

**January 26, 2026**

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am happy to share the following highlights from the January 26, 2026, meeting of the Board of Directors of Southern Arizona. This was a hybrid meeting and was conducted with all attendees on Zoom. As per our bylaws, we did have a quorum to conduct business.

Pamela Traficanti  
Board Secretary

**Present via zoom and in person:** Melissa Arroyo, Natali Behar, Karyn Damschen, Pam Treadwell Rubin, Sheila Kressler Crowley, Leia Begay, Pamela Traficanti, Tanisha Price Johnson, Elaine Becherer, Cheree Meeks, Lesah Sesma, Tanya Tretschok, Nicholle Zarkower, Karen Riddle, Lynn Borders

**Staff present:** Kristen Hernandez, MacGyver Tank, Melissa Tomlinson, Elizabeth Locke Thomas, Timalee Nevels

**Call to order – *Sheila Kressler Crowley, Chair of the Board***

Sheila called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. and presented a bouquet of flowers to Lynn Borders upon the occasion of her retirement from TEP.

Kristen shared reflections about Scoutchella as the mission moment. While it was meant to be a one-time event, in hindsight we may revisit some form of family festival on a smaller scale in the future. The donor cultivation element of the event yielded some gifts, at least one of which was significant.

**CEO Update – *Kristen Hernandez, CEO***

Kristen provided an update which included the following highlights:

We experienced a theft involving a Girl Scout at a cookie booth this week. There was media coverage of the incident, and we worked to keep the narrative positive; however, that angle was not reflected in the final news story as we had intended.

Cookies are also in the national news. The Cookie Queens documentary has received coverage as well. We were approached to participate in the documentary and declined. The film is being shown at Sundance, and Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are listed as part of the production. Reports indicate that the final product is well done and favorable to Girl Scouts and our history.

Conversations are ongoing regarding the decline in engagement that many youth-serving nonprofits are experiencing across the country. A peer in another organization that distributes grant funds reported that, in her sampling of 10 youth-serving organizations, none are meeting their membership goals. We continue to monitor the situation and launch strategies to mitigate and counteract these effects across our organization.

Councils across the country are discussing potential ICE actions. GSUSA has reached out to Kristen and the leaders at Arizona Cactus Pine Council, as they believe Arizona may be one of the next states targeted by these actions.

## **Finance Update — *Melissa Tomlinson, COO***

Melissa presented an overview of the November and December financials. These were reviewed in depth and approved at the Finance Committee meeting last week. All documents were provided in the packets sent in advance of this meeting.

November: We exceeded the revenue goal and managed expenses well. Investments performed better than budgeted.

December: Performance was not as strong, in part because Scoutchella ticket sales did not meet expectations. Expenses were below budget; however, not all Scoutchella invoices have been received. Investment income declined. Overall, net income was positive.

Year to Date: We are trending slightly under budget for income. Foundation income in particular is trending down, which is difficult to forecast. The balance sheet remains strong.

Melissa highlighted a new category in the financials this month. The Board's new board-designated fund is reflected, with year-to-date income of approximately \$600.

The auditors are completing their fieldwork, and the audit is expected to be presented to the Board for acceptance in February.

**Motion to accept the draft November and December financials as approved by the Finance Committee at their meeting this month.** Motion by Pam Treadwell Rubin Second by Lynn Borders  
**Motion passes.**

## **Philanthropy Committee Update - *Elaine Becherer, Chair***

Committee Chair Elaine shared context and key points regarding the document sent via email with the Board packet in advance. The document was also shared on screen for those who had not yet reviewed it.

- The committee name has shifted from Fund Development Committee to Philanthropy Committee.
- GSUSA requires several standing committees as part of the chartering process: Finance, Governance, and Fund Development. This council has not previously had a standing Fund Development Committee, and establishing one has taken time. In late 2024, the committee in its current form began meeting.
- The committee is presenting for a vote a roles and responsibilities document that outlines the spirit and intent of the committee and formalizes the Board's responsibility in resource development. The document is intended to serve as a working roadmap.
- Special thanks were extended to Pam Treadwell Rubin, who served as subject matter expert and worked with the committee and Kristen to develop the document. Similar efforts are underway for the other standing committees. The document was shared in advance to allow time for Director review. The Board is being asked to approve it to confirm broad buy-in and ensure the committee's work aligns with Board priorities.

It was suggested that an element be added to reflect that the two committees consult and align with one another.

Question: Does this committee include non-Board members?

Answer: Not yet, but that is the intention. There has been turnover as expectations regarding experience and knowledge were clarified. Outreach to non-Directors has not yet occurred.

Question: A question was raised regarding expectations for Director experience when serving on committees and whether flexibility exists in committee assignments.

Response: It was noted that, in establishing the committee and initiating its work, onboarding needs and varying levels of familiarity with fund development practices contributed to delays. The need for alignment and readiness to engage in the committee's specific scope of work was discussed.

Discussion points included:

- The potential role of Directors and assigned "buddies" in bridging experience gaps among committee members.
- Clarification that major donor solicitations are the responsibility of professional staff, while Directors play a key role in donor cultivation through introductions within their networks.
- The committee's intent that the document provide leadership structure and clarity for the Board.
- The importance of including measurable indicators of success within the Council's Fund Development Plan.
- Affirmation that this is a working document to be reviewed and refined annually and that no prior framework of this kind existed.
- Notation that development of the document aligns with a Director's recommendation that such a framework represents best practice.

Motion to accept the proposed document from the Philanthropy Committee. Motion by Pam Treadwell Rubin. Second by Pamela Traficanti.

Following the motion and second, further discussion occurred.

- A request was made for latitude to make minor adjustments as similar foundational documents are developed for other standing committees.
- A question was raised regarding whether it was appropriate to vote on a first-of-its-kind draft document amid ongoing discussion and whether additional time for review would be beneficial.
- An online participant noted that audio quality limited their ability to fully follow the discussion and suggested tabling the matter until the next meeting.
- It was reiterated that the document is intended as an evolving framework rather than a policy and procedure manual.
- Directors were encouraged to conduct due diligence over the next 30 days and bring forward questions or recommendations.

Motion to table the proposed document from the Philanthropy Committee. Motion by Melissa Arroyo. Second by Dr. Cheree Meeks.

Vote:

In favor: 10

Opposed: 2

Abstained: 1

The motion to table carried.

## **Product Program Report**

**Elizabeth Locke Thomas, CMDO**

Elizabeth shared an update from the Product Program sale. Notable items are below:

There are 41 days remaining in the program. Currently, 508,763 boxes have been sold against a budget of 875,000 boxes, and the number continues to grow.

The following challenges have impacted the program this year:

- A glitch in the digital order system early in the sale nullified email outreach requests for purchases.
- Many individuals are avoiding online platforms to limit exposure to news, affecting awareness of our program.
- As discussed earlier, overall engagement is down, and participation in the program has declined.
- Fiscal uncertainty and economic realities have made purchasing cookies a luxury for many families.
- Booth locations were exceedingly difficult to secure. Much of our booth recruitment occurred during or immediately after a government shutdown. Following a significant staff effort, additional booth slots are now available. We are trending down in sales and are making daily adjustments to address the gap.
- A Girl Scout cookie booth was the scene of a “snatch and grab,” during which the Care to Share donation jar was stolen. The incident received broad coverage in traditional and social media. The Girl Scout and her parent were not physically harmed.

The Cookie Program is our largest income stream, and our girls are our most significant donors. Directors are encouraged to support the program by widely sharing our social media content and visiting booths to engage with participants.

Sheila charged Directors with visiting three cookie booths in the next week and sharing a photo with Elizabeth for social media.

### **Consent agenda**

Motion to accept the consent agenda, including the dashboard, leadership reports, agenda, and minutes.

Motion by Pam Treadwell Rubin. Second by Tawnya Tretschok

**Motion passes.**

### **Announcements**

Elaine Becherer, Chair of the Philanthropy Committee, requested to address the Board prior to adjournment. She noted that standing committee chairs are appointed by the Board Chair and formally resigned as Chair of the Philanthropy Committee to allow the current Board Chair the opportunity to make a new appointment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.