

**Dallas County Master Gardener Association
Board Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2023**

Attending:

Monica Nagle – President
Abbe Bolich – Immediate Past President
Nancy Black - 1st Vice President (Fundraising)
Sue Smith - 2nd Vice President (Member Services)
Sue John - Treasurer
Leslie Densmore – Secretary
Ned Buxton - Director-at-Large
Neal Howard - Director-at-Large
Denise Strueber - Director-at-Large
Barbara Anderson – Parliamentarian
Barry Bloom – Garden Consultations
Rick Coke – Budget Committee
Zandra Faris – Nomination; Financial Audit; Communications
Cynthia Jones – Communications
Cindy Large – Continuing Education
Joellyn Nobbe –TMGA Director; Investment Committee; School Liaison to the CEA
Fern Brown – Master Gardener Coordinator
Jadi Oliver – TMGA Director
Tig Thompson - Statistician

Absent:

Katerina Graham – AgriLife, Dallas County Horticulture Extension Agent
Chris Geyer – Safety Coordinator
Margaret Ghose – TMGA Director - Alternate
Mark Jones – Procurement
Glen McGee – Director-at-Large
Cookie Peadon – Speaker’s Bureau
Stephen Seewoester – TMGA Director – Alternate

Guests:

No guests attended this meeting.

Quorum:

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

Approve Minutes from the July 2023 Board Meeting

Abbe Bolich made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 2023, DCMGA Board Meeting. Sue John seconded the motion. The motion passed.

President's report – Monica Nagle

Discussions are still ongoing with the insurance; there has been heavy turnover and we are currently on our fourth agent. A meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 10. An invoice from USLI for \$770 has been received for renewal of the current policy; this will be reviewed in the meeting on Thursday. There are some funds left in the insurance budget, but these funds will not cover the fall renewal because the prior policy did not include some of the medical coverage we required; a non-budgeted funding request will be made in the fall.

Monica would like to put all the policies, procedures, and forms on the web. Some of these reside on hard drives so a request was made to forward any of these documents not currently on the web to Monica.

Katerina, Xiomara, Jayla, and the Texas A&M legal team are working on developing an MOU for PlantTAGG to be voted on at a later Board meeting.

Treasurer's Report – Sue John

There were no questions regarding the Treasurer's Report submitted for June 2023 and July 2023.

Sue reminded everyone that two signatures are required on a check request; Sue will confirm that the check request has been approved.

Monica requested that the Budget-to-Actual report be distributed to the project leaders monthly; Sue will coordinate this with Neal Howard. Rick Coke requested that he also be included in the distribution for the monthly Budget-to-Actual report.

Sue confirmed that the treasurer will maintain a record of any contributions but that the secretary will send thank you notes to the donors; Nancy Black has made personalized DCMGA thank you notes that can now be used.

Leslie Densmore made a motion to approve the July 2023 Treasurer's report as submitted. Monica Nagle seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Past President's Report - Abbe Bolich

The first meeting of the Nominating Committee will be held August 17th. There are five positions to be filled: two Directors-at Large, two Nominating Committee members and one Financial Review Committee member. Please send any suggestions for candidates to Abbe.

Directors' Report: Volunteer Engagement – Neal Howard

Neal highlighted the Taste of the Gardens at Anne Frank Elementary and the efforts of the Salvation Army project team. The Taste of the Gardens program will continue in September with the Texas Discovery Garden and Salvation Army Garden.

Texas AgriLife Update - Katerina Graham

Monica reported that Katerina is at a conference today. Monica is working with Katerina to distribute the definitions of projects and volunteer opportunities to the Board for discussion at the September Board meeting.

1st VP Report: Fundraising - Nancy Black

There are two requests for fundraisers: the Japanese Maple sale and Raincatcher's Jelly and Jam sale. A tax-free day has been requested for the Japanese Maple Sale. Monica reported that there is only one tax-free day remaining; Denise reminded us that the requirement for a tax-free event is that it must take place in a single 24-hour period. Abbe commented that food sales are tax-free, so the Raincatcher's sale does not need a tax-free day.

Monica Nagle made a motion to approve the NBFR for the Japanese Maple sale to be held October 1 through October 14 on SignUp Genius with pickup on October 21st at Raincatcher's. Leslie Densmore seconded. The motion passed.

Monica Nagle made a motion to approve the NBFR for the Raincatcher's Jelly and Jam Sale to be held in the fall; the date has not been finalized. Abbe Bolich seconded. The motion passed.

The Garden Tour Team has announced a date for the 2024 Garden Tour: May 11, 2024. There are five residential gardens and one community garden all located in the Casa Linda, Lake Highlands, and Northeast Dallas areas. Abbe clarified that the Garden Tour will be a one-day event only.

At Home Botanists received a \$735 donation from PlantTAGG.

2nd VP Report: Membership - Sue Smith

The Saturday DCMGA membership meetings have been very well attended and this will be taken into consideration in planning the 2024 meetings.

The objective of the funding request is to provide a portable, simple technology platform that will provide a quality recording of DCMGA monthly membership meetings; equipment needed to provide live Zoom capability will be evaluated later. Monica clarified that the Microsoft Office Suite software can be shared by five laptops. The midrange camera was selected which makes the total funding request \$4660. The Speaker's Bureau has budgeted funds to purchase similar equipment, but that equipment is not part of this funding request. The equipment for the monthly meetings will be purchased first and will provide proof-of-concept validation. The new equipment is planned to be used at the October monthly meeting at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church which does not have recording equipment. The 2nd VP will be the keeper of the equipment for the meetings.

Monica Nagle made a motion that Sue Smith as 2nd VP in charge of monthly meeting purchase the following equipment to aid in the recording of the monthly meetings: a laptop at \$849, a wireless microphone system at \$329, a projector at \$499, a suite of accessories at \$126, and a Sony Alpha 7C camera at \$2100 for a total of \$4660. This purchase will go through the purchasing manager process. Abbe Bolich seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Speaker's Bureau – Monica Nagle for Cookie Peadon

A funding request for \$1499 for upgrade of equipment to support the Speaker's Bureau activities was submitted. These funds have already been approved in the budget process and will go through the procurement process. This equipment includes a laptop, projector, microphone, accessories, and the Microsoft Office Suite which will be shared among up to five laptops including the equipment for the monthly meetings.

Investment Committee – Joellyn Nobbe

The monthly report outlined the minutes from the first two investment meetings. There is an existing Investment Policy which will be put on the website. There is a statement in the existing Investment Policy that says 'under no circumstances will the principal of the bequest from Carolyn Bush be invested in any way that jeopardizes the principal of the bequest.' The Investment Committee suggested that this clause be eliminated from the existing policy as there are more funds than just that bequest that needs to be protected. However, the intent of the Carolyn Bush bequest supporting school education should be kept in mind.

The Investment Committee suggests moving funds from the Bank of America savings account in order to earn more interest as well as to keep DCMGA funds substantially under the \$250,000 FDIC insured limit at the Bank of America. Also, under consideration is the reduction of funds in the Bank of America checking account but keeping it at a level to support DCMGA annual expenses including a cushion amount. Additionally, reducing the funds at the Oakwood bank to keep it substantially under the \$250,000 FDIC insured limit is also recommended.

Monica Nagle made a motion that the Investment Committee move \$200,000 from existing accounts to another higher interest-yielding, insured account; the details are up to the Investment Committee. Abbe Bolich seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The Bylaws committee is also looking at including the Investment Committee and possibly a Strategic Spending Committee in the revised Bylaws; this will be discussed later.

Discussion on the Endowment is also being tabled; there is concern regarding oversight as well as other questions.

The effort to develop school MOUs for Anne Frank Elementary, Ruby Young Elementary and Lakewood Elementary is continuing; the goal is to develop a standard MOU for schools. Katerina is also considering a MOU for the Dallas Arboretum. Katerina has developed a policy on volunteer opportunities versus projects; this will be discussed at the September Board meeting.

Bylaws Committee – Barbara Anderson

The revised Mission Statement has been distributed. Some of the changes were made to match the language of the new style being used in the revision; Linda Seidel suggested adding language to state specifically that all activity would be performed in compliance with the 501c3 rules. The objective is to specifically align the mission statement with the DCMGA practices that expand the Texas A&M mission statement such as supporting food banks, scholarships, etc. Ultimately, the new Bylaws will have to be approved by the Board, by the membership, by AgriLife and by Texas A&M. The Bylaws approval will be based on the entire document not on individual sections or changes. A question was asked about removing the language ‘shall not be *affiliated* with a commercial enterprise’ as separate from *endorsing* a commercial enterprise. Barbara explained that both words don’t have strict interpretations, ‘affiliating’ seems to describe the association with North Haven, Home Depot, etc but is different than a commercial endorsement. Joellyn suggested making the change on item 4 from generating funds to ‘support Master Gardener *projects*’ to ‘support Master Gardener *activities*.’

Barbara suggested streamlining the Bylaws to include the provision that committees are created at the discretion of the Board and that the details of the committees are described in the Policy Manual not in the Bylaws. The Policy Manual would be public and could be changed at the discretion of the Board and therefore not subject to the Bylaws revision process requiring membership approval. Monica asked whether committees already in the bylaws would be moved to the Policy Manual. Barbara said that the Nominations Committee and the Financial Committee are integral to the operation of the structure itself and should probably remain in the Bylaws. However, some of the current Bylaws provisions are both specific and detailed, such as dollar amount spending required for membership approval, and might be more easily maintained and specifically outlined in a Policy Manual.

Barry suggested that the minutes of the Board once approved be sent to the membership and that the financial reports be sent at least quarterly to the membership. Barbara suggested that these reports be posted on the website and also remind membership that the reports are available.

Directors’ Report: Awards and Recognition - Ned Buxton

There has been a good response from the project leads recognizing those individuals deserving recognition. Steve Houser, Mary Clare Milner, and Lisa Patterson were recognized in July.

New Business

Purchase of Canopy Tents

Glen McGee will research the request for purchase of canopy tents to support volunteer outreach activities and will present a recommendation to the Board.

Directors’ Report: Project Coordination / Scholarship/Outreach – Monica Nagle for Glen McGee

Two candidates have been selected for scholarships. Hope Miller, who had previously received a DCMGA scholarship, will receive a new \$1250 scholarship to continue her studies at Texas A&M where she is in the Agricultural program maintaining a 3.8 GPA. Michael Cook is a PhD student at Texas A&M and will be awarded a \$1250 scholarship; Michael maintains a 4.0 GPA. The scholarship expenses have already been approved in the budget.

Monica Nagle made a motion to pay out \$1250 for the benefit of the DCMGA scholarship to Michael Cook noting the exception that he is not a graduate of a Dallas County secondary school but he does serve Dallas County with his knowledge of grapes and winemaking; this motion also includes a pay out of for the benefit of the \$1250 DCMGA scholarship to Hope Miller and an additional pay out of \$2500 for the benefit of the 2022 DCMGA scholarship to Kalina Heimuli. These funds have already been approved in the budget. Sue John seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Directors' Report: Advisory Committee - Denise Strueber

The October Education event is scheduled for October 14th at the Dallas Brookhaven campus to be held from 10:30am until 4pm with lunch included. The event charge will be to cover the cost of the lunch estimated at \$15; having an attendance fee will hopefully minimize the number of no-shows. Joellyn asked about the CEU hours that would be awarded from attendance at this event; this will be decided by Katerina. Denise plans to sell merchandise; speakers will have the opportunity to sell books. Dallas Water Utilities will also have a table for WaterWise brochures and will donate moisture meters for attendees. A NBF for \$2100 has been submitted for this event covering speaker fees, transportation, and meals as well as miscellaneous fees for the event.

This event will be advertised to the public; anyone including Dallas Master Gardeners and Master Gardeners from surrounding counties may attend. There is a concern about no-shows, but overselling tickets may cause an issue of paid attendees not having a seat. Another question was asked about the number of Master Gardeners attendees crowding out seats available for the public. Denise will talk to Katerina about initially limiting Master Gardener tickets to a certain number as this is an AgriLife event.

Nancy Black made a motion to approve the funding request for the October educational outreach event with speakers Felder Rushing and Callie Works-Leary; fees are approximately \$2100 (\$1000 speaker fees, transportation \$500, meals \$300 and \$300 miscellaneous fees.) Abbe Bolich seconded. The motion passed.

Budget Committee and Procurement - Rick Coke

Information is being gathered for the preparation of the 2024 budget. Project leaders will be contacted in the next two weeks for input for budget requests to be presented in the October board meeting.

Rick discussed some approaches to simplifying the purchasing process. Currently there is a second Board approval required to spend money over \$1000 that has already been approved by the Board.

Rick suggested making a rule that expenditures of high dollar items be made in conjunction with the Purchasing Manager in lieu of the second Board approval process to verify that the purchase is from a good source at a good price. There have also been questions regarding the requirement for a second signature on check requests. The budget committee will look at simplifying this to avoid multiple 'sign, scan, and email' cycles. A third consideration is the definition of guidelines around the flexibility that projects have in spending their budgeted money. Abbe suggested that the policy manual might encompass overall guidelines in project budget spending. Examples would include purchase of anything that might create a liability, e.g., mechanical

items would require a review if not already approved in budget. Also, items of personal benefit would not be permitted in project budget spending.

Communications Report: Cynthia Jones / Zandra Faris

The information about the upcoming Master Garden School is being reviewed for posting on the website. Plans are also being made to include Board documents on the website.

Safety Report – Cynthia Jones for Chris Geyer

The response to possible dates for the CPR training has been ‘underwhelming’. Dates for possible classes will be narrowed down to two dates and will be emailed to membership. Cynthia clarified that this class is not a CPR certification class; it will be a two-hour class, Friends and Family, an overview of CPR including chest compressions and when/how to get help.

Statistics/Data Report: Tig Thompson

There is a new online system under consideration for background checks; DCMGA will have approximately 250 background checks required at a cost of \$12. The process and payment for these background checks is outstanding. One option is for the Board to process and pay for the background checks and add the cost to the dues. However, while all members will pay dues, not all will be required to have a background check. Another option is to have members individually request and pay for the background checks personally. Background checks are required every three years; Joellyn suggested including increasing the dues by a third of the background check cost which evens out the cost of the background check over three years and have the association pay for the background checks. Master Gardener member dues need to be decided in the September timeframe as part of the budget process.

Tig said volunteer hours were about 400 hours behind, but it has been difficult to accumulate hours in this heat.

Financial Review – Zandra Faris

The Financial Review was triggered by the resignation of Barbara Hardin. The Financial Review has been completed and reported to the Board. Recommendations included continuing a monthly Budget-to-Actual report. The 2022 Financial Review suggested that the Inventory of Merchandise should be performed quarterly. There was no documentation that this had been done for 2023 but it is best just to keep up with it. The Review committee commended the procurement procedure as sound financial practice.

Garden Consultation Team

A comprehensive report on the Garden Consultation Team has been distributed.

The Garden Consultation Team has expanded its scope to include outside requests from the general public as well as requests from project leaders regarding a problem in a MG project-approved garden. Anyone who has taken a Master Gardener Advanced Training course, or an outside approved advanced training course, is considered a member of the Garden Consultation team and would be available to lead a consultation. Brochures and documentation are being collected to make information available on the website for the Garden Consultation Team to use; these are located under Get Help/Resources on the website.

TMA Director's Meeting

Background checks were a major topic at the TMG meeting; more information will be available as soon as the minutes are officially published.

Master Gardener School – Fern Brown

The new school coordinators, Lisa Reese, Jurhee Curtis and Gwen Cassel will be attending the next meeting in September. This team has already had two meetings and will meet again next week. The Master Gardener School applications process will open September 5, 2023.

Adjourn:

Ned Buxton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nancy Black seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 12:32pm.