

**Dallas County Master Gardener Association**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**May 9, 2023**

**Attending:**

Monica Nagle – President  
Abbe Bolich – Immediate Past President  
Nancy Black - 1st Vice President (Fundraising)  
Sue Smith - 2nd Vice President (Member Services)  
Barbara Hardin - Treasurer  
Leslie Densmore – Secretary  
Ned Buxton - Director-at-Large  
Neal Howard - Director-at-Large  
Glen McGee – Director-at-Large  
Denise Strueber - Director-at-Large  
Cynthia Jones - Communications  
Barbara Anderson – Parliamentarian  
Jadi Oliver – TMGA Director

**AgriLife:**

Katerina Graham – Dallas County Horticulture Extension Agent  
Fern Brown – Master Gardener Coordinator

**Absent:**

Stephen Seewoester – TMGA Directory Alternate  
Margaret Ghose – TMGA Directory Alternate

**Guests:**

Barry Bloom – Garden Consultations  
Rick Coke – Budget Committee  
Zandra Faris – Nominations, Financial Audit, and Communications Committees  
Cindy Large - Education / Outreach Committee  
Joellyn Nobbe – Investment Committee / School and Project Liaison to the CEA  
Cookie Peadon – Speaker’s Bureau  
Tig Thompson - Statistician

**Quorum:**

The meeting was held via Zoom. It was called to order by President Monica Nagle at 10:00am with a quorum present.

### **Opening remarks/ President's report – Monica Nagle**

On June 9, 2023, the quarterly review with Xiomara Diaz will be held at 10:00am at the Brinker building.

Monica asked for feedback on the team workshop on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion presented by Washington State University at a cost of \$1200 for up to 50 people which could include the Board members, project leaders, Katerina, Fern, and others. There was general positive consensus for a team building workshop. Monica made a motion to form a team of three board members (Monica Nagle, Sue Smith and Nancy Black) to investigate teambuilding workshop options considering a maximum budget of \$1200 and present a proposal to the board at the June Board meeting. Barbara Hardin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The votes for approval of meeting equipment and North Texas Giving Day were postponed until the discussion of those items later in the meeting.

### **Approve Minutes from the May 2023 Board Meeting**

Abbe Bolich made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 2023, DCMGA Board Meeting. Nancy Black seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report - Barbara Hardin**

There were no questions regarding the Treasurer's report. Leslie Densmore made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as submitted. Nancy Black seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **1<sup>st</sup> VP Report: Fundraising: Nancy Black**

North Texas Giving Day is September 21, 2023. There has been a downward trend in DCMGA donations. In 2021, donations totaled \$5965.50; in 2022, donations totaled \$4097. Nancy confirmed that funds are budgeted but also commented that possibly the board can strategize on ways that members may be more willing to participate. Nancy proposed that the Board needs to move forward on North Texas Giving Day and sign up. Monica expressed a concern that as there are available funds in the DCMGA accounts it could be hard to justify asking for donations. Abbe commented that last year there was a great deal of effort in advertising the giving opportunity to membership but there was little return. Denise Strueber expressed a concern that although DCMGA funds are available, a conservative approach to future expenditures should be taken. Barbara Anderson commented that making the membership aware that the North Texas Giving Day opportunity was available would be sufficient. Nancy Black summarized that DCMGA should sign up for North Texas Giving Day as budgeted; no vote required.

Barbara Hardin requested that the final report on the Raincatcher's plant sale be submitted by the end of May so that it could be included in the May Treasurer's report. Abbe Bolich agreed that this was possible.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> VP Report: Membership: Sue Smith**

Survey results are in; a summary report will be finalized and distributed before the June Board meeting.

A potluck element will be added to the June membership meeting at C. C. Young and Sue is requesting each board member to provide strawberries or fruit for the meeting.

Monica asked for clarification on the food policy for volunteers; specifically, does the prohibition on providing food at the project workdays extend to all volunteer activities? Barbara Anderson said that her understanding was that food would not be provided to volunteers at project workdays because this was not standard practice across all projects. However, for a meeting that is open to all membership, the prohibition does not apply. Since the Taste of the Gardens is open to all the members, food can be provided.

In response to a question about no planned August general membership meeting, Barbara Anderson clarified that the bylaws required 10 general membership meetings annually so no August general membership meeting would not be in violation of the bylaws.

## **Directors' Report: Volunteer Engagement – Neal Howard**

Neal lauded the tremendous effort that Janet Lane has made in coordinating the Taste of the Gardens. Over forty people attended the April Taste of the Gardens events at Raincatcher's and Moss Haven. Lakewood Elementary and the Texas Discovery Gardens events will be held in May.

Sacred Spaces project team is continuing to work with the First Prep students and the team is excited about a new project team member joining their efforts. The Juliette Fowler project team hosted a garden party for the Juliette Fowler residents conducting garden tours and sharing best horticultural practices. The TDG greenhouse conducted a spring plant sale, hosted an intern day and will host a Taste of the Gardens event.

There has been some confusion regarding the submission of project leader reports; Neal will clarify that these reports should now be submitted to Joellyn Nobbe. Joellyn asked about transferring the responsibility of the scheduling of the project highlights and content to the Project Team.

## **Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Katerina Graham**

There were no questions on the report submitted by Katerina.

## **New Business**

The Bylaws rewrite is waiting on feedback from other counties and a rewrite of the financial section. Monica thanked Barbara Hardin for reaching out to the other counties for a copy of their bylaws and a description of the composition of their board.

## **Directors' Report: Awards and Recognition - Ned Buxton**

Monica thanked Ned Buxton for his work on awards and recognition. Ned recognized the tremendous work that Cynthia and the Communications team have done in publicizing the recognition recipients. Ned encouraged Board members and projects leader to continue to identify potential candidates for recognition.

**Past President's Report: Abbe Bolich**

Work will begin in July on identifying candidates for the 2024 Board.

Memorial bricks have been received and paid for and will be installed this fall.

Use of the woodchipper at Raincatcher's has been on hold pending confirmation of insurance liability coverage. The 2023 insurance policies are in place and Monica will confirm insurance coverage by the end of the week.

**Directors' Report: Project Coordination / Scholarship – Glen McGee**

Efforts to add more project workdays to the calendar are continuing; currently, only about a third of projects are submitting workday schedules. Glen asked that the Board help urge project leaders to communicate project workdays via email to Glen and Sue Jones. Three days' notice is requested.

Glen has submitted scholarship information to the web team for publication but, for next year, having this information available to schools earlier will help identify candidates. Potential scholarship recipients must have graduated from a Dallas County high school and be a sophomore or higher in university studies pursuing a bachelor's degree in horticultural studies.

**Directors' Report: Advisory Committee - Denise Strueber**

Denise asked for feedback from both the Board and Katerina on her suggestion of organizing a day-long educational event with out of city or possibly even state keynote speakers as outlined in her May report before she began researching venues, speakers, and cost. This would be an event open to not only Dallas County MG association members but neighboring counties and the public as well. A show of hands supported the effort to pursue this effort.

**Budget Committee - Rick Coke**

Planning for the 2024 budget process is in progress. The first step is a complete and accurate list for all potential people who might submit a budget request to be considered by the Board. Rick asked for help identifying contacts for administrative and miscellaneous budget items.

Integrating the Purchasing Manager function into the projects' efforts in progress. If a project has a major purchase, the Purchasing Manager function can help project leaders avoid using personal credit cards and potentially take advantage of pricing discounts. Small purchases would not need to utilize this function.

For the Purchasing Manager function, there will be no credit card purchases. To date, participation has been limited as it has not been fully rolled out, but this will not be mandatory at initial implementation. Abbe Bolich reported that the process has been utilized at Raincatcher's and all went smoothly.

Rick Coke requested any feedback from the Board within the next week on the Vendor Purchase Request form so that it can be finalized and distributed to all the project leaders.

Margaret Hranitsky compiled a comprehensive report on the vendor agreements that have been established with guidelines for usage of the accounts. Margaret has done an outstanding job in this effort.

### **Communications Report: Cynthia Jones / Zandra Faris**

Updating the website work is continuing; Glen has been very helpful in this effort. There have been some concerns on the website Search mode returning archived/out-of-date information and this is being worked on. There are some gaps on the Communications team to be filled. Katerina has requested that the number of new posts on the website be reported monthly.

### **Statistics/Data Report: Tig Thompson**

The Year-to-Date hours have been down over the last two months by approximately 1000 hours each month. This could be a result of the new reporting deadlines. Also, the Administration category for reporting hours has been utilized for hours that should be reported under a different category. Tig is working on addressing this.

### **Master Gardener School – Fern Brown**

Recruiting for 2024 school coordinators is continuing. Also, the intern school survey results are being analyzed for suggestions for possible incorporation into the 2024 program.

### **Public Education Project Oversight Liaison – Joellyn Nobbe**

School Project leads have been notified of Katerina's intent to visit the school administrator and discuss the Memorandum of Understanding; these visits are tentatively planned for the June timeframe. Additionally, Joellyn is working on a report on the value of volunteer hours for each school as well as identifying other contributions that have not been reported on VMS.

### **Investment of Funds – Joellyn Nobbe**

There is a meeting scheduled with Dallas Foundation on May 16, 2023 on possible collaboration opportunities for investment of DCMGA funds.

### **Speaker's Bureau – Cookie Peardon**

There were over 219 attendees at a Farmers Branch presentation by Barbara Gollman on Herb Gardening. Biodegradable planting pots with basil seeds were also distributed.

Work is continuing on identifying the equipment required to update Speaker's Bureau and membership meeting audio/visual equipment. One estimate for \$400 to purchase, equip and train for equipment has been received. Additional proposals are being researched; a preliminary estimate of approximately \$3000 has been identified. Projectors are not included in this estimate. Also, a floater system for the Speaker's Bureau is included in their budget; using this floater system for general membership meetings is also being considered.

### **Continuing Education – Cindy Large**

No further report

### **Help Desk – Rick Coke**

There are approximately 50-60 help desk inquiries per month. The Help Desk also goes to Lowe's Garden Center and Northaven Gardens one Saturday each month. In April, there were approximately 76 attendees.

These presentations will continue in May and June but will be on hiatus for July and August. The Help Desk also held an Earth Day event at Valley Ranch with approximately 70 attendees.

The email address for the Help Desk is available on the website; also, cards with this information are distributed at live events. All contact with the Help Desk is via email; voicemail requests were investigated but not implemented. There are some Speaker's Bureau presenters that still have the obsolete phone number at the end of their presentations, these speakers are being contacted to remove this number.

Abbe clarified that the Help Desk phone number is being used as identification only for the Tax Exemption certificate approval at some vendors.

#### **TMA Director's Meeting – Jadi Oliver**

TMA would like to establish an endowment to specifically support the Texas Master Gardeners Association and is requesting support and financial contributions from member MG associations. Currently, TMA is only paying for one staff member for support of the Texas Master Gardeners Association; an endowment would be the way to support additional staff and expand the program.

One concern expressed by the Board questioned why a large, wealthy university with a significant endowment of its own would not just fund the Texas Master Gardener program instead of creating a separate endowment and asking for contributions. Another concern is that the proposed endowment to support the Texas Master Gardener program is run by one person and particularly when that person would then determine her own salary and staff; perhaps a committee and a rotating membership of delegates from the large and medium sized associations would be more appropriate as contributing associations would then have some say in the decisions made by the endowment. A concern was also stated that there is just not enough information available at this time on the details of the endowment. Also, Texas A&M is a land grant college charged with the responsibility of educating people in Texas on agricultural and horticulture topics; this is a part of their stated function. An alternative viewpoint presented that since the state level is the top of our organization, then wouldn't we want to support their efforts as we are part of that organization? TMGA has committed to fund \$10,000 and is asking county associations for contributions to reach \$25,000. If \$25,000 can be raised to establish the endowment, then a long-term account specific to the Texas Master Gardener Association could be established which might facilitate public donations in the future. However, the main issue remains the question of county association participation in the management of the endowment. Determining equitable contribution amounts among Texas county master garden associations is another major question.

#### **Nominating Committee – Abbe Bolich**

The Nominating Committee is in place and will begin identifying candidates in July.

#### **Financial Review - Zandra Faris**

The 2024 Financial Review committee will have a new member to replace a member whose term expires in 2023. The Nominating Committee will identify candidates.

#### **Adjourn:**

**Abbe Bolich made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:40pm. Denise Strueber seconded the motion. The motion passed.**