

Ohio Christmas Tree Association –

Board Meeting Minutes

June 29, 2024



President Jeff Greig called the meeting to order. The Board meeting took place at Timbuk Farms. Prior to the Board meeting, Mrs. Keener gave a brief tour to those in attendance.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Robin Saum

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham. David Keener arrived later during the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

President Greig called for motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, OCTA board meeting. Roger Koch motioned to approve; Gary Hite seconded the motion. Motion approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Alan Binger presented the Treasurer's report. Mr. Binger provided a detailed account breakdown of all accounts. The overview is as follows; Community Bank CD \$11,332.31; National City Checking 3131 \$30,879.50; National City Savings 294 \$24,767.72; Edward Jones account \$10,500.00 for a total of \$77,479.53. Fund balances of General Fund \$40,792.98; Operation Evergreen \$12,136.45; Research Fund \$9,852.85; Scholarship Fund \$6,235.00; and Scholarship Endowment \$8,162.25. He reported that we are a little behind from last year due to the revenue from the summer meeting yet to have been received. There was discussion regarding whether there was a projection of the amount of revenue that the meeting would generate. That is to be determined, as the number of registrants are low and still coming in. Valerie stated that she did a mailing regarding registration. He also stated we had a profitable year last year and to be on track with last year is promising. Memberships are down eleven from this time last year. Valerie reported that twenty-seven members from last year had yet to pay and she had sent out reminders. President Greig requested a list of the twenty-seven non-renewed members be sent to the Board members. Treasurer Binger stated that he would send copied of Edward Jones statements to Valerie. Matt Mongin moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. James Stribny seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

MACT/OCTA Summer Meeting Update:

Bev Keener reported that the summer meeting is on target and moving forward. She also stated that at this point, the help that is needed would be setting up, during the meeting and during sessions. She updated the board as to the planning of the meeting, location of sessions, how the attendees would move through the two-day event. It was decided that there would be a board member staged at each breakout session throughout the day. Joel Berry offered to pick up the donuts from Danville. Jeff Greig offered to arrange the workers for each breakout session area. The topic of recertification was discussed and the lack of MACT informing OCTA or Timbuk Farms that they did not arrange for recertification credits.

New Grower Sessions:

Alan Binger reported that he and Jeff Greig would be conducting a shearing clinic. He also reported that they currently had one registrant. Valerie reported that she did not have information on the clinic. Alan stated that he would forward the information about the clinic to her. President Greig stated that the association needs to continue making educational opportunities available for the members. Vice President, Gary Hite, reported that the next new grower session scheduled for Saturday, September 28 at his farm.

Switching 501 Status:

Alan Binger reported to the board that he had investigated what would be involved in switching the association status.

- The association would need to update the bylaws with a clause of what would happen if the association would dissolve.
- The association would need to hire professional help to assist with the change.
- There is a \$600.00 application fee, and the application must be completed online and is twenty-eight pages long.
- There must be officers.

It was discussed by the Board and was decided that it is not advantageous for us to pursue.

Membership Signs:

Valerie Graham discussed the signs and shared an example of a sign that was purchased in the past. She also reported that there were options available costing \$15.00, \$25.00, and \$40.00 per sign. Gary Hite offered to check pricing with a vendor that he uses in the Marion area. Discussion followed with ideas as to how to distribute to the membership, how to cover the cost and whether to make them available at the summer meeting. James Stribrny moved the association make the sign available at a 50% discount to members and to promote at the summer meeting. Matt Mongin seconded the motion. Valerie recommended to order fifty signs. Motion approved.

Sleds:

Matt Perdulla reported it is still a work in progress. Due to the time crunch, we will not be able to have sample sleds prior to the summer meeting. Discussion by the board continued regarding vendors, color, size, type, and availability. Matt Mongin suggested that something be put together prior to Operation Evergreen. Matt Perdulla will continue to work on this project and report findings to the Board.

Veterans Event:

Valerie Graham shared at the last meeting that everyone thought it was a promising idea. However, no one had expressed an interest in helping with the event. She then moved on to share an update on Operation Evergreen and the Department of Agriculture had called another meeting the following Monday. The Veterans group and a General will also be in on the call. She also shared that the Ohio Department of Agriculture wants to take lead on Operation Evergreen. Valerie asked the Board if they thought it would be possible to get three hundred trees donated. The Board joined in with discussion on how Operation Evergreen had been arranged in the past. Amy Galehouse stated that the most trees ever collected was three hundred. Amy stated that if three hundred trees is the goal, each member would need to be contacted individually requesting a donation. She also reported the tree donated for this year would be sent to Jordan. Valerie reported that the Director of Agriculture wants to make the event at the ODA to be larger and to involve the State FFA. She cautioned making the event too large. Amy Galehouse reported to the Board that there are products available to extend the freshness of the trees during shipping. This product may be a necessity should we need to ship the trees earlier. Amy also reported that she needs to meet with UPS. President Greig stated that shipping costs is an ongoing concern. Valerie will report back to ODA that the Board recommends sending 150 trees. Valerie brought the Board back to the subject of the Veterans Event to be held on August 3 at OSU Union. The event is a trade show for veterans and would allow our association to set up a table and put out a jar for donations to defray Operation Evergreen shipping costs.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:**Scholarship Committee:**

Roger Koch reported the committee met via Zoom on June 10, 2024. He made the report from the meeting available to the Board. The report is attached to the minutes. Roger read the report and asked for discussion from the Board. James Stribrny, Valerie Graham, Bev Keener expressed concern of the addition of these criteria. Amy Galehouse asked the mission of the scholarship. Valerie updated that originally the scholarship was for those enrolled in a horticultural type of major. Due to the lack of applicants in these fields, the scholarship was opened to include other interests. Roger Koch moved to include the question of financial need to be added to the scholarship application. Motion fails lack of second. Issue #2 regarding number of times an applicant can apply for the scholarship. Gary Hite motioned that an applicant be limited to being awarded the scholarship two times. Motion seconded by Matt Mongin. Discussion. Motion approved.

Social Media Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger reported a Facebook following of 981.

Website Committee:

Valerie Graham shared that it is time to send out the Web listing information. She asked the Board if it was okay to continue charging \$75.00 for the upgraded web listing. The Board agreed.

Education Committee and Research Committee:

Bill Cackler reported that he will be conducting new grower sessions at the upcoming summer meeting.

Operation Evergreen:

Operation Evergreen update was reported during Veteran event under Old Business. No additional information was shared.

Winter Meeting:

President Greig reported that the 2025 Winter meeting date has been set. The meeting will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2025, at the Quest Center in Columbus. Mr. Greig noted that if any Board member had ideas for meeting topics, speakers to forward the information to him or Valerie. He also reported that a meeting will be held in July with Kathy Smith, OSU. Valerie is wanting to push for an earlier release of the Winter meeting agenda. Discussion was heard by the Board regarding insurance topic for the Winter meeting.

Summer Meeting:

Everything is set for the 2024 Summer meeting at Timbuk Farms.

2025 summer meeting - Kaleidoscope Farms, Mt. Cory, Ohio. (This will be a June meeting.)

2026 summer meeting - Feisley Christmas Tree Farm, Belmont, Ohio

2027 summer meeting Hidden Pines, Clyde, Ohio (Tentative)

Finance Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger had nothing else to report.

NCTA Report:

Chairperson Matt Mongin reported that John Wyckoff is the new NCTA President. Mr. Wyckoff is encouraging membership. He also provided the following:

- There is a new coordinator.
- Five-year Farm Bill is up for renewal.
- 2025 meeting will be held at Northern Pines/Dutchman Tree Farms, Manton Michigan.

Membership Committee:

No report

Research Committee:

Chairperson Bill Cackler reported the plots are in. He will take measurements prior to the meeting on the 19th.

State Fair Committee:

President Greig reported the contest will be on Monday of the Fair. He also reported due to the building being razed, there will be no booth at this year's fair. Valerie stated she had tickets for board members who plan to check in on the trees during the fair. The condition of the tree stands was discussed. David Keener offered to donate new tree tubs and could also donate stand replacements. The Board decided that how the trees would be displayed would be decided upon arrival and viewing the area at the fair.

Publications/Public Relations:

Chairperson Gary Hite had nothing to report.

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry reported the committee has received one nomination and is open to receiving additional candidates.

Evaluation Committee:

No report.

Valerie mentioned that we need to think about membership fees. The fee needs to be decided upon at the next meeting. Further discussion on the topic was offered by the President. The topic of vendors at the summer meeting was also discussed. Bev Keener reported seventeen registered vendors for summer meeting. Mrs. Keener also voiced her concerns regarding push back by MACT regarding the AV equipment requirements for the meeting. Valerie to reach out to Kathy at MACT requesting additional AV equipment.

NEW BUSINESS-

President Greig mentioned that State meetings at the summer meeting are currently scheduled for Saturday afternoon. There is a concern the members in attendance will have left the meeting by the end of the day. Discussion was heard by the Board as to a better time to have the meeting. It was agreed to schedule the membership meeting during the ice cream social. The following topics need to be discussed before the membership.

- Promote people who are interested in becoming a Board member.
 - o Alan Binger, Bill Cackler, Gary Hite, and Matt Mongin are up for reelection.
- Operation Evergreen
- Winter Meeting
- Financial Report
- State Fair

NEXT MEETING-

The next meeting scheduled via Zoom, Monday, October 14 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Roger Koch moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Gary Hite. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Keener
Secretary

Ohio Christmas Tree Association
The Alfred DiVencenzo Memorial Student Scholarship
Committee Report to the Board
June 11, 2024

The Committee members met by Zoom on June 10, 2024.

Present were Committee Members Roger Koch, Robin Saum and Bill Cackler.

Guest : Valerie Graham, OCTA Ex Dir.

The committee reviewed the current judging procedures. The 100-point scoring sheet is satisfactory and will remain the same, and the three scholarship committee members will continue as judges for the annual OCTA scholarship. The Committee recommends adding the question, on Page 3 of the Application, under **Financial Need**; “Have you received, or will you be receiving, any other scholarships or education grants for the upcoming school year?”.

An applicant winning the scholarship more than once was discussed. One of the 2024 OCTA Scholarship winners was also a winner in 2023. It is conceivable that an applicant could win the scholarship multiple years in a row. If OCTA was a larger organization (financially / member #'s) and offered more scholarships, then this scenario might be acceptable. But considering OCTA's overall size, the committee recommends awarding the scholarship to an applicant a maximum of **two** times during their academic studies. This would allow other qualified applicants a chance to be awarded the annual scholarship. The scholarship committee recommends this change.

Respectively submitted by Robin Saum, Bill Cackler, and Roger Koch

RCK, 6-11-24