

Chip Bennett
96 Margate Court
Winchester, VA 22602
cabennettjr@comcast.net
(540) 539-4893

4 October 4, 2016

Laura Marfut, Chair
Scout Executive Selection Committee
Mason-Dixon Council, Boy Scouts of America
18600 Crestwood Dr
Hagerstown, MD 21742

Dear Ms. Marfut,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Mark Pennington as he seeks employment as Scout Executive in the Mason-Dixon Council, Boy Scouts of America. As a long time volunteer in the Shenandoah Area Council, I have enjoyed working closely with Mark over many years. He has been a really wonderful Assistant Scout Executive and COO. Mark has great communication and management skills and has consistently exceeded his goals. On a personal level, Mark is friendly, charismatic, and well spoken. These traits have served him well as a Scouting professional.

Quite frankly, we would hate to see such a valuable asset as Mark leave the Shenandoah Area Council. He is a true friend of Scouting. He is passionate about the program, developing volunteers, and instilling Scouting's values in youth. Mark very clearly understands what it takes to make Scouting successful in the community. Our loss would truly be your gain.

I am currently serving as Council Vice President of Relationships and Council Wood Badge Coordinator. I work with Mark in those capacities. I have also served as Council Commissioner, Council Camping Chairman, Council Training Chairman, Order of the Arrow Chapter Adviser, Order of the Arrow Conclave Adviser, NOAC Adviser, and Council Alumni Chairman. In each of these positions, I've had the opportunity to work with Mark as my Professional Adviser. Each has afforded the opportunity to see Mark's leadership skills first hand.

Mark has a proven track record of membership growth. He has consistently met and exceeded goals in this area. He is skilled at managing and developing volunteers to oversee membership efforts in their communities. Mark has

recently worked to cultivate very successful relationships with local school superintendents and administrators to reestablish “Scout Talks” during the school day and “Back to School Nights”. Mark provides leadership to both the Commissioner and professional staff in this effort. As a result, we enjoy high recharter and retention rates. Mark also works with the Council’s Exploring Explosion efforts. Under his leadership, we have seen remarkable growth in the number of Exploring aged youth and chartered new Posts. In my role as Vice President of Relationships, I recently worked with Mark to hold a Law Enforcement Breakfast to develop relations with local law enforcement officials. Our focus was the role law enforcement can play in the Council’s relationships with local schools. The heads of seventeen departments were present and the event was a great success.

Mark is a fantastic coach and mentor to our volunteers and field staff. He provides support and counsel to the Council Executive Board, guides our Vice Presidents, and serves as professional adviser to many Committee Chairmen. Mark brings a vision of what success looks like for the Council to this role, along with an ability to focus on the detailed needs of our program. He consistently engages volunteers to succeed in their areas of service while promoting their personal accountability. Mark is not afraid to reach out to establish new relationships or to renew old ones. He does a wonderful job of recruiting, cultivating, and training volunteers, while inspiring them in their role to bring about the promise and vision of Scouting to the youth we serve. Mark provides oversight to our professional staff in developing Scouting professionals in all aspects of field operations. Mark’s devotion to customer service and the success of both our field staff and volunteers is evident by his hands on approach to leadership. He works along side those he serves and willingly assists with any effort no matter how small the detail. Mark’s understanding of the importance of succession planning has helped to ensure the future success of the Council.

Mark has a keen understanding of the fiscal health and responsibility of the Council and is very experienced with sound business and financial record keeping and reporting practices as used by the Boy Scouts of America and in a corporate environment. Mark understands the need for transparency and communication of finances with volunteers and the public. He is a skilled fundraiser and has been indispensable in local and Council-wide fundraising efforts. Mark is an expert at managing product sales, as well as seeking and cultivating donor giving. Under his leadership, the Council has consistently enjoyed new funding as well as the rewards of repeat gifts. Mark has a sure fire approach to managing Friends of Scouting and special events- He works to train professional and volunteer Scouters in their roles, empowering them with the tools and skills needed to get the job done, and establishes accountability through reporting and feedback. He has played an important part in growing relationships with corporate sponsors and donors; successfully promoting the role that local business plays in the success of Scouting. Mark is experienced with the development and support of endowments as well as capital campaigns.

Mark's skills in managing the overall business of running a Scout Camp are unmatched. His strong program background and fiscally responsible business approach are key elements of the success of Camp Rock Enon. Mark's ability to clearly communicate with staff, volunteers, and campers helps to convey a clear vision of the importance of outdoor experiences in a safe environment to the success of our program. His skills in training, promotion, and marketing have helped to provide the addition of new programs and facilities that enable the continued success of Camp Rock Enon.

Mark Pennington has an unwavering work ethic. He is constantly the first into the office and the last to leave. He clearly demonstrates by his own example a willingness to put in whatever time is needed to accomplish goals. He manages his time wisely, allowing him to travel when and where needed to best serve needs. All while still finding time for his own personal development, growth, and family life.

Mark successfully leads and inspires the Council staff to get the job done. He is able to successfully train them in successful business and management practices. Mark is a team player who understands that the success of each individual is ensured by the success of the group as a whole and puts this into practice through team building with both professionals and volunteers. He is also able to recruit, cultivate, and inspire new volunteers to ensure the success of the Council and its units.

Mark's role in development and implementation of the Council's strategic planning has helped to ensure the Council's current and future success. He is able to bring new ideas, creativity, and innovation to the table, while ensuring that we uphold our traditions and values. Mark has true understanding of the role that Scouting plays in the Nation to instill values in our youth. He clearly sees the vital role Scouting plays in ensuring the success of future generations. He knows that Scouting is more needed and more relevant on today's society than ever before and is able to communicate a vision of Scouting's success in the local community to the public and to our stakeholders.

For many years, Mark has impressed me with his devotion to the Scouting movement. His leadership skills and talents have been vital to the success of the Shenandoah Area Council. His ability to communicate the values, mission, and vision of Scouting has inspired many to sacrifice their talents and resources in promoting the movement. Mark's skills in coaching and mentoring both professionals and volunteers continue to improve the quality of leadership demonstrated by those he serves. His networking abilities have established a wealth of resources and cultivated talent to serve the needs of the Council across a vast range of abilities in areas of business, cultural, educational, financial, and infrastructure. His customer service oriented management style has ensured that the needs of our stakeholders are met in our business practices and decisions.

Mark Pennington has my highest recommendation for the position of Scout Executive. If the circumstances were different, I would strive to retain him as part of our team. I am confident that he will surpass your expectations in this role. Mark is proactively helpful, experienced, and has a proven track record of success as a Scouting professional. I am sure he has a bright future. Please feel free to contact me at (540) 539-4893 or cabennettjr@comcast.net if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chip Bennett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chip Bennett
Vice President of Relationships
Shenandoah Area Council, Boy scouts of America
cabennettjr@comcast.net
(540) 539-4893