



Special 57th  
National Council Session  
Delegate Workbook

October 19, 2024

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# From the National President and Girl Scouts of the USA CEO

**Dear Girl Scout National Delegate,**

This is an historic moment for the Girl Scout Movement. On July 25, following significant input from local councils and National Council delegates, Girl Scouts of the USA's National Board decided to call the first-ever special session of the National Council.

Our National Council Session represents the best of our dynamic democratic process—one that is for Girl Scouts, by Girl Scouts. As a delegate chosen to represent your council, you have a critical role to play in helping our Movement stay true to our mission, and we appreciate your service. Our experiences within our troops, service units, and councils will inform our perspectives, and our delegate education will create space for us to learn about the experiences of other members in our Movement and to consider how we can best ensure a sustainable and thriving future for Girl Scouting.

This decision by the National Board followed nine months of discussion with local councils and delegates about our Movement strategy. This strategy has been informed by research, including the clear expectations around what today's girls and families most want and need, and input from stakeholders across the Movement.

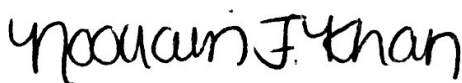
To execute our strategy, we will invest in those initiatives that enable us to more effectively serve our current members and reach the 24 million girls who are not yet part of Girl Scouts. To accomplish what we know is possible, we must increase and sustain all financial resources, including philanthropy and membership dues.

We have collectively acknowledged that a membership dues increase is needed which is greater than the 25 percent (or \$6.25) the National Board has authority to approve in a single triennium.

As a leader in our Movement, and in your role as a National Council delegate, we appreciate you carrying out your responsibility to learn about, discuss, and help decide on our path forward. This workbook serves as the formal call to meeting for the Special 57th National Council Session, which will take place virtually on Zoom on Saturday, October 19, 2024, for the purpose of considering membership dues increases and contains the proposal details, as well as parliamentary and business procedures. Delegates are responsible for their own device and internet connection.

Thank you for the input you provided during the development of our Movement strategy. Your support in this process has been invaluable. Collectively and collaboratively, we will chart a course for success for our Movement and an impactful experience for all of the Girl Scouts we currently serve—and those we will serve in the future.

Yours in Girl Scouting,



**Noorain F. Khan**  
National President



**Bonnie Barczykowski**  
Chief Executive Officer



# 2023–2026 Girl Scouts of the USA National Board of Directors

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\*Ex-officio, without vote  
\*\*As of September 13, 2023



# The Girl Scout Promise and Law and the Girl Scout Mission

## The Girl Scout 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.

\*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

## The Girl Scout 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.

## Girl Scout Mission

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

# Basics of the National Council

The National Council is the membership body charged with giving broad policy direction to the future of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States. The National Council's responsibilities, eligibility requirements, composition, size, and how and when its meetings are held are outlined in the Congressional Charter and the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the United States of America, as found in *The Blue Book of Basic Documents*.

## The National Council convenes regularly every three years, and its responsibilities are to:

- Elect the officers and other members of the National Board and National Board Development Committee
- Amend the Girl Scout Constitution as needed
- Establish requirements for certificates of membership, council charters, and all other credentials
- Act on proposals to foster and improve Girl Scouting, receive reports of the National Board of Directors, and give guidance to the National Board upon general lines of direction of the Girl Scout Movement and Girl Scout program

## Special Sessions of the National Council

The National Council may also meet in special sessions between regularly scheduled National Council Sessions. Special sessions of the National Council may be called by the President upon written request of a majority of the members of the National Board of Directors or twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the National Council, which shall represent at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the councils chartered by GSUSA. The purpose of the session shall be stated in the written request.

The purpose of the special session shall be limited to legitimate business of the National Council, and no other business shall be transacted except that for which the session has been specifically called.

Notice of the special session, stating the time, place, and specific purpose, shall be mailed or delivered electronically not less than 30 days before the session to each local council, each delegate from USA Girl Scouts Overseas, each member of the National Board of Directors and the National Board Development Committee, each Past President, and each member elected by the National Council who is entitled to vote at such session.

## Composition

### The National Council is composed of:

- Delegates elected by chartered Girl Scout councils
- Delegates from USA Girl Scouts Overseas
- Members of the National Board of Directors
- Members of the National Board Development Committee
- Past presidents of Girl Scouts of the USA
- Other persons as may be elected by the National Council



## Delegates

The total membership of the National Council shall not exceed 1,500, and at least four-fifths of the entire membership shall consist of delegates from local councils and from USA Girl Scouts Overseas. A formula is used to determine how many delegates each council may send to the National Council Session. This same formula is also used to select delegates to represent USA Girl Scouts Overseas.

## Preparation for the Special Session

Every Girl Scout council should prepare its delegates to fulfill their responsibilities at the Special 57th NCS by providing opportunities for delegates to:

- Review and discuss proposals that require action by the National Council
- Study the parliamentary procedure that will be in effect during the session and become familiar with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 12th Edition*, including undertaking live and/or on demand training provided on the delegate website
- Become familiar with the various procedures established for the Special 57th NCS outlined in this workbook
- Understand the purpose of the special session so they can participate fully in the decision-influencing process

This Special 57th National Council Session Workbook and the *September 2024 Blue Book of Basic Documents* are essential tools for delegates and should be brought to the meeting.

## During the Special Session

At the Special 57th National Council Session, delegates will discuss and make decisions on a topic of great importance and on which members of our community hold an array of perspectives.

There are a number of things we can do as Girl Scouts to concretely embody the values embedded in our Law and Promise as we take part in these courageous conversations.

Specifically, each of us can:

- Assume that each person has good intentions.
- Pause to think of what we would like to convey before we speak.
- Listen carefully to each speaker, trying to understand their perspective, even if we don't hold that same perspective.
- Ask questions when we don't understand something (whether it is an idea, a policy item, or what a particular speaker is saying).
- Consider sharing why this issue or policy item is important to us.
- Know that our body language conveys a message, even when we are not sharing our ideas verbally.
- Try to frame differences as a difference of ideas or perspectives. We can direct our comments toward the different ways we see an issue, not at someone personally. For example, "I hear a number of people speaking about this issue in this way, yet I see it a little differently...." or "[Name], I heard your ideas on this issue, and I really agree with you on x. When it comes to y, though, I do see it differently..."
- Refrain from name-calling or saying anything about another speaker's motives or character.



- Recognize that time is a valuable resource. As Girl Scouts, we promise to use our resources wisely. Consider if the point you had planned to make has already been made by another speaker. If so, consider whether restating the point is necessary to further debate, or whether you could withdraw from the speaker queue to make room for speakers with new ideas to offer.

Our diversity is our strength, and when each person can both share their ideas and be treated with respect and dignity, that makes for a productive experience and embodies our values.

### Following the Special Session

National Council delegates are elected for a three-year term and engage in the governance of our Movement throughout their term. Following the Special 57th National Council Session, delegates are responsible for sharing to their constituents decisions adopted by the National Council. GSUSA will provide materials to support delegates in this role. Each council delegation should plan how to report to its council on the discussions held, decisions made and the reasons for them, and all that the delegates may have learned about Girl Scouting as a national and international Movement.

National Council delegates can contribute to the democratic process during the triennium by:

- Being active participants on the official Girl Scout delegate website and sharing information from that site with their council
- Engaging in delegate input gathering opportunities throughout the triennium
- Helping their councils understand their role in submitting agenda items for the next National Council Session
- Sharing their knowledge with the National Council delegates who are elected for the following triennium



# Special 57th National Council Session Agenda

## Required Action Items

The National Council will adopt:

- **The Credentials Report**  
The credentials report is the official roll of voting members.
- **Standing Rules for the Special Session**  
Proposed Standing Rules for the Special 57th National Council Session will be shared in an addendum to this workbook prior to the meeting.
- **Program**  
The program is the schedule of proceedings, including the sequence of business items, and will be distributed at least 48 hours in advance of the Special 57th National Council Session.



# Input from Local Councils and National Council Delegates on Membership Dues Changes

On July 25, 2024, following significant input from local councils and National Council delegates, Girl Scouts of the USA's National Board called the first-ever special session of the National Council. The purpose will be to discuss a membership dues increase.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to any decision to change Girl Scouts' membership dues structure or amount, the National Board must seek the input of local councils and delegates on the proposed changes, intended use of the funds, and potential impact on the Girl Scout Movement. After the National Board takes action on membership dues changes, there shall be a report to all local Girl Scout councils and National Council delegates of the decision taken and the impact of the dues change (page 24, *Blue Book of Basic Documents, September 2024 edition*).

The National Board's recommendation to increase dues and to call a special session followed almost a year of discussion with local councils and delegates about our Movement strategy. This strategy has been informed by research, including clear expectations around what today's girls and families most want and need, and input from stakeholders across the Movement.

As the leaders of our councils, council board chairs and CEOs provided valuable perspectives over this period, including input on Movement strategy and on the investments most needed to support current members and families and those yet to join Girl Scouts. In those early conversations, it became clear that an increase in all our financial levers—including philanthropy, licensing, and membership dues—would be needed to be able to successfully deliver our Movement strategy. Council board chairs engaged in a similar process throughout 2024.

In addition, GSUSA convened a Movement Strategy Working Group in December 2023 to develop a three-year Movement strategy. To ensure the strategy was informed by the perspectives of delegates, and to reinforce the role of a National Council delegate in our decision-influencing and decision-making responsibilities, GSUSA held three series of delegate webinars to secure input.

- In April 2024, GSUSA held three delegate webinars to engage delegates in research findings about what today's girls and families most want and need.
- In June 2024, GSUSA hosted another series of three webinars to gather National Council delegate input into a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis to highlight where, as a Movement, we have the most opportunities to improve the experience we provide to girls, families, and volunteers and how we might better communicate our strengths to those families yet to join Girl Scouting. This input further evidenced the need for significant investment into our Movement to ensure that more girls and families choose Girl Scouts as the place to learn, grow, and connect.
- In July, delegates participated in information and input gathering webinars on: GSUSA's current financial position and how membership dues were currently used to deliver the Girl Scout mission; the trends impacting our membership and revenue; the membership fees of other girl and youth serving organizations; and the many initiatives being evaluated by GSUSA and the potential impact of those initiatives on the Girl Scout Movement, including the cost impact of these initiatives and the likely impact on membership dues and other sources of revenue.

Delegate feedback from the webinar series was clear: these investments are needed and cannot be funded sustainably through philanthropy and licensing alone, and a membership dues increase would be required.

<sup>1</sup>Increases above 25% in a triennium must be approved by the National Council. As the National Board is proposing an increase above 25%, it has convened a Special National Council Session so that the National Council may consider the proposal and take action.



# Introduction: Rationale for Girl and Adult Membership Dues Proposals 1 and 2

## Movement Strategy Background

Girl Scouting is on the cusp of a historic opportunity; it is a time when we will make choices about our future and what potential it holds. We must build on our strong history and look ahead to engaging and serving more girls, their families, and caring volunteers who, together, make the world a better place. This evolution includes significantly improving how we deliver programming (e.g., the Girl Scout Experience Box), making it easier to volunteer with simplified processes and tools, increasing our public visibility, and, most importantly, remaining relevant by directly addressing the needs of girls through engaging offerings.

Currently, only 1 in 25 girls in the U.S. is a Girl Scout, and membership has declined for both girls and adults. Girls today face significant challenges. The fast pace of life, social media's influence, and the lingering effects of the pandemic have disrupted their lives, weakened their communities, and strained their mental health.

The Girl Scout Movement continuously evolves by listening to Girl Scout voices during changing times and learning from research for additional insights. To more deeply understand how Girl Scouts can more substantially impact the lives of girls and women well into the 21st century, GSUSA commissioned new research in 2023. We learned that, while online learning is growing, girls still crave in-person activities where they can make friends, be themselves, and feel a sense of belonging. Parents and caregivers are looking for opportunities that build girls' self-confidence and independence, foster skill development, and offer mentorship from caring adults. Being part of Girl Scouts provides these benefits. Results from our Girl Scout Voices Count survey support this information. Girl Scouting gives girls a strong sense of self, positive values, and healthy relationships, and provides the opportunities that girls and their caregivers seek.

Ensuring that Girl Scouts can be here for girls both now and in the future requires financial resources. Delegates will discuss proposals to increase membership dues for girls and adults. These dues changes bring the cost of Girl Scout membership more in line with similar organizations and, compared to many activities, Girl Scouts remains less expensive. Girl Scouting offers year-round, girl-centered, fun, skill-building experiences. Our programs evolve with a girl as she grows, and each moment is a possibility to create a lifelong, positive impact. Few, if any, other youth activities offer this value.

To stand effectively for girls, we must commit to making sure no financial barriers prevent girls from joining and staying in Girl Scouts.

## Delegate and Local Council Leader Feedback

As outlined in the Gathering Input section of this workbook, GSUSA engaged extensively with delegates and local council leaders to inform the development of both the Movement strategy and the needed investment in it. There was support for raising membership dues and for increasing national and local fundraising to pay for initiatives that will engage with all girls and families in ways that fit their lives.

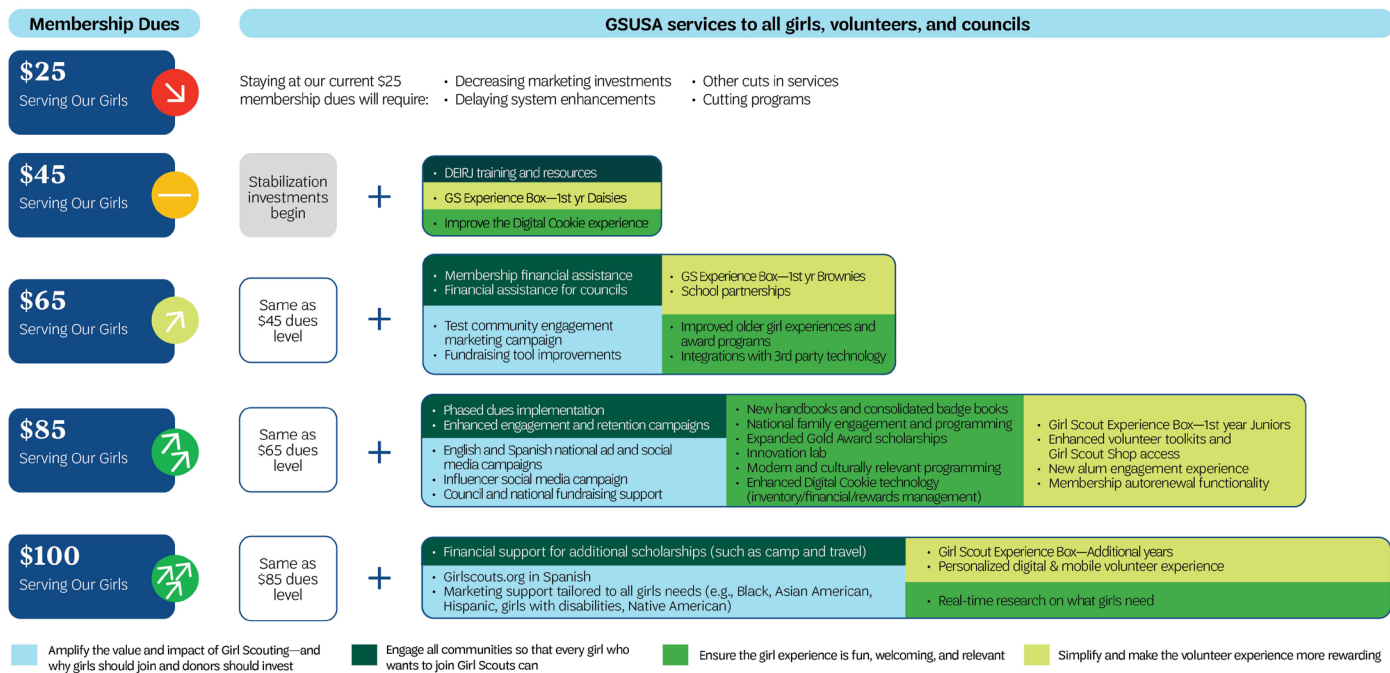
Feedback highlighted the need to

- be a more welcoming organization where girls from all backgrounds feel that they belong,
- ensure that sufficient financial assistance is available for girls and families,
- invest in publicly sharing the value of Girl Scouting and broadly communicating what Girl Scouts do,
- simplify the volunteer experience and make it more rewarding,
- make the older girl program more visible and engaging, and
- improve technology to make it easier for girls, families, and volunteers to join and participate.

The chart below summarizes the investments that are possible based on the amount of annual membership dues.

## We must invest in girls. Our choice is now.

Girl Scouting must invest today to better serve our current members and to reach girls who are currently missing out on the Girl Scout experience. These are a few examples of initiatives that would be possible with an increase in national dues:



Looking at the future possibilities we can create for girls, it is essential to focus on the investments that will make the biggest impact on our volunteers, our councils, and the girls and families we serve now and those we will serve in the future.

## Financial Implications

Membership dues fund most of the national organization's services which, in turn, support all councils, girls, and volunteers. For additional information on how GSUSA allocates our resources, please review the [State of the Movement briefing](#) (passcode: RVaB%w^L) and the recorded September 16, 2024, [State of the Movement interactive webinar](#) (passcode: FZW4sQ^!).

Across all local councils as well as GSUSA, Girl Scouting has had significant and uncontrollable pressures on our membership and finances, including the global pandemic and soaring inflation. The last few years have been especially challenging for councils and many of our Girl Scout families. As a National Board, we knew that would not have been the time to increase dues. We have held dues steady for 8 years and have not shared the increased costs of technology, which in turn means the GSUSA expense budget is larger because of national technology costs for all members and all councils. Now, as we collectively reflect on the state of the Girl Scout Movement, it is clear from our analysis, as well as local council leadership and delegate input, that to meet the needs of current and future members, we must increase dues.

As we shared during the interactive State of the Movement webinar, GSUSA and councils have cut costs and ended underperforming initiatives. Despite these efforts, GSUSA's expenses are still outpacing revenue. Managing costs is difficult, as many of GSUSA's services for all councils are fixed expenses that do not go down when membership decreases. Because Girl Scouts is a membership organization, declining membership reduces the revenue needed to operate the Movement.



GSUSA ended FY23 with a deficit of \$4.4M, and we expect to end FY24 with a deficit of \$5.6M. Over the past few years, costs have increased everywhere, and neither GSUSA nor our councils have been immune to this pressure. The National Board has used financial reserves (our Movement savings account) to cover the shortfall by continuing to invest in council support, absorb increased costs that would normally be passed on to councils, and invest in initiatives directly impacting all volunteers and girls.

With money from financial reserves and national fundraising, we piloted programs (e.g., the Girl Scout Experience Box), developed national partnerships to engage girls and families (e.g., Major League Baseball), and created the Gold Award Scholarship Fund. We also invested in critical and less visible requirements like insurance for girls and members, information security, data privacy systems, and technology upgrades—all essential elements that national organizations like GSUSA provide in support of all members, and for all of which costs are rising.

Operating at a deficit—spending more than we bring in—as we have been doing, is not sustainable. We can no longer afford to use our financial reserves, and we cannot pass through all escalating costs to our councils. We also cannot continue reducing our expenses without further reducing services to councils, which will negatively impact girls and volunteers. And we cannot risk further deferring the investments to improve the Girl Scout experience for girls and adults across the country. We must increase revenue from all sources—robust fundraising, comprehensive partnerships, and membership dues.

Delegates and council leadership shared many potential dues increase considerations during our input-gathering process, including ensuring:

- that there is sufficient financial assistance to meet the needs of current and future members,
- that we consider the total cost of Girl Scouting to a family, especially when caregivers join to support their girls' experience, and
- if there is a significant increase in membership dues, there would be a phased increase time to give troops and families time to adjust.

With a compelling Movement strategy, continued financial discipline to use resources wisely, increased fundraising, and our choice to increase membership dues, Girl Scouts will be able to accelerate our future like never before. Without increased dues revenue, we cannot, and the Movement will face financial options that do not serve girls well. GSUSA is and will be your partner—being financially responsible, supporting each council, and providing you with what you need to serve girls. The additional revenue generated by national annual membership dues of \$85 for girls and \$45 for adults will enable all of us, together, to deliver our Movement strategy.

Increased dues will:

- make programs easier to deliver for volunteers,
- make technology easier to use, with more integration between platforms, including integrating technology tools that some volunteers already use at your council,
- ensure that processes are easier, faster, and better streamlined, including more 'turnkey' training, recruitment tools, and programs,
- clarify and amplify for families and communities the value and impact of the Girl Scout experience and why girls should join and donors should invest,
- eliminate barriers so that every girl who wants to join Girl Scouts can do so and engage in all that Girl Scouting offers, and
- create new experiences, including opportunities to explore new places and better connect with our global sisterhood.

As you consider the opportunities available with increased resources, it is important that we also consider what opportunities we forgo if the final approved dues are less than proposed. Without dues increases, GSUSA will need to make significant cuts that would negatively impact the Girl Scout experience for years to come. Our girls expect and deserve a different outcome.

## **Actions Taken to Support Implementation**

Delegates spoke with great compassion about not wanting anyone to feel left out of Girl Scouting because of the increased dues cost. In response to this powerful advocacy, and recognizing this is a large increase, the National Board approved three specific actions to support girls and councils with financial assistance. This aid will be effective based on specific amounts for girl membership dues and will support council financial assistance, council membership scholarships, and a gradual increase in girl membership dues. (See Proposal 1, Actions Taken to Support Implementation on page 16 for additional details.)

As part of the extensive financial assessment and strategy work with our local council leaders, GSUSA assessed the impact of potential dues increases on girl and adult membership. While it is difficult to forecast, councils and GSUSA are working together to prepare for a wide variety of possible outcomes, including both membership growth and decline in the initial years following the dues increase.

Families, businesses, and non-profit membership organizations like Girl Scouts are all facing economic pressures. Families are searching for safe, impactful experiences for their children. As a National Council, we must be confident in Girl Scouting's value. For our girls, we need to be bold and consider a dues investment that reflects this value.

This action provides the resources to invest in what girls need and what their caregivers want for them. We will do this while recognizing the potential financial effect on girls, volunteers, and families. Our shared commitment is to make financial assistance available for those who need it. Equally important, we will champion the efforts necessary to attract and retain girls and adults to ensure the public understands what Girl Scouting is and how a girl benefits. We will keep our programming easy to access and relevant—today and into the future. The funds generated by a national dues increase will build on our strong history. Together, we look ahead to engaging and serving more girls, their families, and caring volunteers who, together, make the world a better place.

# PROPOSAL 1\*

Girl members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

## Originated by

Girl Scouts of the USA

## Proposal

To amend the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, page 23, as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
Girl members pay annual dues of \$25.	Girl members pay annual dues of \$___.	Girl members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

\* The National Council will use the “fill-in-the-blank” parliamentary process for this proposal.

## RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL 1

Please also refer to the proposal introduction, which applies to both Proposals 1 and 2.

This proposal specifically addresses the financial amount of national annual girl membership dues.

**In recognition of the value girl members gain from the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and of the need to increase resources to deliver our Movement strategy, the National Board will recommend that \$85 fill the blank for annual girl membership dues, effective for Membership Year 2026.**

GSUSA research among families who were not yet part of Girl Scouting highlights the clear alignment between what parents and families want for girls and what girls themselves say they enjoy in Girl Scouting. Leaders supporting today’s Girl Scouts share the same sentiment. Raising girls of courage, confidence, and character in today’s world takes all of us—it takes a movement. Girl Scouting is that Movement.

For Girl Scouts to remain relevant, maintaining the status quo is not an option. Girl Scouts expect and deserve so much more! Girls evolve and change and so must our Movement—including the cost to be a member and the investments we secure from communities and donors. Girl Scouting grows and thrives when girls, families, volunteers, communities, and donors choose Girl Scouting. This exciting future is ours to shape as a place for girls who will change the world! We must continue to create new experiences, including opportunities for our youngest to oldest Girl Scouts. A girl is only five years old once; she is only ten once and only fifteen once. We cannot delay and miss a generation of girls. We have the potential and choice to act now to ensure Girl Scouting is possible for generations of girls to come.



## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

We know and we heard delegates emphasize that there must be sufficient financial assistance to meet the needs of current and future members. The additional revenue provided by national annual membership dues of \$85 for girls will enable all of us, together, to deliver our Movement strategy.

As you consider the opportunities available with increased resources, it is important to also consider what opportunities we forgo if the final approved girl membership dues are less than proposed. Nationally and locally, there are significant financial implications related to our ability to support girls today and improve for tomorrow, to grow membership, and to ensure that the positive impact of Girl Scouting is represented in every community. (Refer to chart on page 12.)

- Staying at our current \$25 membership dues will require dramatic cuts in services, passing technology costs on to councils, decreasing marketing investments, and delaying enhancements of the systems used daily to serve girls and councils.
- At a \$45 girl membership rate, we will only be able to maintain service levels, but there will not be funds for enhancements or innovation.
- At a \$65 girl membership rate, we will support councils with financial aid assistance and can maintain critical services. We will be able to make some improvements and innovations, including expanding the Girl Scout Experience Box to first year Brownies, improve and expand our older girl programs, and launch community-focused marketing.
- At \$85 and above, Girl Scouting's future is incredibly bright. Together with councils, we will prioritize initiatives and execute them in ways that work for all, including national marketing and social media influencer campaigns, consolidated handbooks and badge books, increased Gold Award Scholarship funds, and more. Regarding technology, we will be able to address the necessary enhancements, make our systems more user-friendly, and achieve connectivity to other systems. With these investments, we are confident our membership will grow as more girls and volunteers choose to join and fully engage with Girl Scouts.

Our Movement strategy reflects what you have been asking for, what our girls need, and what our families expect. We cannot do that without more financial resources. Increased fundraising is a critical priority locally and nationally, but it will never meet all our needs. For a membership organization, member dues are an essential part of the financial picture.

The dues opportunity that our National Council will consider is of great importance. Together, let's stand and invest in girls, their potential, and the promise of Girl Scouting.

## ACTIONS TAKEN TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

While it is difficult to forecast membership changes, GSUSA has done extensive modeling and is working with councils to prepare for a wide variety of possible outcomes. This includes both membership growth and decline in the initial years following the dues increase.

In our July 2024 input sessions, delegates spoke with great compassion about not wanting the cost of Girl Scouts to leave anyone out. In response to this powerful advocacy, and recognizing this is a large increase, the National Board approved the following three resolutions to support girls and councils at its September 2024 meeting:

### 1. Council financial assistance

Recognizing that Girl Scout councils may require additional resources to execute the Movement strategy, including funding membership dues assistance, council financial support will be available if the National Council approves girl membership dues over \$65. For five years, GSUSA will provide councils a percentage of the total annual girl membership revenue at the following rates:





- a. If girl member dues are \$85 or above, 32% of this revenue will be provided to councils.
- b. If girl member dues are between \$75 and \$84, 30% of this revenue will be provided to councils.
- c. If girl member dues are between \$65 and \$74, 25% of this revenue will be provided to councils.

## 2. Scholarship fund

In rare cases, a council's financial assistance provided by the previous resolution may not fully cover a council's membership dues financial assistance needs. To aid councils, with the approval of a girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of up to \$5 million. Councils can apply for these funds if their incremental cost of membership dues financial assistance is more than the amount of council financial assistance (see #1) provided by GSUSA.

## 3. Phased implementation

Delegates indicated they would be more supportive of a significant dues increase if this occurred over time versus all at once. In response, the National Board approved a resolution that, with the approval of girl membership dues of \$85 or more, GSUSA will implement a 20% discount on girl membership dues in year one (Membership Year 2026) and a 10% discount in year two (Membership Year 2027). This means that, if the National Council approves an increase in girl membership dues of \$85:

- in membership year 2026, girl membership dues would be \$68,
- in membership year 2027, girl membership dues would be \$77, and
- in membership year 2028, girl membership dues would be at the approved \$85.

These measures will ensure that Girl Scouts can continue to thrive and serve more girls while addressing financial challenges and keeping the organization strong for future generations.

## **RECOMMENDATION OF THE NATIONAL BOARD TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL**

The National Board recommends approval of this proposal.

# PROPOSAL 2\*

**Adult members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].**

## Originated by

Girl Scouts of the USA

## Proposal

To amend the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, page 23, as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
Adult members pay annual dues of \$25.	Adult members pay annual dues of \$___.	Adult members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

\* The National Council will use the “fill-in-the-blank” parliamentary process for this proposal.

## RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL 2

Please also refer to the proposal introduction, which applies to both Proposals 1 and 2.

This proposal specifically recognizes the value adult members provide in the Girl Scout Movement. Delegates are asked to consider dues amounts different (i.e., lower) than the amount girls may pay, which will support volunteer recruitment and retention as well as the financial investment a family makes when the adults choose to volunteer. **The National Board will recommend that \$45 fill the blank for annual adult membership dues, effective for Membership Year 2026.**

Raising girls of courage, confidence, and character in today’s world takes all of us—it takes a movement. Girl Scouting is that Movement. Caring adults who volunteer and support girls are a powerful and fundamental part of this. Our adult members contribute their valuable time, creativity, and expertise in many ways to make the Girl Scout experience happen.

Increasing Girl Scout dues will provide resources to strengthen our national organization (GSUSA) and the councils GSUSA serves. This will fund improved support for adult members who bring the Girl Scout experience to life. Volunteers are looking for simpler, more dependable, and exciting opportunities to actively participate in inspiring girls of courage, confidence, and character across the country. Nationally, Girl Scouts cannot do this without increased revenue. Investing more in volunteer support requires increased revenue on all fronts—through robust fundraising at the national level, additional membership dues, and comprehensive partnerships.

Why are we proposing differentiated pricing for adults? Local council leaders, delegate input, and the favorable sentiment expressed during delegate sessions in the summer of 2024 prompted the National Board to make this proposal. Delegates and councils asked us to consider a lower adult price that recognizes the value adult volunteers bring to our Movement while still providing an increase in dues revenue to invest in the initiatives needed to execute our Movement strategy and better engage, retain, and support our current and future adults in Girl Scouting.



## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is clear from national analysis and local, council, and delegate input that to meet the needs of current and future members, we must consider an increase in dues. The additional revenue provided through national annual membership dues of \$45 for adults will enable all of us, together, to deliver our Movement strategy.

As you consider the opportunities available with increased resources, it is important to also consider what opportunities we will forgo if the approved dues are less than proposed.

- Staying at our current \$25 membership dues will require dramatic cuts in services, passing on technology costs to councils, decreasing marketing investments, and delaying enhancements of the systems used daily to serve girls and councils.
- At \$45 adult dues, we will be able to maintain service levels, and with girls' dues at \$65 or more, as outlined in Proposal 1, there will be funds for enhancements and innovation.

Based on your choice to approve dues increases aligned with our Movement strategy, Girl Scouting will be able to address the needs delegates and councils have identified—support for volunteers, which is what our girls need and families expect. Working together, we can ensure that the Girl Scout Movement, in service to girls everywhere, has the strategy, focus, and resources to thrive.

## ACTIONS TAKEN TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

While it is difficult to assess the potential impact of a dues change on adult membership, councils and GSUSA are working together to prepare for a wide variety of possible outcomes, including both membership growth and decline in the initial years following the dues increase. Investing in Girl Scout volunteers across the country includes learning from proven practices that have been shown to effectively support adult members as well as reviewing national processes and tools to make volunteering easier. Movement strategy initiatives will be designed and developed with council and volunteer input. Additionally, the National Board has approved providing council financial support and an additional membership scholarship fund to aid families in paying membership dues should it be needed.

## RECOMMENDATION OF THE NATIONAL BOARD TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

The National Board recommends approval of this proposal.

# Basic Parliamentary Procedure

## A Quick Guide to the NCS Decision-Making Process

### How does the National Council make decisions for the Girl Scout Movement?

The National Council makes decisions by voting on proposals that are included in this Workbook or included with the call to the National Council Session.

### What is a proposal? Doesn't the National Council make decisions by voting on motions?

Good thinking! Yes, the National Council makes decisions by voting on motions. "Proposal" is just another word for a main motion.

### What on earth is a motion?

A motion is a fancy term for a suggestion made to a group. There are two kinds of motions:

Main motions/proposals are suggestions about how a group will continue to act, behave, or govern itself after the meeting is over.

*Think: "Let's double the size of the cookie box ASAP!"*

Secondary motions are suggestions about how the group will handle the main motions/proposals.

*Think: "Let's not talk about cookies for longer than 20 minutes! I'm starving already!"*

### How do proposals and motions actually work?

Glad you asked! Here's what you need to know:

#### Step one: the Chair recognizes a National Council member to speak.

*What should you do? Join the virtual queue and wait to be recognized.*

*What will the Chair say? "The Chair recognizes the member speaking for/against the motion."*

#### Step two: the National Council member says the motion.

*What should you do? Say your name, the name of your council, and your motion.*

*Like this: "Greta Smith, Brightest Fire Council, I move that ..."*

#### Step three: another National Council member says, "Second!" \*\*\*

*What should you do? Use the 'raise hand' function in the virtual meeting platform.*

#### Step four: the Chair repeats the motion or refers to it on the screen.

*There may be a pause here. Take time to stand and stretch in place.*

#### Step five: the Chair asks the National Council if they want to talk about the motion.

*What will the Chair say? "Is there any discussion?"*

*What should you do? If you want to talk pros and cons, join the virtual queue and wait for the Chair to recognize you. Then say your name, the name of your council, and why you think the proposal is a good or bad idea.*

*The Chair will alternate between pro and con speakers.*

#### Step six: the Chair takes a vote on the motion.



*What will the Chair say? The Chair will repeat the motion that needs a National Council vote or refer to it on the screen, and then ask you to vote in favor or in opposition.*

*What should you do? Cast your vote with confidence!*

**Step seven: the Chair announces the result of the vote.**

*What will the Chair say? The Chair will tell you whether the motion is adopted or defeated and then present the next item of business that needs the group's attention.*

\*\*\* When someone says, "Second," they are saying that they think the motion is worth the group's time. It's a way of making sure that one person doesn't control the group with a suggestion that absolutely no one else wants to discuss.

**Pro tip:** proposals don't need a second because they're brought by a group—the National Board or a council—so we already know that more than one person thinks they're worth discussing.

# Basic Information of Motions

#	Motion	Interrupt Speaker	Second Needed	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required
13	Fix the time to which to adjourn	No	Yes	No*	Yes	Majority
12	Adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
11	Recess	No	Yes	No*	Yes	Majority
10	Raise a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	Ruled by Chair
9	Call for orders of the day	Yes	No	No	No	One member
8	Lay on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
7	Previous question	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
6	Limit or extend limits of debate	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds
5	Postpone to time certain	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
4	Commit/refer	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
3b	Secondary amendment	No	Yes	Yes**	No	Majority
3a	Primary amendment	No	Yes	Yes**	Yes	Majority
2	Postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
1	Main motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	Ruled by Chair
	Appeal	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
	Objection to consideration	No	No	No	No	Two-thirds
	Division of the question	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
	Division of the assembly	Yes	No	No	No	One member
	Call for counted vote	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	Responded to by Chair
	Request for information	Yes	No	No	No	Responded to by Chair
	Withdraw motion (after stated by Chair)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Take from the table	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
	Reconsider	Yes***	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
	Rescind or amend something previously adopted	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Two-thirds

\*Is debatable if a main motion and not a privileged motion

\*\*Is debatable if motion to be amended is debatable

\*\*\*May interrupt someone who is assigned the floor but not someone who is actually speaking



# Background on Making Open-Ended Motions

The article below is by [Sarah E. Merkle](#), Girl Scout of the USA's National Council parliamentarian, and was originally published on [The Law of Order Blog: A Resource on Parliamentary Procedure & the Law](#). This content is provided as a resource to aid in understanding the fill-in-the-blank motion that will be used during the special session.

## Making Open-Ended Motions By Sarah E. Merkle, JD, CPP-T, PRP

There's a little-known option for [making a motion](#)—you can draft a motion that includes a “blank,” and members can propose options for that blank without moving to [amend](#) the motion. Here's how it works.

### Making a Motion with a Blank

Wording a motion with a blank is a bit different from the traditional motion-amendment process in a few ways. Let's review the [normal process of motions](#) and amendments first, and then look at this alternate of wording and processing a motion.

#### 1. Traditional Motion-Amendment Process

- A member is recognized.
- A member makes a main motion.
- The Chair repeats the motion.
- The motion is [seconded](#).
- The motion is [discussed](#).
- The motion is voted on.

During discussion, members can also propose [amendments](#) to the main motion—these are called primary amendments. Amendments are made by striking words, inserting words, or replacing words in the main motion.

Members can also propose amendments to primary amendments—these are called secondary amendments.

#### 2. Alternate Fill-in-the-Blank Motion Process

A different option allows for construction of a main motion with a blank that members can fill in with options of their choice.

The details of this process differ among parliamentary authorities, but in general, the process works as follows....

- A member is recognized.
- A member makes a main motion—with a blank indicating one unspecified piece of the proposed motion.
- The Chair repeats the motion.
- The motion is seconded.
- The Chair invites members to submit options for the blank and discuss the motion and options.
- When members are finished submitting options and discussing them, they vote on which option should fill the blank.
- Members then vote on the final wording of the motion with the blank filled.

#### *An Example*

Let's look at an example of the traditional motion-amendment process, followed by an example of this alternative using a blank.

#### 1. Traditional Motion-Amendment

- Member A makes the following motion: “I move that we paint the organization headquarters blue by the next annual meeting.”

- Member B moves to amend the motion: “I move to strike the word *blue* and insert the word *red*.” The group starts to discuss blue vs. red.
- Member C moves to amend the amendment: “I move to strike the word *red* and insert the word *green*.” The group discusses and votes on red vs. green, votes on the amendment to the amendment, and the amendment to the amendment passes.
- The group discusses green vs. blue, votes on the amendment as amended, and the amendment is adopted.
- The group discusses and votes on the amended main motion: “To paint the organization headquarters green by the next annual meeting.”

## 2. Alternate Fill-in-the-Blank Motion

- Member A makes the following motion: “I move that we paint the organization headquarters by the next annual meeting.”
- Members B, C, and D submit colors during discussion: blue, red, and green. The motion in general and the suggested colors are discussed.
- A vote is taken on all three options. The choices can be placed on a ballot, or the Chair can take a vote on each choice individually:
  - “All those in favor of filling the blank with **blue**, say, ‘aye.’ All those opposed, say, ‘no.’”
  - “All those in favor of filling the blank with **red**, say, ‘aye.’ All those opposed, say, ‘no.’”
  - “All those in favor of filling the blank with **green**, say, ‘aye.’ All those opposed, say, ‘no.’”
- The choice that receives the highest majority fills the blank.
- The group discusses and votes on the final wording of the motion with the blank filled.

## Advantages of Making a “Fill-in-the-Blank” Motion

### 1. Unlimited Choices

The traditional motion-amendment process only considers one option, then a second, and sometimes a third, but never an unlimited number. A fill-in-the-blank motion allows for many options to be proposed and for all to be considered in the end.

### 2. Multiple, Not Binary

In the traditional motion-amendment process, the choice is always binary. To reference the example above, discussion happened and a vote was taken on red vs. green, and the next discussion and vote considered green vs. blue. There was no chance to go back to consider blue vs. red as a set of options. Using a fill-in-the-blank motion, members can consider many options equally at one time.

### 3. Efficiency

Because the fill-in-the-blank method allows discussion and voting on multiple options at once rather than simply two at a time, a group can often streamline its discussion and come to a final decision more quickly.



#### **Sarah E. Merkle, JD, CPP-T, PRP**

Sarah E. Merkle is one of five attorneys in the world to have earned the credentials Certified Professional Parliamentarian-Teacher and Professional Registered Parliamentarian. She advises national, regional, and local organizations of all types and sizes on proper governance and parliamentary procedure, and on how to make sound decisions in an efficient manner.

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# Business Procedures

## National Council Credentials Chair

The Credentials Chair will report the number of eligible voting members at the beginning of the first meeting, and subsequent reports will be made, as necessary, throughout the session. A credentials report chart for your use can be found on page 27.

## Delegate Credentials

1. Completion and submission of the required documents shall, upon receipt by Girl Scouts of the USA, be presumptive proof that the individual meets requirements for membership in the National Council as set forth in Article IV of the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA and is entitled to a delegate credential.
2. A person elected by a Girl Scout council as a National Council delegate shall cease to be a delegate and therefore cease to be entitled to a credential if: (a) the person is unable to serve; (b) the person becomes ineligible; (c) the council for any reason takes action to end the person's delegate term; or (d) the council is no longer chartered by Girl Scouts of the United States of America.
3. It is the responsibility of the council to determine the eligibility of each of its delegates.
4. Completion and submission of the required Delegate Change Request Form by a representative of the council, certifying that a person no longer remains a delegate of that council and that another named person, eligible to become a member of the National Council, has been duly designated to fill the vacancy so created, shall, upon receipt by Girl Scouts of the USA be presumptive proof that a transfer of the delegate's credential can be made.
5. Questions or challenges with respect to a delegate's credentials shall be emailed to the National Council Credentials Chair immediately preceding or during a meeting of the National Council at [specialsession@girlscouts.org](mailto:specialsession@girlscouts.org).
6. Each delegate will be issued unique login information to the special session meeting and voting platform(s), which will serve as the delegate's credential and is only to be used by the delegate to which it was assigned. It allows admission to the meeting and use of the voting platform to be used for the Special 57th National Council Session.

## Change of National Council Delegate

The delegate credential shall be transferred only when a delegate is permanently leaving the National Council Session.

If a delegate must permanently leave the National Council Session, a representative of the council submits the Delegate Change Request Form electronically, and the delegate surrenders the credential by leaving the meeting. The person designated to fill the vacancy shall then assume the status of delegate for the remainder of the delegate's term and unique delegate login code will be issued.

## Office Hours for National Council Parliamentarian

Sarah E. Merkle, attorney, certified professional parliamentarian-teacher, and professional registered parliamentarian, will serve as parliamentarian for the Special 57th National Council Session. Prior to the special session, she will be available by appointment, which can be scheduled via a link posted on the delegate website.

## Queue Personnel

A team of queue attendants will be assigned to the queue to ensure it is functioning properly, to collect Electronic Speaker Identification Forms, and to transmit motion forms to the Motion Clearance Team.

A parliamentary aide will monitor the queue to review all Electronic Speaker Identification Forms. Motions to interrupt the queue must:

- Legitimately interrupt proceedings
- Not repeat the same specific request addressed earlier in the same meeting and related to the same motion
- Not qualify as debate

## Technology Access

Delegates will not be able to be seen, or see other delegates during the special session. They will be able to see the presiding officer and any main stage speakers, as well as the motions for vote by the delegate body. Delegates should have access to a microphone in order to make motions, speak for or against a motion, or to speak at the interrupting microphone.

It is each delegate's responsibility to ensure that they have access to devices and a stable internet connection to participate in the Special 57th National Council Session. Failure of a delegate's device or connection does not invalidate the proceedings. A delegate must participate from their own unique device in order to speak and vote.

## Voting

Each National Council member present in the virtual meeting shall be entitled to one vote. Each delegate should join the meeting using a unique device in order to vote and speak in debate. All matters shall be determined by a majority vote of the members present and voting, unless otherwise provided by the Girl Scout Constitution and Bylaws, standing rules, or parliamentary authority. An electronic voting system will be an authorized method of voting.

## Individuals Who Need Accommodations

GSUSA is committed to making our events accessible and will seek to make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The technology platform used for the special session offers a number of user-managed accessibility options to fit various needs, including a closed captioning functionality and screen reader support. Questions related to accommodations should be sent to [specialsession@girlscouts.org](mailto:specialsession@girlscouts.org).

## National Council Member Comfort and Technology

All comments related to comfort and technology must be addressed to designated staff. Designated staff will be available at [specialsession@girlscouts.org](mailto:specialsession@girlscouts.org).

# Appendix 1: Credentials Report

Voting Members	Meeting 1 Saturday, October 19	Meeting 2 (if needed) Sunday, October 20
Delegates elected by Girl Scout councils		
Delegates from USA Girl Scouts Overseas		
Members of the National Board of Directors		
Members of the National Board Development Committee (non-board)		
Past Presidents of Girl Scouts of the USA		
Other members elected by National Council		
<b>TOTAL ELIGIBLE VOTING MEMBERS</b>		

# Appendix 2

## Floor Speaker Identification Worksheet Motions

A link to an electronic form will be provided in advance of the virtual Special 57th NCS.

This worksheet is optional and for planning purposes only.

<b>Proposal Number</b>	<b>Meeting Number</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Proposal Title</b> or <b>Other Action Item</b>	<b>Name</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check box in front of proposed action.</li> <li>• Write out motion in space provided. An asterisk (*) indicates there is no need to write out the motion.</li> </ul>	<b>Full Council Name or Position as Member of National Council</b>	

### To Make a Motion (Except for an Amendment†)

Check appropriate box below.

- Division of a Question
- Previous Question\*
- Limit or Extend Debate
- Postpone Definitely
- Refer to Committee
- Postpone Indefinitely\*
- Reconsider
- Rescind
- Main

- Point of Order
- Appeal from the Decision of the Chair

\* Not required to write out motion

† To make an amendment, submit the electronic Amendments form provided by GSUSA.

**I move that/to/the:**

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# Appendix 2

## Floor Speaker Identification Worksheet

# Amendments

A link to an electronic form will be provided in advance of the virtual Special 57th NCS.

This worksheet is optional and for planning purposes only.

<b>Proposal Number</b>	<b>Meeting Number</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Proposal Title</b> or <b>Other Action Item</b>	<b>Name</b>	
• Write out amendment in space provided below.	<b>Full Council Name or Position as Member of National Council</b>	

### Common Ways of Amending a Motion

- By inserting consecutive words (or a paragraph). Specify the exact location where the words are to be inserted (by adding words or a paragraph if at the end of the motion).
- By striking out consecutive words (or striking out a paragraph).
- By striking out and inserting consecutive words. There are two types: words are struck out and different wording is inserted in their place, or words are struck out from one place and inserted in a different place (substitute if an entire section or article is involved, or a complete main motion).

**I move to amend the motion by:**

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# Appendix 2

## Floor Speaker Identification Worksheet

# Interrupting Motions Only

A link to an electronic form will be provided in advance of the virtual Special 57th NCS.

This worksheet is optional and for planning purposes only.

<b>Proposal Number</b>	<b>Meeting Number</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Proposal Title</b> or <b>Other Action Item</b>	<b>Name</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check box in front of proposed action.</li> <li>• Write out question/inquiry/request for information in the space provided.</li> </ul>	<b>Full Council Name or Position as Member of National Council</b>	

### To Make a Motion (Except for an Amendment)

Check appropriate box below.

- Question of Privilege
- Parliamentary Inquiry
- Request for Information

**I raise a Question of Privilege/Parliamentary Inquiry/Request for Information As Follows:**

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# Appendix 3: Glossary

**germane.** Closely related to or bearing on the subject at hand. Amendments must be germane to the motion they are amending. They must deal with the same subject and cannot introduce a new subject under the pretext of being an amendment. Debate must be germane to the question before the assembly—that is, the statements must have a bearing on whether the pending motion should be adopted.

**immediately pending question.** A question that is before the assembly that must be dealt with before any other business can be handled. For example: if a main motion and a primary amendment are before the assembly, the primary amendment is the immediately pending question.

**meeting.** A single official gathering of members in one physical or virtual space to transact business for a period with no break in the proceedings and in which the members do not separate except for a recess.

**point not well taken. point well taken.** The point of order calls upon the Chair to make a ruling. The Chair may rule on the point of order or submit it to the judgment of the assembly. If the Chair accepts the point of order, it is said to be ruled “well taken.” If not, it is said to be ruled “not well taken.”

**question.** After the Chair has stated a motion to the assembly, it is referred to as the question.

**scope.** A range between what currently exists and the proposed change. When a motion requires previous notice, amendments to that motion must be within the scope (or range) of what currently exists and the change proposed by the motion.

**session.** A series of connected meetings devoted to a single order of business.

**stand at ease.** A brief pause, declared by the Chair, that does not constitute a recess. Members remain in their seats and connected to the meeting. Quiet conversation may take place, but it must cease immediately when the Chair declares the meeting again in order.



**girl scouts** 