Dear Concerned Members:

We sincerely appreciate you having the best interests of the NSS at heart. We wish to assure you that the Board of Governors shares that sentiment. We have worked toward making continued improvements to our governance structure and financial controls long before Annette's departure. We hope that by better addressing the points presented in your letter sent August 3, 2026 we can alleviate any confusion and concern. Below we have addressed each of your points in turn.

1) The board stands by our selection of Kristine Ebrey to serve as interim ED. We have consulted our attorneys and the CPA firm conducting our ongoing audit to ensure that there are no issues with her serving simultaneously as S/T and interim ED. We understand the need for checks and balances and have added many additional measures over the past years to strengthen financial controls. All distributions that were previously approved by the ED now go to the chair of the board. Despite our audit CPA confirming that our controls were in order and met all expectations, we requested additional measures to have extra eyes on the finances. We have now implemented monthly reports which are reviewed by members of the financial review committee. In no way does Kristine's current role remove any essential checks or balances, and we have ensured that we are following best practices to maintain a continuity of operations.

2) This has already been completed. [withheld] actions preceded the ED's start date of August 4, 2025. For context, he originally reported to the facilities chair, [withheld] [withheld] who oversaw the financial operations at headquarters. Upon the hiring of an Executive Director, this responsibility and oversight transferred to Annette Engel. [withheld] was fired during Annette's tenure, and no one else has held financial and/or personnel oversight over him.

   Please keep in mind that while the S-T role verified the facilities chair and/or the ED confirmed any distributions, that individual did not have management oversight over the staff or any of the contracts related to the headquarters. Whatever actions [withheld] committed had nothing to do with the S-T. The S-T was informed after the ED reviewed the bookkeeping and brought it to their attention.

   Additionally, as covered in the next point, a full audit is being conducted, and all facts related to the embezzlement were discussed during the CPA firm's engagement so they can review and provide additional feedback.The Board has been committed to transparency around the HQ issue as far back as the spring and does not plan to change its approach.

3) We should start by clarifying that an audit has been a necessary action for years both to ensure the longevity of the NSS and increase our eligibility for grants long term.

Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC was approached in December of 2025 after being one of a few candidates vetted by the financial review committee. We ultimately decided to engage this CPA firm to do a complete audit, and it was incorporated into the March budget. Because of our fiscal year, the audit kicked off on June 1, 2026, and has been in progress since then. The S/T and Financial Review committee have worked diligently to produce all requested data and reports and to answer any questions the firm has had. They expect a completion date in the late fall. We are excited about their report, and all findings and recommendations will be available to the membership, as will bylaws updates, which require notice, as always.

4) The board stands by the interim appointment of Kristine Ebrey, who does not have an interest in running for the full-time position and would not be considered by the board for the position. The Board discussed three candidates apart from the current Chair to fill the gap. The Chair declined, as did one other candidate, and Kristine was ultimately selected given her proximity to operations would simplify the audit needed across staff and Division Heads. Kristine falls outside of the current governing group, as the S/T and ED roles are fully within the operational division. We agree that anyone with governing authority would not be an appropriate fit for the interim ED role. We are working diligently on the next hiring process and will share the job posting as soon as it is available. The aforementioned town hall will also include context of what backgrounds and experience the BoG wants to see out of the new hire and why. ‘

5) We will continue to make our controls more transparent. In the next NSS news, we have shared our use of the RAMP financial control system and approval methods as well as the additional report reviews to be conducted by the financial review committee. The audit report, later this year, and the actions we will take to address any findings will be shared to continue our efforts toward a more secure financial operations system.

    a. Updates are being made to the website to make minutes easier to locate. A revised BoG manual through 3/14/2026 is posted in the members section. The outstanding minutes will follow. The board is also going to hold meetings in the month after a BoG meeting specifically to approve the minutes, so there is a more timely release to the membership. Closed sessions occur only to discuss private matters such as employment concerns, land acquisitions, and legal matters. The ED will continue to sit in these meetings as requested by the former ED. Reports to membership are made after the conclusion of a closed session, with as much detail as possible without jeopardizing the NSS.
    b. This has already been done. This change was implemented upon the hiring of an Executive Director.
    c. This has also already been completed. All current employees report to the Executive Director.

d. This has also been completed. As of July 27, 2026, background checks are completed for all employees of the NSS via ADP.

We hope this answers many of your questions and shows how much time and effort we have put into considering these issues. We genuinely appreciate your input and questions and strive to continue improving. All of us welcome your continued questions. Please know that none of our actions have been made without great thought, and what we all want is for the NSS to be successful and well managed.

Sincerely,

The NSS Board of Governors