Board Of Directors Letter To The General Membership

October 12, 2026

Dear Members,

A lot has changed in approximately 60 days, and you deserve a clear account of it from your Board of Directors and Administration. In that time we've strengthened how Get Free Minnesota is governed, clarified who on staff is responsible for what, and begun a careful review of our finances, all while the advocacy work has continued. None of this is process for its own sake. It's how we protect the mission, support the people doing the work and make sure you can see how decisions are made and how our resources are used.

On September 30, the Board adopted the **attached Code Of Business Conduct And Professional Ethics.** In plain terms, it asks everyone acting on behalf of Get Free Minnesota to communicate with respect, to keep honest and accurate records and to use funds responsibly. It also asks everyone to disclose any conflicts of interest and to stay within the authority they've been given. Just as important, it protects anyone who raises a concern in good faith and requires that concerns receive a fair review without retaliation. Directors, Officers, staff, interns, fellows, volunteers and others acting on behalf of the organization must complete the Code of Conduct acknowledgment and conflict of interest disclosure.

The Board is also reviewing a **proposed Drug-Free Workplace and Substance Use Policy.** It's pending legal review and Board adoption and hasn't taken effect. The policy would apply the same standards to everyone who works or serves on behalf of Get Free Minnesota: employees, contractors, Directors and Officers, whether paid or unpaid, and interns and volunteers. It centers on safety while working, protects lawful off-duty conduct, lawful prescriptions and medical-cannabis patient rights, keeps medical information confidential and authorizes no testing. Once adopted, every covered person will receive the policy with a short acknowledgment to return.

On accountability, raj has been nominated to serve as Accountability Chair and to lead the **independent Accountability And Ethics Committee** we're now organizing. That nomination is subject to raj's acceptance and the completion of the appointment or election process. Once in place, the Committee will give concerns a clear route to impartial review. Independence, recusal, fair treatment and protection against retaliation will be written into its charter and carried out in practice.

Several of us have stepped into acting roles so the organization remains legally compliant and continues to grow stronger while nominations and elections proceed. I'm providing Administration and Board leadership as Acting President And Board Chair Pro Tem. Maggiy Emery is serving as Acting Treasurer, Raeanne Makinen-Brown is serving as Acting Secretary

and Max S. Graves Jr. is serving as Interim Executive Director. Each acting assignment, along with the authority that comes with it, is being documented.

Nominations for Directors are open now, and we've already received two: **James Ferguson and Vada Haxton**. Members elect Directors, and the Board elects Officers through our established processes. Before any permanent slate is announced, we'll have candidate consent, eligibility, disclosures, the voting procedure and the results on record.

Machelle would also like to entertain a motion at the General Membership meeting to expand the scope of the Board stipend and increase it. Today the stipend is $100 per month and goes only to formerly incarcerated Directors. The motion would extend it to all Board members who are actively serving and engaged, at $300 per month, for up to six Directors. Because Directors would benefit from the change, the Board won't vote on its own stipend increase. That decision will come to you, the membership.

We're pleased to announce **two new roles**. **Chauntyll Allen is our Program Director**, with her current focus on the End Slavery MN Campaign, and **Darla Holland is now our Director of Prison Reform and Advocacy. David Boehnke has been reassigned as Inside/Out Organizer** and now reports to Darla. Together, these roles make clear who is responsible for organizing, program delivery and supervision under the Interim Executive Director.

On Friday, October 9, our **newly formed Finance Committee (Jaime, Max, Maggiy and me)** agreed by a majority to pause new discretionary spending, including travel and related spending, while we take a full look at the organization's financial health. The updated September financial reports and budget comparisons have surfaced questions that need follow-up, and we're working through them. Two safeguards are now in place, effective immediately. First, organizational written checks, along with every funding request, payment and reimbursement, require **two authorized signers: the Interim Executive Director and the Treasurer**. Second, every request goes through a documented review. Send yours to Max and the Finance Committee with the supporting records; nothing new will be spent or committed without written authorization.

I want to be direct about something that concerns many of us. Relying on a single major grant leaves our staffing and services exposed to one funder's renewal decision, restrictions or payment timing, and that isn't a stable footing for any organization. From January through September, corporate and foundation grants together made up 98.8% of our recorded revenue. That figure is the combined share of all such grants, not a verified percentage for any one funder. Either way, we need a broader base of support. The Executive Director and the Board also need a clear line of sight to every grant and funding proposal, what it obligates us to and when the money is anticipated to arrive.

Progress on new and existing funding development remains a concern as well. Meetings, grant applications and proposals are activity; they have to be transformed into a visible pipeline, timely

submissions, confirmed awards and money received. Our next steps are practical ones: verify the cash we have on hand and any restrictions on it, align the revised budget with current staffing costs, review spending we can avoid and build our FY27 plans around priorities we can fund. Every program and legislative plan will name who owns it, what it realistically costs and how we'll measure the result.

The report that accompanies this letter goes deeper into what we've accomplished, what remains unresolved and what we're prioritizing over the next 30 days. I hope you'll read it, and I hope you'll take part. Nominate a leader, consider serving on a committee, volunteer your time or bring us a funding lead. Get Free Minnesota is strongest when its members are close to the work. Thank you for your continued commitment.

Sincerely,

/s/ Yolanda Butler

Electronically signed October 12, 2026

Yolanda Butler
Acting President And Board Chair Pro Tem
For The Board Of Directors
Get Free Minnesota