

Ohio Christmas Tree Association – Board Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2024



President Jeff Greig called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The board meeting took place at the Hampton Inn 8411 Pulsar Place, Columbus, OH.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Joel Berry, Alan Binger, Bill Cackler, Amy Galehouse, Jeff Greig, Gary Hite, Bev Keener, Roger Koch, Matt Perdulla, and James Stribny.

Absent: Stacie Hopple, Bill Cackler (excused) and Matt Mongin (excused)

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham; Charles Perdulla and Amy Perdulla.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS:

President Jeff Greig introduced our newly appointed board members. Matt Perdulla of Pioneer Trails Christmas Tree Farm and James Stribny of Manners Christmas Tree Farm. The newly appointed members were welcomed by the group.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

President called for motion to approve the minutes of the October 17, OCTA board meeting. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Motion approved.

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING:

President called for motion to approve the minute of the special meeting held January 30, 2024, via Zoom. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Motion approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Alan Binger presented the Treasurer's report. He reported Bank Account totals of Community Bank CD \$11,332.31; National City Checking 3131 \$45,900.39; National City Savings 294 \$24,767.11 for a total of \$81,999.81. Fund balances of General Fund \$47,993.26; Operation Evergreen \$10,896.45; Research Fund \$9,812.85; Scholarship Fund \$5,095.00; and Scholarship Endowment \$8,312.25. Profit of \$2,240.87. Alan discussed simplifying financials. Mr. Binger provided a breakdown report for the board members. There was a discussion about membership. Valerie mentioned that there had been an increase in new members and that she was preparing to do another mailing. Roger Koch moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. James Stribny seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Scholarship Committee:

Roger Koch reported the committee had met via zoom on January 31, 2024. They reviewed current OCTA Scholarship Funds. Roger reported the committee was recommending a change to the scholarship application. Under Rules Eligibility, the committee recommends adding to #6, "unless authorized by the Board of Directors". The committee provided a report to the Board of Directors. There was discussion about endowment investments. Alan Binger recommended that he and Valerie be authorized by the Board to make investments on behalf of the Association. A variety of investment strategies were discussed by the group. Roger asked that the scholarship fund and the scholarship endowment be kept separate. Matt Perdulla motioned to take \$8,000.00 from the endowment fund and invest with Edward Jones a 1-year CD at 5.10%. Bev Keener seconded the motion. Motion approved. There was further discussion. Gary Hite moved to invest \$2,500.00 from the scholarship fund with Edward Jones. James Stribny seconded the motion. Motion approved. Matt Perdulla motioned to authorize Alan Binger and Valerie Graham to set up the investment account with Edward Jones and be the signors for the account. James Stribny seconded the motion. Motion approved. Amy Galehouse moved to approve the addition requested to item #6 Under Rules of Eligibility of the scholarship application. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Social Media Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger reported response to the page after the October meeting and the visit of the new Director of Agriculture at Timbuk Farms. This event was also "shared" with the Great Lakes and Real Tree pages.

Website Committee:

Alan Binger is making content updates and posting meeting minutes/financials. Valerie Graham questioned financials being available on the website. There was discussion on the subject. Valerie will investigate password protection. Alan Binger will remove financials from the website.

Education Committee and Research Committee:

Due to the absence of Chairperson Bill Cackler, no report was provided to the board.

Operation Evergreen:

Valarie Graham reported that there will be a zoom meeting on March 18, 10:00 a.m. about funding opportunities. The zoom meeting will be with Tim Derrickson, Jobs Ohio and Deborah Ashenurst, Veterans Affairs. Please let Valarie know if you would like to take part. Chairperson Amy Galehouse reported everything is donated for the project except for shipping. The old maximum of trees collected to ship was three hundred. We now ship a maximum of one hundred trees. She reported UPS provides the cost of shipping estimate in June, and the final shipping cost is known 30 days before shipping.

Winter Meeting:

- Roger Koch will provide the attendees with a scholarship committee update.
- Alan Binger will provide the attendees with a financial update.
- Bev Keener will provide the attendees with a MACT/OCTA Summer meeting update.
- There will be discussion about the State Fair.

- Deaths to be announced at Winter meeting:
 - Bob Reeves, Mountain Creek Tree Farm
 - Gus Ruetenik, Ruetenik Farms
 - Ramon and Jane Battles, Tower-N-Pines
- Golden Lightbulb
- 50/50
- Secured two sponsorships and one vendor

Valerie asked that the date for the 2025 winter meeting date be set. The date of March 1, 2025, has been tentatively set and the location to be Timbuk Farms, Granville, OH.

Summer Meeting:

The 2024 summer meeting will be held at Timbuk Farms, Granville, in conjunction with MACT. Discussion regarding whether a contract had been received from MACT and how the funds from vendor registrations would be split. The 2025 summer meeting will be held at Kaleidoscope Farms, Mt. Cory, Ohio. The 2026 summer meeting to be determined with both Dickess Tree Farm, Kitts Hill, Ohio, and Hidden Pines, Clyde, Ohio, offering to host.

Finance Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger distributed a written report showing how our financial position compares 2/29/2024 to 2/28/2023 and previous year ends. The report also showed a comparative income statement from 2018 to 2024. A financial forecast for the next three years was also provided to the Board.

NCTA Report:

Due to Chairperson Matt Mongin absence, no report was given. NCTA meeting location Nova Scotia, Canada in conjunction with the Nova Scotia meeting on August 1 – 4, 2024.

Membership Committee:

No Report

State Fair Committee:

Executive Director Graham reported on the changes being made at the Ohio State Fair. She provided information as to which buildings would be torn down. She also said that the new location for the next two years would be to the south of the old building. The contest will be held on Monday, there will no longer be a peoples' choice or the need to schedule workers for the booth. The trees would be moved around the building. There was discussion about how to care for the trees without workers. Amy Galehouse suggested using soil moist and developing a worker list to water. Valerie also mentioned that the new commodity building could be the new home to the booth. The contest will be July 22. There was discussion of judging the State trees at the summer meeting.

Publications/Public Relations:

Chairperson Gary Hite had nothing to report. Valerie reported that the next newsletter will be made available April 1.

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry reported the nominee for the Hall of Fame is Avery Wilcox and that he would be recognized at the winter meeting.

Evaluation Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry reported that a two-year contract has been awarded to Valerie Graham as Executive Director of the Ohio Christmas Tree Association.

10-minute break

NEW BUSINESS-

New Grower Session: Gary Hite mentioned that the new grower sessions were well attended and well received. There was discussion and it was decided to continue to offer the sessions.

Membership Fees: President Jeff Greig brought up the idea of offering affiliated memberships. The benefits of an affiliated membership were discussed along with the topic of member rates, giving only email access, and not allowing affiliated members to vote or take part in contests. This item was tabled until there was a discussion with the MCTA President, and further information was available.

NEXT MEETING-

The next meeting will be a zoom meeting (virtual) on Monday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Roger Koch moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Keener
Secretary