

**Dallas County Master Gardener Association  
Board Meeting  
Date: May 10th, 2022**

**Attending:**

Abbe Bolich – President  
Zandra Faris - Immediate Past President  
Monica Nagle – Secretary  
Julia Matthews - Treasurer  
Barbara St. Clair - 1st Vice President (Fundraising)  
Joellyn Nobbe - 2nd Vice President (Member Services)  
Ned Buxton - Director-at-Large  
Denise Strueber - Director-at-Large  
Mark Jones - Director-at-Large  
Rick Coke - Director-at-Large  
Cynthia Jones - Communications  
Barbara Anderson – Parliamentarian

**AgriLife:**

**Absent:**

Jeff Raska, Horticultural Program Coordinator for Dallas County  
Katerina Graham – Dallas County Horticulture Extension Agent

**Guests:**

Tig Thompson - Statistician

**Quorum:**

The meeting was held via Zoom. It was called to order by President Abbe Bolich at 10:02am with a quorum present.

**Opening Remarks/President's Report - Abbe Bolich**

There were no questions pertaining to the President's report.

There was no update on the DCMGA member who was injured doing preparations for the Garden Tour. Abbe Bolich requested an update from Carolyn Gilbert on the status of the insurance claim from Hartford. She will forward any information received to the Board as soon as it becomes available.

### **Approval of the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes**

Ned Buxton made a motion to approve the April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Board meeting minutes as written. Zandra Faris seconded the motion. The motion passed.

### **Treasurer's Report - Julia Matthews**

#### **2022 Garden Tour:**

Julia Matthews commented that the money pulled from the bank for change needed at the DCMG Garden Tour (\$700) has already been returned to the bank. It went out from, and back into, the petty cash category on the financial statement.

As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Garden Tour revenue was \$14905. When adding in the fall 2021 revenue, the total was \$16255. This does not include Paypal ticket purchases. Those will appear at the end of May.

#### **Treasurer's Bank Card Replacement:**

The Treasurer's bank card needed to be replaced due to an erroneous Spotify charge. Members who use the card should update their account(s) when the replacement card is available. Abbe Bolich commented that Denise Strueber may use the President's card until the Treasurer's card has been replaced.

#### **Raincatcher's Fence:**

The Raincatchers fence needs to be paid. Julia Matthews thought this could be done through Zelle.

Cynthia Jones commented that the fence at Raincatchers Garden is about 85% installed and looks great. Raincatchers may ask for additional money for the extra concrete needed to secure the posts using a wider footprint. Would this be a non-budgeted funding request? Can we vote now?

Mark Jones made a motion to approve a non-budgeted funding request of \$300 for Raincatchers Garden to purchase additional concrete to build the fence. This is needed to fill the post holes with a larger volume of concrete than was originally anticipated. Due to the underlying limestone, the post hole dimensions were made wider and shallower. Using the new hole dimensions, the post itself takes up less volume (more concrete) compared to the original deeper / narrow hole. Ned Buxton seconded the motion. The vote passed. Julia commented that the budget for the fence posts will go from \$3270 to 3570 to include the additional concrete.

### Merchandise Sales:

Denise Strueber asked how merchandise finances work. Julia Matthews responded that merchandise purchased goes into Merchandise Inventory. When sold, it applies to sales. The cost of sales is estimated throughout the year. Julia reduced the percentage used to estimate the cost of goods sold to better reflect the actual costs. The original percentage (50%) used at the beginning of the year for cost of goods sold was determined to be too high.

### Texas AgriLife Extension Service Report – Katerina Graham

No report.

### New Business:

#### Standardization of Accounting Procedures for Donations and Grants.

Abbe Bolich and Julia Matthews requested a discussion on how to standardize and differentiate accounting procedures for donations and grants. The need for this discussion came from a check request from R&B1 in March of 2022 to reimburse funds used for the purchase of a freezer and beekeeping supplies. R&B1 requested to use an unrestricted \$500 donation, given in the name of Jennifer Bowers, to use for reimbursement of the purchases. The donation was received in January and was recorded to R&B1's fund as an unrestricted donation. According to the financial procedures policy that Julia Matthews has, the hierarchy of sources to pay for expenses on a project is:

1. Donations
2. Fund raising
3. Allocation from General Funds that were established at the beginning of the year.

However, this hierarchy is different from R&B1's expectation that donations made to a given project increase the budget for that project.

As a follow-up to this, Julia discussed the definition of a grant vs. a donation with the CPA firm used by DCMGA. The CPA Julia talked to at the firm commented that grants are applied for, and their use is restricted.

Based on her discussion with the CPA, Julia commented that the existing financial procedures are good and that no change is needed.

Denise Strueber asked if DCMGA paid for the items requested by R&B1. Julia responded that we reimbursed R&B1 for the freezer against R&B1's regular budget. Julia recommended to R&B1 that they ask the Horticulture fund to reimburse the beekeeping expenses.

Abbe Bolich said R&B1 was under the impression they could spend the donation money at their discretion, even though the check states that it's a grant. A boilerplate form came with the check. Julia commented that this is considered a donor-advised fund by Fidelity and is not

considered a grant. To avoid causing further bad feelings between the Board and R&B1, Abbe decided to let R&B1 spend the money as they see fit. Denise commented that this sets a bad precedent. Julia agreed and commented that it blurs the line for the use of project designated donations.

Barbara Anderson was asked to voice her opinion on this. Her response was:

1. When coming from a donor-advised fund, it's a gift, not a grant, and needs to be treated as a donation.
2. The use of donated funds needs to be approved by the Board because the Board is ultimately liable for what the money is used for. Barbara recommends having a better discussion about whether donated funds are to be treated as an alternative source of funding or whether the money is to be used on top of what they already have. We do not want to deter people from gifting money to a project if all it does is alleviate the Board from budgetary agreements that were made. On the other hand, a lot of projects do not make money and we want to have money in our budget to support them. A discussion needs to be held on how to navigate true donations (not grants) on the criteria for spending.

Zandra Faris asked if Barbara Anderson has the document which outlines the policies concerning donations, and if so, is there specific wording that draws concern for:

1. if a donation is restricted for a specific purpose, then the fund, if accepted, must be used only for that purpose
2. if a donation is designated, then the treasurer will ensure that the funds are retained and used for any approved expenses for the project.

Barbara responded that she has the document and does not have a concern about the wording. However, Barbara is concerned about the protocols which dictate the order in which expenses are paid: first from donated funds, then from fundraising and then from the general fund. Joellyn Nobbe commented that she thought the order of payment is for accounting purposes only. Julia Matthews responded that, at the end of the year, we zero out any unused funds allocated to a project for that year. At the beginning of the following year, a new allocation is made to each project from the General Fund to cover their budget amount. R&B1 is more difficult. They had two grants come in at the end of the year that were not fully used and were retained in their fund. The allocation approved by the Board for 2022 was then added to the R&B1 fund. Expenses over the course of the year are paid from that fund. Details entered when expense is recorded states: 'Project Expenses, R&B1'. There's too much detail for Julia Matthews to keep up with for specific line-item needs; however, Julia can pull a Transaction Report if someone requests details on how the money was spent. As the year progresses, the balance in each project's fund can be viewed to know whether that project is within budget. The project leader is responsible for keeping up with the line items in the budget.

Per Julia Matthews, what precipitated this discussion was that R&B1 wanted to use the \$500 donation as additional new money, when in the past, DCMGA has not used individual donations to a specific project as new money during the course of the year.

Denise Strueber asked about how the spending of grant money is tracked for accounting purposes. Does the grant money spending need to be kept separate and reported back to the giver of the grant? Julia responded that grant money is tracked outside of the regular budget.

Zandra Faris asked that, if they still have grant money left at the end of the year in a designated fund, does this carryover into the next year in a designated fund? Julia responded 'Yes, we're doing that.'

If needed, a large grant can be setup as its own fund, but the R&B1 grants were not that big and the money was spent quickly, so it made more sense to put it in the R&B1 fund.

Janet Lind has been reporting back to Les Dames effectively. Julia was not aware of the reporting from R&B1 that went back to EcoLabs.

Abbe Bolich commented that Janet Lind has recently stepped down as the project leader for R&B1 but will still be their 'treasurer'. Abbe will discuss the roles and responsibilities that Jen Bowers and Jadi Oliver will be assuming, as well as the details of Janet Lind's new role.

Denise Strueber asked how the R&B1 \$500 donation was handled. Was it added to their budget? The cost of the freezer (\$300) will be applied against the \$500 donation. Denise asked if this adds money to the R&B1 budget? Joellyn commented that question on the table is: 'If you receive an unrestricted gift, designated for project, does this increase the project's budget in the amount of the gift?' Denise Strueber stated that, at this time, our policies, and procedures state that it does not increase the project's budget. Abbe Bolich responded that R&B1 does not comprehend it that way. Barbara Anderson commented that the decision needs to be made clear:

Does it increase their budget? Is it an additional designated fund, ..., or

Does the donation just relieve some of the funding obligations?

It's a principal decision. What is right?

Julia Matthews commented that, if we decide to allow donations to increase budgets, we should put some type of limit on them. Small donations are difficult to work with.

Cynthia Jones provided some history of the Les Dames donation. She was surprised about the confusion by Les Dames since it had been discussed in detail. Cynthia had told Les Dames that if they donate \$2k and it's specified to the R&B1 account, it does not add to the R&B1 budget. The way this was resolved by Les Dames was to have Rebecca put in her letter that the money was to go to certain items that were not already included in the R&B1 budget. Any money accepted by DCMGA must be approved by the Board for approval of restrictions BEFORE the money is accepted. Once accepted by the Board, this implies that the money is accepted for

spending per the use stated in the grant letter. Cynthia Jones asked if the \$500 donation to R&B1 was approved by the Board. Julia responded that it was not restricted, and the Board only needs to approve donations with restrictions.

Denise Strueber commented that, with the way the policy stands today, project budgets are not allowed to be increased with an unrestricted donation.

For budget additions, donations will need to be explicitly stated that the money is to be used for specific items and the Board would need to approve it.

Zandra Faris commented that the regulations for restricted, unrestricted, designated, and undesignated donations needs to be clarified in the budget regulations. Project Leaders need to understand what type of donation will increase their budget and what type will not. Rick Coke replied that the procedures and policies currently in place do cover the various situations and should be clear to the Project Leaders. He recommends that the Board vote on the acceptance of any donation/grant to make clear how that money will be spent and whether it adds to the project's budget or becomes part of that project's general fund.

Denise Strueber commented that we only vote on restrictions, not designations.

Barbara Anderson stated there two items for board approval:

- receiving the funds, and
- spending the funds.

Abbe Bolich commented that, if the funds were accepted as unrestricted, and the project wanted to use the money as additional money, then the project liaison would need to come back to the Board and request a non-budgeted funding request.

Monica Nagle asked how the project leaders are trained on the budget procedures. Mark Jones replied that they review and sign the procedures document.

Barbara Anderson stated that the financial procedures document provided to the project leaders speaks to fundraising and grants but does explain how to handle donations. This needs to be added to the document. However, the project leaders do receive the Donation Policy Document every year, but this is not signed by the project leaders. For next year, the Financial Procedures Document will be edited to include the donation policy and will be signed by the project leaders.

It was decided to table this discussion for the next meeting. Abbe Bolich recommends forming a committee to work on revising the policy concerning fundraising, grants, and donations (designated/undesignated, restricted/unrestricted).

### **Budget Review Committee– Rick Coke**

Rick Coke has been working with Ned Buxton, Denise Strueber and Joellyn Nobbe to revise the frontend of the Financial Procedures Document. A timeline of the budget process will be provided with defined specific responsibilities for Board Members and Project Leaders

Revisions made by the Committee to the Financial Procedures Document were:

1. Define what a project is. A project for DCMGA budget purposes is anything the Board decides is a project. For budgeting purposes, the project list does not necessarily equate to the list of projects shown on VMS on the website.
2. The Committee looked at giving the Directors-At-Large (DILs) on the Board the ability to form a Project Budget committee. The Project Budget Committee would be active from July through October/November when the budgets are voted on and approved. Of the 4 DILs, one would be the chairperson of this Committee and the remaining 3 DILs would divide the projects among them, acting as a mouthpiece for the Board to talk to the projects to prepare the budget procedures and submissions. This Committee would work with the current coordinators to create a list of budget-defined projects and a checklist of items needed to prepare the budget for each.
3. Create a step-by-step table which outlines the timeline for the budget process.
4. The Committee is considering a revision to the Financial Procedures Document to provide clarification on the \$1k rule, defining how and when it applies. More details will be provided at the next meeting.
5. A Procurement Manager will work with the vendors and establish pricing. When working through a Procurement Manager with an approved vendor on an item with a negotiated price, if that item costs more the \$1k, a 2<sup>nd</sup> bid would not be needed since there is sufficient control on the cost.

Julia Matthews asked that, for small budgets, should we consider allowing projects to spend the money on a given list of pre-determined items of garden basics? This could be handled through the short-form budget request. Rick Coke commented that we need to resolve what a Project Leader is required to turn in to make a budget request and what those price limits are.

Zandra Faris appreciates the Committee's work on generating the budget timeline. Abbe Bolich appreciates that this makes the Directors-At-Large position more important. The DILs will serve as the go-between between the projects and the Board for budget purposes.

Rick Coke hopes to have a revision of the Financial Procedures Document ready to vote on at the next Board meeting. This would allow for the changes to be implemented when the next budget cycle begins in July.

### **Scholarships: Rick Coke:**

There were a few changes made to the scholarship application process.

1. The applicant needs to be a graduate of a Dallas County high school and will be required to name the school in the application.
2. A deadline was added for use of the scholarship money. The recipient cannot hold onto the money for over a predetermined number of years. The form should indicate the year of the application. The money needs to be used by the end of the calendar year, following the year the award was granted.

### **Recurring/Unfinished Business:**

- **Past President's Report: Zandra Faris**  
No questions.
- **1<sup>st</sup> VP Report: Fundraising: Barbara St. Clair**  
The Garden Tour was incredibly successful.

Merchandise sales for March were \$2615, which included a new item, hats with neck sun protectors. Denise plans to reorder more hats. April sales were \$3871, including t-shirts for interns which brought in \$882.

DCMGA received a distribution from Koger for their partnership fund for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2022 in the amount of \$46.13

There was a request for \$150 from R&B1 to supply refreshments (water and snacks) to the volunteers in the garden. Joellyn Nobble suggested that Jennifer Bowers check with the Federal Corrections Board to see if they can fund the snacks.

What's being done at other projects?

- Ned Buxton - Temple Emanu-El: This is a community garden where there are volunteers who come to fulfill a service requirement. They are provided with drinks and snacks, which probably come from the Temple Emanu-El budget.
- Barbara St. Clair - Salvation Army Garden: Same as Temple Emanu-El.
- Barbara Anderson – Athletes for Change: the boys were provided snacks and Christmas presents that were paid for by the DCMG volunteers, not the project budget.
- Tig Thompson said that he has worked at two places where the company has service projects. The company provides the food/beverages.
- Monica Nagle commented that her husband volunteers at Habit-For-Humanity and the corporate sponsors pay for lunch.



Barbara Anderson commented that we need to make a universal refreshment policy for outside volunteers at all projects. Ned Buxton and Zandra Faris agreed. Zandra Faris stated that what the board pays for generally has to do with the mission of the program.

Denise Strueber said that when Katerina talked about her vision, she wants to collaborate with several community groups and leaders on how they can contribute to the projects. Could the young people who are volunteering to meet community service requirements be considered an AgriLife volunteer? (Refreshments would then be paid for by AgriLife instead of Master Gardeners.)

Barbara Anderson stated that providing water, especially in the summer, is a safety issue. Providing food is a different issue. Barbara St. Clair asked if food and/or beverages under a certain amount could be paid for from the general fund?

Abbe Bolich commented that Katerina said that, moving forward, she will include many organizations to help. Each project has a miscellaneous/undesignated line item in their budget. Should food/beverage come out of this? Receipts for water could be submitted without having to apply for an unbudgeted funding request.

Denise Strueber asked if we should table this discussion until we talk to Katerina to see if she expects DCMGA to provide food/water to all projects? Abbe Bolich will discuss this when she meets with Katerina on May 12<sup>th</sup>.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> VP Report: Membership: Joellyn Nobbe**

May 26th, 2022, Meeting:

The May speaker, Carol Clark, would like to bring seed packets to sell at the meeting. Denise Strueber said that Carol should have her own table.

June 23rd, 2022, Meeting:

Joellyn Nobbe will not be able to attend the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Abbe Bolich will cover for her. A project spotlight is still needed for June. What about the Dallas Arboretum? Can Nancy Nance give an update? She can give the same presentation she gave to the interns during DCMG school. Joellyn will reach out to Nancy.

There will no longer be live zoom participation at the meetings because it's too difficult to manage. However, the meetings will be recorded for later viewing. Cynthia Jones commented that the problem with recording the meetings is the size of the file. Nicole uses a DISD laptop which doesn't have the storage capacity to work with large files. Do we want to provide an external hard drive to do this? Should we search for someone new to do this?

- **Directors' Report: Website: Ned Buxton**

Sandi Means-Banon continues with transitional activity.

Kanchan Waikar is now the DCMGA webmaster. She is getting a better understanding of resources available to her. She is also an active volunteer at Temple Emanu-El.

Web challenges are being addressed.

The Budget Procedures Review Committee continues to meet regularly.

Ned Buxton's physician (and teacher at UTSW), Dr. Jacqueline Alban, is interested in nutrition, lifestyle, and environmental impact on health. She reached out to Ned for a tour of the Temple Emanu-El Garden and is keenly interested in the overall Master Gardener program as it relates to the health of the recipients of the community gardens. Katerina has been informed of this. Dr. Alban could serve as an educational resource. Temple Emanu-El, which serves the Vickery Food Pantry, takes time to research the nutritional and cultural needs of immigrant populations.

Abbe Bolich recommends that Dr. Alban talk to Larry Thompson who oversees the Coppell Gardens. Larry researches the needs of the student population and what their culture grows in their gardens.

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

There was an advisory committee meeting in April. Refer to Denise Strueber's report for details.

- **Directors' Report: Project Leadership - Mark Jones**

Mark Jones commented that the Farmer's Branch Historical Park will not be hosted school tours due to covid.

Abbe Bolich asked if anymore Vego beds have been purchased. Mark: No, just the Raincatchers beds were purchased. The invoice went directly to Julia Matthews.

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

Nothing to add to his report.

One person (Jackie James) has reached the qualification threshold (4k volunteer hours) for the President's Service Award. A few others are close. When/how do we want to recognize these volunteers? Tig recommends that keep this a secret until the recognition is decided.

Background checks. 10/16 Master Gardeners needing a background check have not submitted any hours. They have been removed from VMS. The list of members who have not turned in their background check was submitted to Katerina last week. Joellyn Nobbe will contact Jessica to let her know that she can't input hours to VMS if she is off the system. (Can't put in post-mortem. A&M rule.) Two class captains have not submitted forms. (One is 'in the mail'.) Texas A&M has waited 5-6 years to do this, which makes it more difficult for Tig.

- **Communications Report - Cynthia Jones**

Our mission is education. We need more help. Cynthia has recruited Zandra Faris to help her get things going. We must work together to identify and provide help for communications. Social media has become important in terms of spreading our word. We need to broaden our team. Zandra and Cynthia have reached out to the new class.

Denise asked what positions Cynthia Jones is looking for to support communications. Cynthia responded that the goal is to make the website the go-to location for information. People like news that is hand-delivered. We still don't have the Helping Hands publication. Cynthia and Zandra are looking at generating a 'plan your week' MailChimp blast that would list about 5 items happening throughout the week. This could also be put on the DCMGA Members page on the website. Our job is to provide information in the best way possible. Kristina Herman will do the MailChimp template. Zandra and Cynthia will oversee content, but the information needs to be fed to them in a timely manner. They will ask the projects to turn in their news/reminders a week ahead of time. Cynthia needs someone to help write the content.

The Event Analysis form has not been helpful to Cynthia. People have a short memory, sending something the week before keeps it fresh. Zandra stated that someone is needed who can take on the 'Plan Your Week' communication. Plan-Your-Week is a word document that would be very simple. Cynthia is the communications liaison, not the leader. Not much is sent out via VMS. (VMS only allows 2megabytes or less). Cynthia got around this by creating a personal email contact list of the DCMG students. Kristina is looking into storing large files on a Google drive. The problem is that DCMGA members are not rich in technical knowledge/experience, and some are tech adverse. Communication is at the heart of what we do.

Barbara St. Clair asked Cynthia what she had in mind for communication. Events? Garden task reminders?... Cynthia gave some examples for Plan Your Week:

- Youth Urban Farm Day on June 30<sup>th</sup>,
- Monthly Meetings,
- Maple Tree sale,
- Jeff Raska's presentations at Northaven Gardens.

Zandra Faris commented that Nicki Maddams, who oversees VMS, will speak about the VMS system at the TMG conference. There is an issue with VMS emails being sent to spam. This didn't happen with the old VMS system. Zandra has told Nicki that the 2megabyte document size limit on VMS does not work for us. We need 10megabytes at the least.

**Next Meeting:**

The next DCMGA Monthly Board meeting will be held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### **Adjournment**

At the conclusion of business, Mark Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ned Buxton seconded the motion. The motion carried. President Abbe Bolich adjourned the meeting at 12:02pm.

### **Supporting Documents**

Agenda, May 2022

President's Report, May 2022

Past President's Report, May 2022

Accounting Protocols Donation Policies Fin Proc

DCMGA Board Meeting Minutes, 041222

Treasurer / Financial Documents:

- April 2022 Journal
- Statement of Financial Position: April 30, 2022
- Statement of Activity: Jan thru April 2022
- Statement of Activity: April 2022

Past President's Report – May 2022

2<sup>nd</sup> VP Membership Report, May 2022

Director-At-Large Report - Projects, May 2022

Director-At-Large Report - Website, May 2022

Scholarship App for Website, 2022

Financial Procedures for Projects, Part 1

Communications Report – May 2022

R&B1 Non-Budgeted Funding Request of \$150 for Drinks/Snacks

Statistics Report, May 2022