

Troop/Crew 56 Adult Committee Meeting

3/7/23

Present: Syd Cash, Diane Johnson, Kathy Kelts, Sue Kriegsman, Michelle Holmes, MaryEllen Galante, Sen Blankinship, Gerry Katz, Gail McCullagh, Pankaj Bansal, Ann Kao, Syd Cash, Hitesh Trivedi, Erik Blankinship, Gaelle Llambi, Andrew Hartness, Robin Bonner, Ed Henley, Marietta Sbraccia

1. Welcome

2. Inclusion

a. Food Allergy Policy:

- i. Summary of survey – 4 nut allergies w/epi-pens; 1 more allergy no longer carries epi-pen; some have had treatment to tolerate nuts; 2 vegetarians; 1 future crossover has multiple allergies – family plans to bring own food.
- ii. Primary focus of policy is weekend trips. Longer, high adventure trips will require their own planning.
- iii. Discussion: Needed: Comprehensive policy: anaphylaxis allergen free weekend trips no matter what the allergen; Simple: easy to follow: adult advisor in charge of ensuring allergy-free weekend. National policy: if Scout or family is not comfortable, don't attend. Training for youth and adults. But, adult on trip may not know how to check for allergens to extent needed. Families have more expertise in this area – can offer to buy the items that are higher risk for cross-contamination (for nuts, that is mainly chocolate and bread.) May not be safe or sufficient to rely on adult advisor. Current proposed policy allows for Plan B, back-up food for allergic kids. Policy as proposed requires two-week planning process for trips. Scouts should take communication role. Can't be rushed. One possible idea: fixed menu with fixed choices to reduce burden on adult trip leader or fixed shopping list that is cross-checked. Taking families out of process may not be safe because products change – so what was on the safe list may no longer be safe. But if items chosen are on an okayed list, maybe families don't have to shop but just check labels and Scouts use back-up food if contamination at production facility is on label. Concern that Scouts will lose opportunity for creativity in cooking if we choose a set menu, particularly after just going through cooking merit badge. MaryEllen, leader of Cooking merit badge is collecting recipes now from the whole troop. Proposal: trial for next 3 trips – parent shop with Scouts and review products before purchase. Suggestion: no allergens on trips, menu planning checked by families, shopping from approved list. Concerns: Unwashed pans may lead to risk. Brightly colored pots

that are nut-free? Separate cooking group would eliminate concern, but we are not patrol-based for cooking on trips. Separating allergic youth would be needlessly stigmatizing and not inclusive. Trip by trip vs. universal policy? For trip by trip, thorough washing of cooking pots required. Removing nuts from all trips brings risk down substantially.

- iv. Decision: Nut-free (peanuts and tree nuts) policy for weekend trips. Eliminate foods with possible cross-contamination at production facility only for trips that allergic Scouts are attending. Evaluate policy every year based on needs of Scouts in Troop/Crew. Other allergens may be identified in other years.

- b. **Troop masking policy** – Proposal: drop mask mandate policy and encourage people to mask if they choose, and individually ask others to mask if needed. Lots of social emotional struggles in society and Troop may be eased by increased feelings of connection. Troop potlucks and other indoor activities without masks can support this connection. Current requirement outside of Troop is masking at Healthcare facilities only – not schools, sports clubs, etc. Troop continues to provide masks so that if asked, everyone can mask. Alternate proposal: Adult Committee continues to mask, but youth allowed to go mask-free. Another alternative: For Boards of Review or other other close-proximity indoor meetings, if one person is masked, the others mask. Current thinking from healthcare professionals about close contact exposure: less than 3 feet away, more than 15 minutes of exposure to known positive individual = close contact. Volunteer drivers – ask if they will prefer masking. Scouts bring mask with them to meetings and trips so that they can be respectful of those who would like masks. Testing before trips? Varied opinions about efficacy of testing as mitigation strategy, but some sense that it is sometimes helpful. Tests supplied by Troop would be expensive so encourage testing at home before trips.

- i. Decision: We will discontinue current policy of requiring masks indoors. Scout youth or adults may mask if they prefer AND ask others to mask during a close conversation.
- ii. The Adult Committee will continue to mask out of respect for members of the committee with COVID vulnerability.
- iii. Drivers on trips may require masking in their cars. Adult advisor can ask whether a driver would prefer masking and help support Scouts to respect decisions.
- iv. Everyone should continue to bring a mask to all meetings so that they are prepared to respect a request to mask from any individual with whom they are conversing. We will encourage Scouts to display courtesy and respect by masking if asked AND by asking someone who is masked, “Would you like me to mask?”
- v. We will continue to require testing before trips.

- vi. Quartermaster will bring box of masks to meetings. We have masks but need tests. Troop will supply tests for those who do not have them at home, but general expectation is that Scout will test at home before trip. Free tests are available at libraries and other community sites.
 - vii. If immuno-compromised or otherwise COVID-vulnerable Scouts join Troop in the future, we will reconsider policy so that vulnerable youth do not have to be in the position of asking other youth to mask.
 - c. **Integration of Crossover Scouts** – Next week first full meeting. Kavita (Junior Assistant Scoutmaster) will be patrol leader in separate patrol from now until end of school year. Help move the new Crossovers through initial rank(s).
- 3. Church Relationship** – report from Michelle Holmes, Charter Org Rep
- a. **Recent Vestry Meeting** – church has been asked to not rent out other spaces on Tues nights while Scouts are here – likely to happen but not confirmed yet.
 - b. **Hosting Eagle Courts of Honor** – Committee had previously made decision to move Courts of Honor out of Tues meeting time slot. After Emily's, any Eagle CoH outside of Tues night costs \$100/hr to rent church space; family would be responsible for this cost.
 - c. **Service opportunities for new Scouts** – some food pantry times available before end of school year
 - d. **Clean-up after meetings:** Scouts can participate, but appointed adult is in charge of completing checklist and reporting to Michelle.
 - e. **June church retreat** – addressed outside of meeting.
- 4. Communication**
- a. **New Weekly Newsletter:** Excellent!! Erik Blankinship: High start-up effort but expected to be low maintenance over time.
- 5. Advancement**
- a. Cooking Merit Badge - completed
 - b. Camping Merit Badge – in process
 - c. Canoeing Merit Badge – in process
 - d. Sustainability & Architecture – April/May with Sen & Andrew
 - e. Merit Badges not offered by Troop 56 – provide resources in newsletter
 - f. Rank Advancement and OA Elections – in calendar
- 6. Activities**
- a. **Wilderness Survival in March**
 - i. **Troop Gear:** Andrew –
 1. lots of medium pots, few large pots; one frying pan. Need supplies for 2 patrols and old goat patrol on trips.
 2. Water purification tablets out-of-date – purchase only when needed; discard when out-of-date.
 3. Need for closed cell thermal sleeping pad – Costs about \$15. This is personal gear, not supplied by Troop;

4. Missing knives;
 5. Need to set up tents, cooking stations, etc. to see what's missing,
 6. Have lots of tents, backpacks, medium pots
 7. Gas cannisters – cannot stay in church – Quartermaster will store at home. Gail currently has them.
- ii. **New Ukrainian Scout** – Mark working with Max. Emergency survival kits.
- b. **April Trip** – car-camping/canoe trip, MHA-required trip 4/28 Syd & Neil?? No female leaders yet. No youth leaders yet. Need to move forward to select leaders and plan.
 - c. **May** – Hitesh & Diane white water rafting
 - d. **June** – Michelle & Dereck for non-MHA patrols; Ann & Syd for MHA crew 6/2
 - e. **Trips for Next Year:** Penny Haney, Activities coordinator, collecting ideas for trips for next year. Email her with ideas.
 - f. **MHA** – four Scouts from Troop 56; 4 Somerville Scouts and one adult; pre-training needed – canoeing merit badge and wilderness first aid for adults and Scouts
 - g. **Summer camp:** Diane Johnson: 14 Scouts signed up; ask again in newsletter to be sure to reach Crossovers
7. **Training 3/26 ILST (Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troop)** Sun afternoon or evening – will cost Troop \$100/hr to rent church space; or at Syd's house
 - a. NYLT at Yawgoog for age 14+; Griswold 1st week of July – individual Scouts can sign up as interested.
 8. **Financial** – Trust request due soon. New Scouts need to pay activity fees. PLC voted to approve spring fundraiser: First Aid kits.
 - a. Gail will order Class B shirts and other Troop/Crew 56 clothing – Erik will help; Suggestion to buy Scout hats for good marketing – beanies and baseball caps. Need to inventory of what we have already in Troop storage.
 - b. Proposal: 56 Friends of Scouting – non-profit, 50c-3 to raise \$, donate to church; Good Scout luncheon to raise money with mayor?
 - c. Trust for summer, high adventure & training; can we add in church rental for leadership training or indoor portions of merit badges? Trust would have to pay church directly. Church obliged to provide meeting and storage space to Troop/Crew, but not space for special events.
 9. **Patrol Leaders Council (PLC):** Scoutmasters decided to hold this meeting first Tues of the month. Other Scouts will not come that night. About 15 Scouts in PLC. There is concern that other Scouts miss out on programming Proposal: Offer a merit badge that is easy to offer in this setting to non-PLC Scouts during that first Tuesday? To be considered and determined later.

Next Adult Committee Meeting: Tues 4/4/23 7:30pm