2024. He reported that for our FY2024 Financial Audit, GSNI received another clean opinion. This means that our auditors believe our financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois, and the changes in net assets and cash flows.

Statement of Financial Position FY '24 & '23

The GSNI Statement of Financial Position, also referred to as our balance sheet, provides a snapshot of the health of the council. When comparing FY2024 to FY2023, our total assets changed by \$913,383 from one year to the

next. Our Current Assets increased by \$377,733 in FY2024 which is attributed to the gain on our investments for last year. Our Non-current Assets increased by \$535,650 over FY2023 which reflects the value of the operating right of use of our leases that are now required to be included on our balance sheet.

Our Current Liabilities for FY2024 have increased compared to FY2023 because at the end of FY2024 we were carrying a balance on our line of credit.

Breakdown of Income and Expense FY '24

In FY2024, 54% of our income was from our Product Programs, that includes Cookie and Fall Product sales, 31% of our income was from Other which includes asset sales, and 8% of our income was from Public Support. In FY2024 78% of our expenses were for Program and Property, 19% of our expenses were for Administration and 3% were for Fundraising.

Statement of Activity for FY '24 and '23

In total we received over \$7.33 million in income and had \$6.97 million in expenses, so we ended the year with a surplus of approximately \$361,000. While still a surplus amount, it is less than the previous year. If we had not received income of \$1.27 million from asset sales, we would have had a deficit budget of around \$900,000.

Welcome of Jodi Dahlke, GSNI CEO

In the fall of 2024, Kari Rockwell resigned as GSNI CEO to work for another council. Soon after, the Board of Directors formed a CEO search committee to identify the new leader of GSNI.

It was announced in late March that GSNI hired Jodi Dahlke as our new Chief Executive Officer, beginning in May 2025. In addition to over 30 years of business leadership experience, Jodi brings expertise in strategic planning, volunteer management, and Girl Scout-specific senior leadership. She prides herself on building strong relationships with her teams and establishing lasting connections throughout the community.

Adjournment

Dana Vierck asked Associate Board Member, Quinn Blevins, to read GSNI's Belonging Statement.

Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois draws inspiration from our Girl Scout Promise and Law in our Belonging Statement. Being a member of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois means you are part of a community of diverse races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and religions. We commit to providing an equitable and accessible Girl Scout Leadership Experience to all Girl Scouts in our council. We are champions for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.

These are our promises to you:

- We will listen and seek to understand from **diverse voices and experiences**. We will act on what we have learned.
- We will offer a **culture of welcoming and belonging** to all members, potential members, and community partners of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois.
- We will provide **brave and safe spaces** for Girl Scouts to participate with us. Members can expect to be themselves in a secure and respectful environment.
- We will incorporate **the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility** at all levels of our movement.
- We believe every member (youth and adult) of Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois should have **respect and acceptance** in our organization.
- We commit to a journey of being an **anti-racist and anti-oppressive** organization.
- We **welcome** you to join us in our movement and mission.

You belong here.

Dana Vierck asked for a motion from the floor to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Scott McCleary moved to adjourn the Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois Annual Meeting. Jennifer Archer seconded. 147 votes were cast. **MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Ramona "Monie" Burns, Board Secretary