

NSP 2020 Board election candidate application

Email the completed form to elections@nspserver.org before 4:00 p.m. mountain daylight time on June 1, 2020.

Personal information

Name Donna J. Gardino
Street Address _____
City, State, Zip Fairbanks, AK
Email address djgardino@gmail.com
Work phone _____
Home phone _____
Cell phone _____
Best phone/time Mornings Alaska Time

Please indicate which of the above pieces of personal information you approve making available to the NSP membership if you are selected as a nominee Name, City, State, Email address

LinkedIn (optional) _____
NSP 6-digit ID 223658
Member of NSP for how many years 15
Primary patrol Fairbanks Ski Patrol
Division Alaska
Credentials (e.g. senior, certified, Nordic Master) _____
National appointment Number, if applicable _____
Leadership Commendation Number, if applicable _____
Number of years previous Board service, if applicable _____

Please respond to each of the following questions concisely but completely.

1. - Describe your NSP Background: List the leadership positions you have held in your Patrol, Section, Region, Division and National.

I was the Secretary for the Fairbanks Ski Patrol from 2008-2019. I became an Alaska Assistant Division Director in 2020. With the Fairbanks Ski Patrol, I took on spearheading award nominations for approximately 12 years. I reviewed and scored annual national award nominations for two years.

2. - List your NSP Educational program participation and certification (OEC, OET, MTR, Avalanche, Instructor Development, Nordic/Backcountry).

I am an OEC Instructor and Mentor as well as an OET Instructor. Every year, I teach three to four classroom sessions for the OEC course and assist with the Alaska Northern Region OEC Refresher. I participate in weekly candidate training and in final scenarios either as a helpful patroller or evaluator. I was the IOR for the OEC Refresher for Alaska's Northern Region in 2019 and will be again in 2020.

I also participate in annual OET training with patrollers and candidates.

3. - Have you served as a board member in any organization? If so, please list the organization, years of service and board leadership positions held, if any.

State of Alaska Governor's Board on Roads and Highways - 2018 (inception) to present

Downtown Association of Fairbanks - 2015 to present

University of Alaska Fairbanks Master Planning Committee - 2012 - present

4. - In your professional, personal and community life outside of NSP, describe your leadership and other relevant experience and how it might benefit the NSP?

From 2008 - 2017, I served as the inaugural Executive Director of the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS), an organization designated by the Governor responsible for all transportation planning in the urbanized area. I managed an annual operating budget of approximately \$430,000 and an annual capital budget of \$9-\$23 million. I reported to the Board which was made up of the three Mayors in the area, the State of Alaska Regional Director of Transportation and the Department of Conservation Director of Air Quality as well as a city council and borough assembly representative. FMATS is a Metropolitan Planning Organization, one of about 400 in the nation. I ensured good standing with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration so that federal funds for surface transportation could be awarded to the metropolitan area for its projects.

As the Coordinator and Executive Director, I was responsible for understanding the federal regulations, interpreting them and coordinating all actions with the state and the federal government. I reported to a diverse board primarily made up of politicians

with different agendas and priorities and developed policy and procedures to ensure that FMATS conducted a transparent and robust public process in setting priorities and allocating funds. I educated the board on all matters before the board with honesty and integrity. I was the Chair of the Technical Committee that provided recommendations to the board and utilized Robert's Rules of Order. I was responsible for the development of short-term and long-range (20+ years) plans and monitored the success of those plans through the use of S.M.A.R.T. objectives that were developed to achieve the goals of the planning process.

I fielded questions from the public, organizations and legislators at all levels on the work of FMATS and presented information to the public in many forums over the ten years I served. I believe these experiences have prepared me to work within the NSP structure, utilizing rules set forth in the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures. I can explain decisions and reasoning behind them and am comfortable interacting with others in order to reach the best solutions.

5. As you review the List of Needs, which one(s) interest you most and why?

As an Executive Director in the world of transportation, I have developed long and short term plans and successfully implemented those plans within resource constraints. This took strategic thinking to lead the efforts to develop the plans and leadership to steer the organization in implementing the plans. My work required that I be objective when dealing with the board and the agencies they represented. My job was to inform them and use my expertise and that of the technicians, to develop plans that could be realistically implemented.

In my work, I developed policy and procedures in line with all federal, state and local regulations and needed to have a working knowledge of all to be successful. I developed long term plans with S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Oriented) objectives so that results could be measured. I reviewed and amended operating agreements and bylaws and spearheaded an self-organizational study and transition plan which was subsequently implemented.

Communication is one of my key strengths. I presented at least 20 times a year to various audiences including the general public, rotaries, Chamber of Commerce, other committees, legislators and military leadership in Washington D.C. I have presented my knowledge of planning and organizations at conferences including the American Planning Association Alaska Division and at the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. I was tasked with presenting the ins and outs of developing a Metropolitan Planning Organization at a national conference when new MPOs were designated in the 2010 census.

6. The four standing committees are Education, Governance, Finance, and Planning. What knowledge, skills, and abilities would you bring to one or more of these committees?

Given my occupation, leadership and policy making background, I believe my skills and experience best target the Governance and Planning Committees and I appreciate the opportunity to currently serve on both of those committees as a Member-at-Large. The Governance Committee is of interest to me because of my

experience in developing organizations. I developed policy and procedures in line with all federal, state and local regulations which required a working knowledge of all to be successful. I developed long term plans with S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Oriented) objectives so that results could be measured.

My occupational experience is in the Planning realm. I have worked in the Transportation Planning realm for 14 years, and in community planning since 1995, volunteering for various ad-hoc committees such as military base reuse, waste management and stormwater management. Understanding the planning process and developing realistic, implementable and measurable plans is my strongest asset.

I also ran a small consulting business where I assisted small businesses in their development including policies, procedures, accounting processes and assisted them in grant writing and developing responses to proposals. This was done for non-profit as well as for-profit organizations.

I can wield a spreadsheet with ease and have been responsible for budgeting on a project, program and organizational basis. These skills would also be compatible with the Finance Committee. I earned a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Colorado at Boulder with an emphasis in Organization Management. This furthered the knowledge of my undergraduate degree in the same emphasis from Elmhurst College. I also hold a two-year accounting degree. I was FMATS' leader for ten years and worked with honesty and the highest ethical standards as a member of the American Planning Association. I was responsible for short-term (1-4 years) and long-term plans (up to 25 years). One of the most rewarding aspects of my work was implementing the plans we developed.

At FMATS, I organized several ad-hoc committees to tackle specific projects. These were made up of volunteers from all different walks of life. One was an Art Committee that was developed to issue a Call for Entries for an art installation connected to a transportation reconstruction project. We started with a blank slate, solicited 99 proposals world-wide and assisted in the management of its development and installation, on time and within budget. This effort was out of my realm as a transportation professional but it was very successful, timely and under budget. This demonstrated my ability to transfer my skills to a new challenge and be successful.

I am an OEC and OET Instructor as well as a Mentor so I am familiar with NSP and have a thorough knowledge of the organization. I have also read the Policies and Procedures, Corporate Articles and Bylaws and can get more familiar with current issues, like Requests for Action, as they arise. This is work that is familiar to me and easy to comprehend.

I have the ability to communicate telephonically and face to face, as required. I have been a practitioner of Robert's Rules of Order for over ten years and have been the Chair of committees that utilize this method for the same amount of time. I have participated in this structure for a much longer period.

7 - Fundraising is critical to the sustainability of any non-profit, including the NSP. What expertise would you bring to the Board with regard to improving our non-dues revenue?

I participate in our local fundraising events for our patrol through my use of social media. This has brought more participants to our events at a low per person cost. I also participate in fundraising for public radio. Telling my story and always remembering my inspiration drives my enthusiasm which makes it easy to engage supporters. I believe goal setting is important and being different and making it easy to act are critical for successful fundraising.

I have seen some Swag that the NSP distributes and I believe this could be improved through messaging and higher quality. Partnering with additional sponsors and manufacturers to develop a fundraising product on a national basis would enable the divisions to be stronger as well as increase brand recognition and hopefully, donations.

8. - Please describe one or two experiences in which you demonstrated your commitment to and support of the strategic mission of the NSP.

Not long after becoming an alpine patroller, I took the Instructor Development class so that I could become an instructor, both in OEC and Transportation. I have been instructing ever since and have also become a mentor. I enjoy educating and developing ways to better engage adult learners. I believe that has made me a better instructor and patroller and our instructors have been quite successful in developing new patrollers. I have also taken on the organizational responsibilities of the regional OEC Refresher. This work is directly in support of the strategic mission of the NSP, to help keep people safe on the mountain.

9. - The NSP faces many challenges. What do you see as the major challenge(s) facing the organization, and what strategic ideas and solutions would you offer?

The Four Rs: Recruitment, Retention, Relevancy and Recognition

As is true in many organizations, many long-standing people are retiring and there is a need to engage new patrollers and retain them. I believe recruitment is critical to the future success of the National Ski Patrol. It is important to contribute yourself and lead by example. I believe communicating the NSP mission by keeping members informed of all successes in an engaging way is important and helps to personalize the organization. I have seen some creative efforts from the Central Division regarding recruitment and I am certain it is happening in other areas as well. Every patrol should embrace these ideas in a focused effort to improve recruitment success.

Encouraging folks to participate year-round would also be of value in increasing the membership and a way to capture more interest in patrolling from a larger pool of interested candidates. It would also increase familiarity with the NSP throughout the

various resort industries, not just skiing but biking or snowshoeing, for example. I believe this year-round opportunity will lead to better retention.

Which leads me to relevancy. As to relevancy, we must remain financially stable, technologically advanced and organizationally adept at changing to meet the demands of the industry, which is changing. By being financially and technologically stable, we will be able to recruit and retain quality staff that will continue to protect the assets and resources of the NSP. Organizationally, we need to be able to recognize the trends in the snow and resort industries so that we may serve them with consistent and unparalleled service. Encouraging folks to participate year round would also be of value in increasing the membership and a way to capture more interest in patrolling from a larger pool of interested candidates. It would also increase familiarity with the NSP. So much so that we are considered one of the industry's greatest assets and remain relevant with the industry and management.

Recognition is also very important and can range from awards to day to day appreciation. Awards must be given selectively so their value remains high.

Other challenges include making all of our curriculum-based programs current, accessible and easier to learn and protection of the independence of the OEC program. Some of our backcountry patrols have very different needs and available resources and the NSP can work to close the gaps that exist in that training area.

Finally, moving forward in the pandemic world while providing emergency care is a substantial challenge and we must adjust and be flexible to change, which is necessary and desirable. The world has changed and we must show the leadership in developing plans for future operations in light of this world.

10. - Summarize why you would be the best candidate for membership on the NSP's Board of Directors.

I have over 15 years experience with the National Ski Patrol and have worked with patrollers of all ages and enjoy teaching and mentoring new candidates and instructors. I have participated in division wide events and am an Assistant Division Director and would like to be more involved on the national level. I am excited to currently be a member of the Planning and Governance committees and am thankful for those opportunities which can better to prepare me to participate on the board level. I also have a solid understanding of how Boards work having reported to a Board for ten years and currently participating on Boards at the local and state level. I have served as a Chair of a board-like committee for almost ten years and am quite familiar with Robert's Rules of Order. I recently retired and have the time to dedicate to this Board, and the energy and desire to participate in helping the NSP succeed in the future. I am excited to have the opportunity to be a part of this group that I already enjoy in my home state and would love to become part of the larger picture in moving us forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Resume (please attach as a separate document)

Please attach a professional resume including NSP-related activities.

References (please attach as a separate document)

Please include the name and contact information (email and phone) for up to three professional or personal references. Please also include their role(s)/title, organization and relationship to you. The role/title, organization and relationship to you will be made available to the membership if you are selected as a nominee.

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