

Executive Summary – Board of Directors Meeting September 17, 2026

Approvals

The board approved the consent agenda and the 2026–2027 fiscal year budget, with both motions passing unanimously. The proposed budget includes operational and capital spending, with the organization anticipating a near break-even year despite significant cost pressures and other financial challenges.

Financial outlook

The board discussed the projected increase in health insurance costs, which was included as a placeholder while final rates are determined. An anticipated 41% increase was ultimately reduced to approximately 11% following the New York State approval process. The council will not pass the increased insurance costs on to employees.

The council expects to finish the current fiscal year, ending September 30, very close to net zero after final reconciliations. The capital budget remains similar to the prior year and will fund essential improvements to council properties and infrastructure, including safety, vehicles, roads, and buildings. A major anticipated project is a new bathhouse at Camp Hoover. Donor support has helped significantly reduce the cost of capital projects in recent years.

Governance and annual meeting planning

Planning is underway for the May 1 annual meeting in the Utica-Rome area. The planning team is considering indoor venues, boxed lunches, and separate adult and youth learning opportunities. Potential youth programming includes a digital leadership badge with help from the Girl Advisory Board.

The Board Development Committee is also beginning recruitment for up to five at-large board positions for the 2027–2029 term. The committee will also identify a future board chair nominee, with the goal of providing an approximately six-month transition period with the current chair.

Property and office updates

Council camps are recovering from a busy summer, including storm-related tree damage at several properties. Repairs are underway, and camp staff are using the fall period for maintenance and improvement projects before winterization and winter programming.

The Watertown office is expected to move to a larger leased location before the end of October. The new space will include an outdoor area, have less traffic, and cost approximately the same or slightly less than the current location. The council continues to seek qualified contractors and skilled tradespeople for property projects.

Fundraising and partnerships

The Advancement team reported new relationships with organizations including the Central New York Women's Network, CNY Women's Magazine, and the CNY Women's Leadership Summit. The council also received several significant individual gifts and is expanding connections with colleges through new internship relationships with Syracuse University and Le Moyne.

Program and organizational priorities

Leadership reported progress from the council's fiscal stabilization plan, which included changes to staffing, the pension plan, forestry, retail operations, online sales, community engagement, troop development, and the cookie program. The council was one of two Girl Scout councils nationwide to meet its cookie goal. The recruitment team has already scheduled 229 fall recruitment engagements.

Looking ahead, the council plans to maintain a strong focus on troop-based programming for girls in kindergarten through sixth grade. For girls in grades 7–12, the council plans to develop more specialized experiences around interests such as sports, politics, STEM, and skilled trades, potentially in partnership with colleges and local businesses. The goal is to provide older girls with more focused opportunities while creating additional pathways to higher education and career-related experiences.

The board expressed support for the council's continued emphasis on troop participation for younger girls alongside more specialized opportunities for older girls.