

**Green Mountain Self-Advocates**  
**GMSA Retreat about Non-Profit Board ~ Montpelier, VT**  
**June 16, 2014 ~ 9:30AM – 2:30PM**



**Attendance: 28 people**

Randy Lizotte Next Step Self-Advocacy  
Nicole LeBlanc GMSA/Capitol Advocates Together  
Jeanette Hurdle Communication Alliance  
Tracy Tresher Communication Alliance  
Sydney Boyd Next Step Self-Advocacy  
Nicole Villemare Next Step Self-Advocacy  
Max Barrows GMSA/Capitol Advocates Together  
Heather Raymond Next Step Self-Advocacy  
Tammy Maberry Advocates for Action  
Paula Collins Advocates for Action  
Lorna Merrill Advocates for Action  
Linda Monette Advocates for Action  
Skye Peebles GMSA  
Wendy C, Friends Helping Friends  
Heather B, Friends Helping Friends

Amy Andersen Next Step Self-Advocacy  
Cy Trombley, Getting Acquainted Through Self-Advocacy  
Marilyn Getting Acquainted Through Self-Advocacy  
Amy Getting Acquainted Through Self-Advocacy  
Debbie Demars Getting Acquainted Through Self-Advocacy  
Erin Rose Communication Alliance  
Kyle M, GMSA/Communication Alliance  
April M Communication Alliance  
Kris Medina Communication Alliance  
Sean Friends Helping Friends  
Rachel MacMartin Friends Helping Friends  
Karen Topper GMSA/Capitol Advocates Together  
Rich Atkinson (support staff for MB)

**Board Members** Total 25 board members



- 90% 23 people with developmental disabilities
- 10% 2 Allies

Each local groups can elect 1 member to the board. People should choose an alternate. Board Make-Up:

- 4 officers
- 19 Local group representatives (1 from each local group)
- 2 allies

Right now, there are no rules about the length of time you can be a board member (no term limits). We can look into term limits in the future once we start operating if it is an issue that comes up. Need to do training with the board members about conflicts of interest. October 1 is deadline for board members.

**Their board role is to MAKE decisions. Not to DO things like a staff does.**

## Meetings



Everyone should be able to share ideas but only board members vote. During the Retreat people wanted to keep having monthly meetings, but make 4 of them board meetings. People also said they prefer face to face meetings over meeting on interactive TV or by conference call. Today we need to Vote and pick one of these options: Should we:

1. Have 11 meetings per year. Four times per year, the monthly meeting is a board meeting. They are the same meeting.
2. Have 11 meetings per year. In the AM, have the member meeting. Then have lunch. In the PM, have the board meeting.

GMSA staff will put agenda and minutes on the website. The board will vote during the July meeting about what to do.

## Officers



Officer nominations come from the OFFICIAL board. Local groups will tell their board rep who to nominate.

The whole membership will vote on the officers like we have been doing. We will have people's speeches up on YouTube. Members will vote by paper ballot.

## Committees



Committees are run by a chairperson. A committee talks about a special project. The chairperson reports back to the Board President. Committees can decide on how many people need to be present. For example, the Voices and Choices Committee.

## How Do We Get Board By October 1<sup>st</sup>?

Groups will nominate 1 person from each group. These are the By-Laws rule according to GMSA for being a self-advocacy board member:

1. Must be PWDD

2. Local group must select you
3. Must agree to go to 4 years per year
4. Have to be an active member of a local group

Lots of groups have already elected this person – let’s check to see who these people are and that they still want to be part of these duties. Once we have the self-advocate board members, they will nominate and select the allies. Allies – people with resources, are well known, have lots of skills we want to tap into. We will brainstorm and then the whole board will pick the allies

## Guardians

It is the responsibility of the President and Treasurer to sign official documents. One issue is that if a person has a guardian they are not able to sign contracts. For other officer positions and to be a board member it is okay to have a guardian.

## New Job Titles



We need to change the words we use for job titles. It helps line us up with other agencies and the titles they use. “It’s about becoming a non-profit, not changing our jobs.” We basically are going to substitute the word “director” instead of coordinator.

- So we need a vote today. At the retreat a motion was made to change the following words:
- Now Max’s job title is Outreach Coordinator. We propose to change it to Outreach Director.
- Now Nicole job title is Advocacy Coordinator. We propose to change it to Advocacy Director.
- Now Skye’s job is Program and Development Coordinator. We propose to change it to Program and Development Director.
- Now Topper’s job title is State Coordinator. We propose to change it to Administrative Director.
- Now Kyle’s and Kris’s job title is Disability Educator. We are proposed to change it to Advocacy Educator.

**MOTION PASSED.**

GMSA has a handbook written in 2003. We reviewed the table of contents. The group brainstormed topics to cover as we adapt sections of the handbook to be for board members.

- Responsibilities of being a board member of a nonprofit
- How the meetings work
- How to make decisions
- How to listen to your local group
- How to communicate during a board meeting
- How to follow through and bring things back to local group
- Group agreements
- Mentoring
- Accommodations
- How to prepare for a board meeting
- How to learn about making financial decisions
- Mission of GMSA
- History of GMSA and the self-advocacy movement

The group recommended that the board create a “what we believe” statement to be included similar to the SABE Just Do It statement.