December 22, 2022

RE: Region / Zone Cabinet Positions 2023/24

1VDG Neil;

I hope the holidays are treating you and Ms Karen well. I tend to group Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s together into one big celebration.

In the District Cabinet, I have served as Alert Chair, Zone Chart and Camp Director under three Governors. All three have had completely different styles to match their leadership personality. I have experienced joy and frustration with these positions and have the following comments.

* All of the Cabinet positions fill an important role in advising the Governor with feedback from the Clubs and disseminating the Governor’s guidance or direction based on the Cabinet member’s seat. The Cabinet members needs to understand that they have an active role in helping the Governor run the district. Too many Cabinet members have been place-holders, not necessarily active participants.
  + A better understanding of these roles would help the Cabinet members function better as an asset. I suggest we update the “job description” with the flexibility needed for each Governor and allow the nominee / appointee the opportunity to understand their role before formally volunteering for the position.
  + Director Cabinet members have a pretty well-defined scope of work based on their directorship based on the Camp, Lighthouse and others. An enhancement would be for the Governor to disseminate his specific guidance or goals on these subjects.
  + Chairs have a more direct role in supporting and assisting the Governor with the Districts business. For instance, the Alert Chair could maintain a “binder” of Community Personnel in our seven (?) County Area. I had the titles, locations, phone, email addresses of the Counties and which Clubs were in those counties.

I subscription to the “Ready Harris” .org and fb for alerts. They gather data from NOAA and The National Weather service. Having Contact Info for the State Alert Chair and the Alert Chairs for the surround District was also helpful. I met Zone Chairs during the process and would disseminate info to the Governor, the Vice’s and Zone Chairs. I never got to the funding and staffing a disaster trailer (pull behind a pickup) with tents, tarps, generators, generator, extension cords, chair and hand saws, etc. I know that Lion Nancy is very active with the LEO operations district wide. Each Chair can catch the essence of how the have functioned and pass that history to the next Chair.

* + Have a turn over that the first PCS meeting of the new year. The “Binder” can be electronic.
  + I have found that a title is great. A title makes you feel great, enhances the perception of the holder’s worth to the District and enables the holder to rub elbows with the Lions that make the District work. What If we challenge the Chairs and Directors at a local level, direct impact to our District? These positions may have more value.
  + Where do we find the volunteers for these positions? We have relied on the PCS meeting, Mid-Winter and Annual Conventions to provide the necessary volunteers. Why not add recruiting to the Zone Chair’s role and encourage the ZC to accompany the Governor on the Governor’s visit in the ZC’s Zones?
  + Can we publish a list of district positions and the basic job description? We have recently done a pretty good job on recruiting new members. Why not recruit with a broader brush for the Cabinet positions? Further discussions (interviews) can help ensure a good fit.
  + Zone Chair and Camp Director are two very intense position. I took on both at the same time with a home Club of great Lions that would rather follow than lead. I have been overwhelmed for two years. Burnout is a critical problem. WE got a lot done last year but we worked ourselves to exhaustion. As much as anything else, I feel that burn-out is playing a significant role in our open positions. Finding volunteers for mid-Winter and the Bob Dowden Dinner has been problematic at best.
* Training: We had an excellent face to face gathers with Zone Chair in June of 2021. About 4 hours is a good start assuming the facilitators know what is on the Governor’s mind.
* I suggest one face to face and maybe two remote meetings, one to include PDG Mark Roth’s presentation.
* Reporting, we are having trouble with our Clubs not reporting activities. Do we have the same issue with ZC? Lead by example. Two ZC in my time (six years) stand out. In both cases, member, service and District volunteering were all enhanced. Well trained and motivated CZ’s matter.
* We have tools. Are we using them? We get a zone health analysis monthly, we have access to specific information on MyLCI, when it is working and we have the Governor’s Goals (Club Excellence Award).
* Projecting a positive attitude is imperative. We have many challenges within our District. We are not going to solve them all at once. The senior team (DG, 1VDG. 2VDG and PDG’s can determine the goals and delegate the challenges based on the available skill sets. Going forward, conflict resolution will be my most important tool in my skills tool box. If we cannot get/keep people talking, we will not solve anything.

Not done but getting there.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Yours in Service

Kevin Smith