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**Date:** January 15, 2009  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Nancy C. Dawes, Chair  
**Subject:** Communication Procedure

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In an effort to ensure that our membership has a forum for communicating with the board, the attached draft procedure was developed. I would like to take some time at our January board meeting to review this procedure.

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**Our Mission**

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



## **Council Communication Procedure**

Members have the opportunity and the responsibility to provide input to the council's governance and management. This is based on our democratic values that hold that members should have a voice in influencing major decisions. However, providing input and influencing decisions is not limited to voting or actually making the final decision. Individuals need to be well informed on the council's mission and goals in order to identify and/or discuss issues and needs that exist, then to be able to give sound input to the governance and management of the council.

### **Governance is the responsibility of the board of directors and is defined as:**

- Ensuring the mission and values of Girl Scouting
- Providing strategic direction and leadership of the council
- The care, custody, and oversight of Girl Scouting within the council's jurisdiction.

### **Management is the responsibility of the CEO and is defined as:**

- The day-to-day management/operations of the council
- Developing and implementing systems and processes to carry out the strategic direction as set by the board.

**Governance:** Girl Scouts of Western Ohio's governance process provides a structure for communication between the membership and the board of directors to influence policy regarding the council goals, issues affecting girls, and issues affecting the business of the organization as a whole.

**Management:** Our management process provides a structure for communication between volunteer staff and paid staff. It provides a process for volunteer staff to support and give input to the day-to-day management and operations of our council as we work toward providing girls with the program the Girl Scout Leadership Development program. It includes several means by which volunteers can provide input to the management of the council.

In a continuing effort to improve communication, the following criteria has been developed to be used by the membership and council delegates in determining how to bring issues forward for discussion and/or action.

### **Governance Issues**

1. A governance issue should reflect the following criteria: it impacts the council strategic plan, it a documented trend broadly affecting girls, it significantly affects the business of the organization.
2. The board is the primary group responsible for identification of governance issues to be discussed. Such issues are generally related to the development or evaluation of progress toward the council's goals.
3. A governance issue may be presented in written form at any time, or oral form, through the Annual Meeting or other established forum.

4. When presenting an issue, the member should state what the issue is and the desired outcome or response to the issue.
5. If the governance issue is addressed by written correspondence (mail or email) the board chair will address it at the next appropriate venue. A written acknowledgement will be returned within 30 days. (The board typically meets only 4-5 times per year.)
6. If the board determines that further discussion is necessary, additional information about the issue will be gathered and forwarded to the membership for discussion at a future meeting. Members will be kept informed of the status of the issue
7. At all times, bylaw requirements will be followed.

### **Management Issues**

There are times when volunteers wish to give input, make a recommendation, or change an operating policy or procedure. This could include input on areas such as training curriculum, training policies, program opportunities, camp maintenance, or safety standards. Giving input on management issues includes the following considerations:

1. When addressing issues, volunteers should provide the following information: the issue to be addressed, the reason it needs to be addressed, the desired outcome, and how this issue affects the overall council.
2. Vehicles for providing input include roundtable meetings, evaluations and surveys, voice mail, email, council website, letter writing, and phone calls.
3. Issues should first be presented to the individual most able to resolve the issue. If an appropriate response is not received, the issue or recommendation should be directed to the CEO.
4. Volunteers can expect to receive an acknowledgement to phone calls and emails within 24 hours and a written acknowledgement to letters within seven working days.