Minutes

GDUI Board of Directors Meeting

November 23, 2024

1. The GDUI Board of Directors convened on Saturday, November 23, 2024, at 1:00 pm eastern via Zoom.

2. Attendance:

a. Board Members Present:

Sarah Calhoun, President,

Maria Hansen, 1st Vice President,

Cheryl McNeill Fisher, 2nd Vice President,

Penny Reeder, Immediate Past President,

Maria Kristic, Treasurer,

Lynn Merrill, Secretary,

Patty Fletcher, , Director 1,

Lolly Lijewski, Director 2

Olivia Norman, Director 3,

Liz Bottner, Director 6,

Joyce Feinberg, Affiliates Liaison,

Ryan Hooie, Guide Dog Schools Liaison,

b. Board members Excused (E) or Absent (A)

Vicky Kennedy, Director 4, (E)

Kay Malmquist, Director 5, (A)

Andrea Giudice, Editor, (E)

c. Invited Guests:

Membership Committee Chair (Vacant)

Dixie Sanderson, Membership Data Base Manager (E),

Melanie Brunson, Advocacy and Legislative Affairs Committee Chair P)

Terri Terlau, Special Concerns Committee Chair (A),

Kenneth Semien, Sr., ACB Board Liaison (E),

d. Others Present: GDUI members who were in attendance were invited to announce themselves. Five members announced their presence.

3. Approval of Agenda: President Calhoun called for any additions or changes to the previously published Agenda. After adding one item in New Business from the Treasurer, a motion was made to approve the Agenda (Norman/Reeder). Motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

4. Announcements: President Calhoun Thanked Maria Hansen, Cheryl McNiel-Fisher, and Lynn Merrill for their dedication to the organization as their terms come to an end on December 31, 2024. . She welcomed New Directors, Patti Fletcher and Terry Terlau. P. Fletcher begins as Director 1 since that was a vacant seat and T. Terlau will begin on January 1, 2025.

Thanks to D. Sanderson and Nominations Committee for their work on making the elections and voting processes so smooth.

5. Approval of minutes: Minutes of the September 28, 2024 , Board of Directors Meeting were distributed to members prior to the meeting. President Calhoun called for any changes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

6. Acceptance of Treasurer’s Reports: Treasurer’s Reports for September and October , 2024, were distributed to members prior to the meeting. Hearing no corrections, the reports were accepted.

7. Appointments:

1. 1Vice-President: President Calhoun appointed Liz Botner; motion to approve the appointment (McNiel-Fisher/Norman) carried unanimously by acclamation.
2. Secretary: President Calhoun appointed Lynn Merrill; motion to approve the appointment (Botner/Kristic) carried unanimously by acclamation.
3. Appointment of P Fletcher as Membership Committee Chair (no Board approval required for Advisory Committee appointments)

8. Review and approval of the 2025 GDUI Budget: President Calhoun asked for clarification of the term “place marker” which was used in the report from the Budget and Finance Committee. M. Kristic explained that a line item under the Fund Raising Committee had been added for a donation for emergency veterinary care but that no projected income nor expense, nor an organization, had been inserted. M. Hansen explained that over years past, the organization has been using cash reserves to make up for deficits but this year there will need to be a withdrawal from the investment portfolio to meet the deficit. There are some very expensive operating costs, such as voting and unfortunately some budget requests from committees could not be fully granted. Further explanations of the organizational classification under the Internal Revenue Code and clarification of how a withdrawal is calculated were provided. A motion to approve the 2025 Budget (Kristic/Fletcher) carried unanimously by acclamation.

9. Elections: when members vote in the Vote Now ballot, they are offered an option to make comments related to the ballot. One comment asked why one could not have an option to vote no for the candidates, rather one can only vote in favor of or abstain. The Bylaws and DC Code specify that with respect to voting for Directors, one my vote for or abstain from voting for a candidate. Conversely, both the Bylaws and DC Code state that for any other action, one may vote for, against, or abstain from voting on the action (in this case Bylaw proposals).

10. Editor’s Report: P. Reeder reported that the last edition of “Paws” was late however the December edition is on track for publication on time. She expressed appreciation for all the contributions and encourages all to continue submitting articles.

11. Blessing of the Guides: President Calhoun reminded members that the Blessing of the Guides is scheduled for Sunday, December 29 at 5:00pm Eastern. A reminder of how and by when to submit names will be distributed. Discussion ensued with ideas for broadening the group of participants and the platform(s) for the event. Rather than being a GDUI-hosted event via ZOOM, it was moved (Botner/Fletcher) upon to put it on the community feed as a podcast and schedule it on ACB Community. Motion carried unanimously by acclamation.

The ZOOM links can be shared across all email accounts but not on the website nor social media to prevent “ZOOM bombers”. L. Botner will attempt to send an announcement to Community inviting participants who wish to have their guides’ names submitted for the blessings prior to the deadline of November 28. Advertising can begin ow on Conversation as well as the GDUI lists. P. Reeder will coordinate getting the announcements on Community and Conversation. P. Fletcher will complete the required forms anticipating one hour and a half.

12. The January 25, 2025 Board Meeting will be a short business meeting followed by a retreat of sorts for Board members. Planning of goals and priorities, a review of governing documents, the code of ethics, among other things will be discussed.

13. Sherwood Forest Farms sales of wreaths, centerpieces, and reindeer have been extended until Monday, November 25.

14. An update on Pawsitive Dog Training was not available.

15. GDUI 2024 Budget increase: M. Kristic explained the current status of the 2024 Budget with emphasis on withdrawing from the First Georgetown portfolio. There are cash reserves on hand but there are minimum balance requirements in one account and some anticipated expenses from Vote Now and Sherwood Forest. Comparing the year-to-date income against what may be withdrawn in order to comply with Internal Revenue Code allowances (not more than one-third of income may be withdrawn) Kristic moved to withdraw not more than $6,400.00 from first Georgetown in order to maintain cash reserves (Kristic/Hansen). That amount includes the associated transfer fees which are not expected to exceed $100.00. Motion carried unanimously by acclamation.

16. Important dates:

Board Meetings scheduled on the fourth Saturday of every other month:

January 25 2025 (brief business meeting followed by a “retreat”)

March 22, 2025

May 24, 2025 (this is Memorial Day Weekend) Motion to move to May 17 (Merrill/Reeder) carried unanimously by acclamation.

July 26, 2025

September 27, 2025

November 22, 2025

Other Important Dates:

April 30, 2025 – International Guide Dog Day

September 2025 – National Service Dog Month

October 18, 2025 – Annual Membership Meeting

October19, 2025 – Elections Begin

17. Adjournment: in the absence of further business, motion to adjourn (Norman/Kristic) carried unanimously at 2:54 Eastern.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn Merrill

Secretary

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

The Budget and Finance Committee, after soliciting budget requests from Board members and Committee Chairs,  met three times in late October and early November to draft a preliminary 2025 GDUI budget.  The B & F Committee distributed a proposed budget to these leaders on November 8 and asked that they take advantage of the following two weeks to review the document, ask questions via the Board list and additional questions during the Board meeting and be prepared to vote on passage during the November 23 Board meeting.

The Committee is tasked with preparing a realistic budget that is compatible with GDUI’s Mission/Purposes.  For several years, GDUI has found it necessary to draw down on our cash reserves to correct the disparity between projected income and operating expenses.  This proposed budget includes a $4,500.00 withdrawal from GDUI’s First Georgetown investment portfolio to cover financial obligations while remaining within the withdrawal limitations applicable to GDUI’s tax-exempt classification.

It is incumbent on this Board to work together to develop projects to increase future revenue but to also seek out areas where we could reduce operating expenses.  Possible cost cutting  could be achieved  in the areas of convention and voting.

A “place marker” line item for emergency veterinary care assistance will be included in the budget.  This item will remain blank this year with no specific dollar amount or organization being specified.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Hansen, Chair and VP1

Maria Kristic, Treasurer

Lynn Merrill, Secretary

Penny Reeder, Immediate Past President

Sarah Calhoun, President

GDUI Budget for 2025 Attached

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

GDUI Bylaws Committee Report November 2024

One Bylaw amendment was proposed to  the membership during the Otober 2024 elections.  It passed with the result shown below.

Amendment (129 voters indicated a choice on this ballot; vote for 1):

Votes    Name   %

|     |     |     |     |

123        Yes         95.3%

4             Abstain                3.1%

2             No          1.6%

The accepted language reads:

7.05:  Notice of Meetings and elections

(1)The Organization shall give notice to the members entitled to vote of the date, time, and place of each annual membership meeting, special membership meeting, and elections  .  The notice shall be given at least 45 days before the annual meeting date, the Elections,  and at least 10 days in the case of a special meeting.

The amendment has been made to the GDUI Bylaws, which are pasted beneath my name.

Respectfully,

Lynn Merrill

Chairperson, GDUI Bylaws Committee

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

Editor’s Report

Greetings,

The October issue was delayed, however, it was published as the Fall issue and seems to have been received just fine. There will be a December issue, however, it may be on the shorter side given how recently the Fall issue was published.

In 2025 the bimonthly publication schedule will continue.

Thanks to all who have submitted items, and requests to others to do the same.

Respectfully,

Andrea Giudice, Editor Paws for GDUI News You can Use!

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

Vickie Kennedy, GDUI director and member of the fundraising committee, kicked off this year’s Sherwood Forest Farms fundraiser with a cheery, merry and whimsical flyer! GDUI appreciates everyone who made a purchase to support this guide dog focused organization.

There was a total of 77 items purchased.  48 22 inch evergreen wreaths, 15 centerpieces and 14 Silver and Gold Reindeer Pair.

Happy Holidays!

Sarah Calhoun

Vickie Kennedy

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

Membership Database Report

November 2024

Our 2024 GDUI Membership stands at:

Annual Members: 284\*

Life Members:118

Total Members:402

Of that number we have 228 Affiliate members.

* \* One of our annual members has just recently converted their membership to a life membership.  Therefore, that member has been removed from the annual total and added to the life.

Our Early bird total for 2025 is:8

Respectfully submitted,

Dixie Sanderson

Guide Dog Users Inc.

Membership Database Manager

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

Nominations Committee Report

November 2024

Thank you to the Nominations Committee, Lynn Merril, and Cheryl Peabody, and to the Moderators and timers of the 2 candidate forums, Forum 1 Moderator Penny Reader, Forum 1 Timer: Lynn Merrill, Forum 2 Moderator: Lolly Lijewski, Forum 2 Timer:   Joyce Feinberg and for all of your parts in helping to make this a successful elections season.

We had a little over 30 percent of our membership vote in this election.

The results are below.

Respectfully submitted,

Dixie Sanderson

Nominations Committee Chair

Ballots cast to date: 129 (32.3%)

Distribution: 101 e-votes, 28 phone

Vote has ended.

Guide Dog Users, Inc. 2024 Election

Open from 12:01 AM, October 20, 2024 to 11:59 PM, October 27, 2024

Total voters for ballot: 129 (32.3% of 399 total codes ); as of 7:39:03 AM, Monday, October 28, 2024 (U.S. Eastern).

Vote mode distribution: 101 e-vote (78.3%) , 28 telephone (21.7%)

Amendment (129 voters indicated a choice on this ballot; vote for 1):

Votes    Name   %

|     |     |     |     |

123        Yes         95.3%

4             Abstain                3.1%

2             No          1.6%

President (129 voters indicated a choice on this ballot; vote for 1):

Votes    Name   %

|     |     |     |     |

122        Sarah Calhoun (incumbent) From Missouri        94.6%

7             Abstain                5.4%

Second Vice President (129 voters indicated a choice on this ballot; vote for 1):

Votes    Name   %

|     |     |     |     |

119        Maria Hansen From New York   92.2%

10          Abstain                7.8%

Treasurer (129 voters indicated a choice on this ballot; vote for 1):

Votes    Name   %

|     |     |     |     |

127        Maria Kristic (incumbent) From New York           98.4%

2             Abstain                1.6%

Director (129 voters indicated a choice on this ballot; vote for 3):

Votes    Name   %

|     |     |     |     |

114        Terrie Terlau From Kentucky       88.4%

112        Olivia Norman (incumbent) From Washington DC          86.8%

94          Patty Fletcher From Tennessee                72.9%

4             Abstain                3.1%

Electronic voting by Vote-Now.com -

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

Public Relations Committee Report

November, 2024

An issue with the Office Manager option on the Contact Us page form as reported by a member has been resolved. It now works as expected.

Our Meeting Minutes page has been updated with the latest approved minutes from our board meetings. This page is accessible from the navigation menu of each

page of our Web site or directly at [Meeting Minutes - Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI) (guidedogusersinc.org)](https://guidedogusersinc.org/resources/meeting-minutes/)

As of November 21, 2024, we have 878 followers of our Facebook page, 352 members in our Friends of GDUI Facebook group, and 301 followers of our X (formerly Twitter) handle. Our social media links can be found in the Widgets section of every page of our Web site, along with the links to subscribe to our Chat and Business lists. Our Facebook page can be accessed directly at <https://www.facebook.com/GDUInc/>, our Facebook group can be accessed at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GDUINC/> , and our X timeline can be accessed at <https://x.com/gduinc>.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Kristic

Chair

GDUI Public Relations

\*\*\*end\*\*\*

Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI)

Treasurer’s Report, September, 2024

Income:

Product sales: $134.95

Product shipping: $32.50

Annual dues: $15.00

Total income: $182.45

2024 YTD Income: $7,060.67

2024 Expected Income: $12,404.00

Expenses:

Grasshopper, annual: ($417.51)

Awards, Braille plaque: ($401.17)

Convention, Gifts for presenters: ($230.00)

Webmaster: ($222.00)

Mailing membership meeting information to those without email: ($96.15)

Product shipping: ($21.85)

PayPal fees: ($4.97)

Square fees: ($1.25)

Total expenses: ($1,394.90)

2024 YTD Expenses: ($7,742.58)

2024 Expected Expenses: ($27,640.56)

Balance Reconciliations:

Capital One:

Beginning balance as of August 31, 2024: $4,451.19

Credits: $30.25

Debits: ($1,166.68)

Ending balance as of September 30, 2024: $3,314.76

Carrollton Bank:

Beginning balance as of August 31, 2024: $4,360.67

Credits: $0.00

Debits: ($0.00)

Ending balance as of September 30, 2024: $4,360.67

PayPal:

Beginning balance as of August 31, 2024: $2,010.94

Credits: $150.95

Debits: ($226.97)

Ending balance as of September 30, 2024: $1,934.92

First Georgetown Securities as of September 30, 2024: $498,712.07

Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI)

Treasurer’s Report, October, 2024

Income:

Convention registrations: $1,080.00

Wreath fundraiser, Sherwood Forest Farms: $839.00

Product sales: $100.00

Product shipping: $26.00

Life membership: $300.00

Annual dues: $45.00

Donations, PayPal: $45.00

Donations, Square: $25.00

Total income: $2,460.00

2024 YTD Income: $9,520.67

2024 Expected Income: $12,404.00

Expenses:

Advocacy, Rideshare rally attendance\*: ($1,248.93)

InCorp Services, Registered agent fee, 5 years, 2024-2029: ($332.80)

Webmaster: ($23.05)

Web site, domain renewal, guidedogusersinc.org: ($21.17)

Product shipping: ($21.85)

Annual meeting door prizes: ($50.00)

Zoom, Large meetings add-on for annual meeting: ($50.00)

International wire fee: ($40.00)

PayPal fees: ($37.20)

Square fees: ($2.39)

Total expenses: ($1,898.04)

\*Partial; remaining reimbursements will be reflected in November report

2024 YTD Expenses: ($9,640.62)

2024 Expected Expenses: ($27,640.56)

Balance Reconciliations:

Capital One:

Beginning balance as of September 30, 2024: $3,314.76

Credits: $1,132.61

Debits: ($1,765.95)

Ending balance as of October 31, 2024: $2,681.42

Carrollton Bank:

Beginning balance as of September 30, 2024: $4,360.67

Credits: $0.00

Debits: ($0.00)

Ending balance as of October 31, 2024: $4,360.67

PayPal:

Beginning balance as of September 30, 2024: $1,934.92

Credits: $1,325.00

Debits: ($129.70)

Ending balance as of October 31, 2024: $3,130.22

First Georgetown Securities as of October 31, 2024: $501,123.29

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Kristic

Treasurer

Guide Dog Users, Inc. (GDUI)

\*\*\*end\*\*\*