

Ohio Christmas Tree Association – Board Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2023



President Jeff Greig called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom Call

ROLL CALL:

Present: Joel Berry, Alan Binger, Amy Galehouse, Jeff Greig, Gary Hite, Bev Keener, Matt Mongin, Robin Saum and Avery Wilcox.

Absent: Bill Cackler, Roger Koch, and Stacie Hopple

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Bev Keener moved to approve the minutes of the May 8, 2023 OCTA board meeting. Amy Galehouse seconded the motion. Motion approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Avery Wilcox presented the Treasurer's report. He reported that the association has 140 paid members as of July 31. Current projections indicate that revenues should exceed expenditures in the general operating fund for 2023. He also reported that the summer meeting generated profits of \$10,426.53, including the revenue generated by the auction. Gary Hite moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Matt Mongin seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

New Growers Session:

Gary Hite shared the agenda topics for the fall session he is hosting on October 14. Valerie Graham will be sending an email out and Alan Binger will be updating the Facebook page to promote the event. The registration fee for the session will be \$30 per farm.

MACT Meeting:

Bev Keener updated the board on the 2024 meeting being hosted by Timbuk Farm. The date will be July 19-20, 2024. They are planning a band on Friday evening and kid's activities. She attended the 2023 MACT meeting in Missouri to observe their meeting.

Board of Directors Nominations:

Chairman, Matt Mongin updated the board on the candidate search for election to the board. Amy Galehouse and Jeff Greig have submitted information for reelection. Avery Wilcox has notified the board that he will be retiring from his board position. Matt has been unable to contact Stacie Hopple to determine her interest in remaining on the board. Matt is working on a pool of candidates to make sure we have a full board in 2024.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

Scholarship Committee:

Chairman Roger Koch was absent from the meeting but Valerie Graham reported that one of the 2023 scholarship winners, Hannah Saum had requested her payment.

Social Media Committee:

Chairman Alan Binger shared the results of the Facebook posts that had been placed since the May board meeting. There were 17 posts made. The topics were the summer meeting (including the scholarship winner announcements) and the Ohio State Fair results. There are now 887 followers on the OCTA Facebook page which is up from 813 in May.

Website Committee:

Discussion was held on getting timely information and updates to Michaela Graham for content on the page. Content is still needed and anyone on the board may send information to Valerie Graham.

Education Committee and Research Committee:

No report due to the excused absence of Bill Cackler.

Operation Evergreen:

Chairman Amy Galehouse reported that plans continue for 2023. Because of the lower cash balance in the Operation Evergreen fund, we are currently planning to send 50 trees. This can change if additional funding is secured. The board again discussed ways to raise more funds. We will work on updating the posters that farms can display. November 15 will be the packing date at the ODA complex.

Winter Meeting:

Chairman Jeff Greig reported on the winter meeting. Discussion for the 2024 meeting was held. The original projected date of February 24, 2024 will likely be changed to March 2 to avoid having multiple events at the Quest Center at the same time.

After a discussion of fees Gary Hite moved to set the 2024 winter meeting fees at the same as 2023 rates. \$100 for members, \$120 for non-members. The late fee was \$15. Matt Mongin seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Summer Meeting:

Chairman Jeff Greig recapped the 2023 summer meeting held at Greig Christmas Tree Farm. The 2024 summer meeting will be held at Timbuk Farms, Granville, in conjunction with MACT. The 2025 meeting is tentatively scheduled for Kaleidoscope Farms, Mr. Cory, Ohio.

Finance Committee:

Chairman Alan Binger reported that we have 20 "Seedling" members emphasizing the importance of our new grower efforts. He requested Valerie Graham post a transaction transferring ½ of the summer meeting auction proceeds to the Operation Evergreen and Scholarship funds (\$614.25 to each fund). Other financial matters had already been covered by Treasurer Wilcox in the Treasurer's Report.

NCTA Report:

Chairman Matt Mongin referenced the NCTA report that Valerie Graham had forwarded to the general membership. The 2024 NCTA meeting will be held in Nova Scotia on August 1-2.

Membership Committee:

Bill Cackler was absent but Gary Hite reported that USDA Statistics showed 505 farms in Ohio growing Christmas Trees. The majority of growers in Ohio are not members of our association.

State Fair Committee:

Chairman Jeff Grieg and Executive Director Graham reported on the changes made at the OCTA exhibit at the Ohio State Fair in 2023. Overall it was a success although more volunteers could have been used. The future of an OCTA exhibit at the fair is unknown at this time due to the removal of the Ag/Hort building on the fairgrounds. It is not known how we may fit in to a new building and format. Valerie will keep the board updated as information becomes available.

Publications/Public Relations:

Gary Hite reported that the deadline for the next newsletter is in October.

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairman Joel Berry reported that one nomination for the Hall of Fame has been received and further nominations should be forwarded to him.

Evaluation Committee:

Chairman Joel Berry asked that evaluations forms be sent to the board members and the completed forms be returned directly to him as soon as possible.

NEW BUSINESS-

COSI Proposal: Valerie Graham has received a request from the Center of Science and Industry for OCTA to supply trees to be placed at the entrance to the center for the 2023 holiday season. After discussion, Valerie is to gather more information and report back to the board.

OSU Extension Christmas Tree/Maple Syrup specialist position: Jeff Greig reported that an offer has been made to Jacob Nicholson to fill the position. He will be invited to attend our winter meeting to be introduced.

Ohio Director of Agriculture: ODA Director, Brian Baldrige will be touring Timbuk Farms on November 7 to learn more about the Christmas Tree industry. He will also be invited to attend our winter meeting.

NEXT MEETING-

Joel Berry moved to hold our next regular board meeting on Tuesday, October 17, at 11:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at Timbuk Farms to allow board members a chance to see the facility before the

2024 summer meeting. Bev Keener seconded the motion. Motion approved. Robin Saum indicated that she will be unable to attend the meeting because of work responsibilities. She will be excused.

ADJOURNMENT:

Matt Mongin moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:42 p.m. Bev Keener seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan W. Binger
Secretary