

Ohio Christmas Tree Association – Board Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2023



President Jeff Greig called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was held at Timbuk Farms, 2030 Timbuk Road, Granville, Ohio.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Joel Berry, Alan Binger, Bill Cackler, Amy Galehouse, Jeff Greig, Gary Hite, Bev Keener, Roger Koch, Matt Mongin and Avery Wilcox.

Absent: Stacie Hopple and Robin Saum (excused)

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Roger Koch moved to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2023 OCTA board meeting. Gary Hite seconded the motion. Motion approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Avery Wilcox presented the Treasurer's report. He projected that the association will have total revenues in all funds of \$64,952.06 and expenses of \$64,128.70 for 2023 leaving a net profit of \$823.36. The operating fund would have a surplus of \$3,186.34 but the donations funds would have a net loss of \$2,362.98. Roger Koch moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Bill Cackler seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

New Growers Session:

Gary Hite reported that the new grower session he hosted on October 14 was a success with 13 "new grower" farms and seven experienced growers in attendance. The meeting was well received despite the poor weather. The board then brainstormed ideas for a new grower session(s) for 2024.

MACT Meeting:

Bev Keener updated the board on the 2024 MACT meeting being hosted by Timbuk Farms. The date will be July 19-20, 2024. She reported on the progress being made for session planning as well as with vendors, caterers and youth activities in their Fun Farm area. She and husband Dave will give the board a tour of the facilities at the conclusion of today's meeting.

Board of Directors Nominations:

Chairman Matt Mongin updated the board on the candidate search for election to the board. Two board members must be replaced and Matt indicated that one OCTA member has agreed to put their name up for election and he is working on another candidate. He again asked the board to recommend possible candidates. We should have the slate of candidates ready for the ballot to be distributed in the November newsletter.

COMMITTEE REPORTS-

Scholarship Committee:

Valerie Graham reported that one of the 2023 scholarship recipients had not claimed her scholarship yet. A discussion was held concerning placing a deadline for claiming the scholarship. The committee will discuss this and bring a recommendation to the board for consideration.

Social Media Committee:

Chairman Alan Binger reviewed a written report showing 911 followers on the OCTA Facebook page and detailing statistics regarding the 5 posts made since our August 28 meeting.

Website Committee:

The website continues to need content updates. Roger Koch requested that a new chairman be appointed for this committee in 2024.

Education Committee and Research Committee:

Chairman Bill Cackler reported that he assisted with the New Growers field day with a session on small tree management. He will report on his research at the 2024 Winter Meeting.

Operation Evergreen:

Chairman Amy Galehouse reported that a quote from UPS was received for \$12,087 for 100 trees. This quote is substantially lower than last year, but it is subject to change by the time we actually ship our trees. At this time we only have enough funds to commit to 50 trees at that rate. The board brainstormed about ideas for further fundraising. A final decision of the number of trees to be sent will be made closer to our November 15 packing day.

Winter Meeting:

Chairman Jeff Greig distributed an early draft of the winter meeting agenda. The meeting date was changed to March 2. Jake Nicholson, the new OSU Christmas Tree/Maple Syrup Specialist will have an opportunity to introduce himself.

Summer Meeting:

The 2024 summer meeting will be held at Timbuk Farms, Granville, in conjunction with MACT. The 2025 summer meeting will be held at Kaleidoscope Farms, Mt. Cory, Ohio. Several possible sites were discussed for 2026.

Finance Committee:

Chairman Alan Binger distributed a written report showing how our financial position at 9/30/23 compares to 9/30/22 and previous year ends. He stated that he made an adjustment transferring ½ of the summer meeting auction proceeds to the Operation Evergreen and Scholarship Endowment funds (\$614.25 to each fund) so his report will differ from the totals in the reports Valerie Graham had emailed to the board. An adjustment still needs to be made in Quickbooks. The report also showed a comparison of summer meeting profits through the years and showing the total revenues received from

memberships for the 2023 membership year and detailed how much of that revenue had been received in calendar year 2022 and how much was received in calendar year 2023.

NCTA Report:

Chairman Matt Mongin referenced his NCTA report that Valerie Graham had forwarded to the board. In the report he referenced the article that NCTA Director Tim O’Conner had in the recent Great Lakes Journal. The 2024 NCTA meeting will be held in Nova Scotia on August 1-2. Matt and his wife plan to attend.

Membership Committee:

No Report

State Fair Committee:

Executive Director Graham reported on the changes being made at the Ohio State Fair. The future of an OCTA exhibit at the fair is still unknown at this time due to the removal of the Ag/Hort building on the fairgrounds. It is possible that we will not be included in the replacement building’s new format. One advantage we have is holding a fair sponsored competition. Valerie will keep the board updated as information becomes available.

Publications/Public Relations:

The newsletter will come out in November.

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 by November 30, 2023.

Evaluation Committee:

Chairman Joel Berry has the executive director evaluation forms that were returned to him. A discussion was held on how to proceed with the contract of Valerie Graham as her current two-year contract expires on December 31. It was decided that the executive committee will meet to review the evaluations and propose a new contract that will be acted on by the entire board. The goal would be to have this matter settled by the end of January, 2024.

It was moved by Alan Binger and seconded by Roger Koch to extend Valerie’s current contract with identical terms an additional 30 days to accommodate the above time frame. Motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS-

COSI Proposal: Bev Keener reported that Timbuk Farms would be supplying the trees for COSI as was discussed at the August board meeting.

Membership Fees: Membership fees for 2024 were discussed. Fees had been increased in 2023. After discussion, Roger Koch moved to keep all fees the same for 2024. Matt Mongin seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Officer Elections for 2024:

President Greig then led elections for 2024 board officers.

Alan Binger nominated Jeff Greig as President of the association for 2024. Roger Koch seconded the nomination. No other nominations were heard. Jeff was elected by voice vote.

Jeff Greig nominated Gary Hite as Vice President of the association for 2024. Matt Mongin seconded the nomination. No other nominations were heard. Gary was elected by voice vote.

Jeff Greig nominated Alan Binger as Treasurer of the association for 2024. Matt Mongin seconded the nomination. No other nominations were heard. Alan was elected by voice vote.

Roger Koch nominated Bev Keener as Secretary of the association for 2024. Alan Binger seconded the nomination. No other nominations were heard. Bev was elected by voice vote.

New Grower Mentorships: Matt Mongin asked that we continue the conversation of a new grower mentorship program. This type of program would be very beneficial to keep new growers in the industry. He asked that new growers be identified and determined whether they are members of OCTA. Experienced growers in the area of the new growers would be identified and asked if they would be willing to serve as a mentor resource for these new growers.

NEXT MEETING-

The next meeting will be a special meeting (virtual) to be held to act on our executive director contract. The date will be announced via email. The next regular meeting of the board will be held on Friday, March 1, at 7:00 p.m. It will be an in-person meeting held at a Polaris area hotel close to the winter meeting site (Quest Center).

ADJOURNMENT:

Bill Cackler moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan W. Binger
Secretary