

Ohio Christmas Tree Association

Board Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2024



President Jeff Greig called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The Board meeting took place virtually.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: James Stribny

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

President Greig called for motion to approve the minutes of the June 29, OCTA board meeting. Bill Cackler motioned to approve; Roger Koch 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 \$24,743.78; National City Savings 294 \$24,768.75; Edward Jones account \$10,500.00 for a total of \$71,344.84. Fund balances of General Fund \$36,458.29; Operation Evergreen \$12,236.45; Research Fund \$9,852.85; Scholarship Fund \$4,235.00; and Scholarship Endowment \$8,462.25. He also reported that the balance is off by \$100.00 and has been for the past three months. The bank totals are \$100.00 more than the fund balances. This may be due to a deposit being entered with the wrong date. Due to the amount being one-hundred dollars, it may be from a weblink payment. He reported that memberships are at 142 compared to 144 this time last year. We are up by two vendors. We are down two memberships in the 6–15-acre group, as well as in the 16-24-acre group. We have added in the new grower and 1-5-acre groups. He also reported we are down 4 growers from last year. Mr. Binger asked if there were any items for discussion. Bill Cackler questioned the line item under mileage in the amount of \$2,048.00. The question was directed at the Executive Director, Valerie Graham, for an explanation. She reported that it was just the mileage she has for travel. Mr. Binger stated that it would need to be compared to what the amount was for last year. He also stated that the IRS reimbursement rate went up a little bit this year. Mr. Greig reported that the amount in question increased \$55.00 compared to last year. Mr. Binger stated that for the most part the increase is from the rate increase. Mrs. Graham stated that if she travels for more than one group, we are charged at a reduced rate. He reported that we are a little behind last year due to the revenue from the summer meeting yet to have been received. Mrs. Graham reported she had talked to MACT and the revenue amount OCTA would expect to receive would be approximately \$6,800.00. It was discussed that the estimated amount seemed low. Mr. Binger reported that we would only receive money if the attendees were from Ohio.

Valerie is to request a breakdown/Treasurer's report for the meeting.

Bill Cackler moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

New Grower Sessions:

Vice President, Gary Hite, reported to the board regarding the New Grower Session that was held at his farm on Saturday, September 28. There were eight farms in attendance and two of the eight have yet to plant the first tree. He reported that the meeting went well, and a lot of information was shared. He also reported that the topics of weed control and complete nutrients sessions would take an entire afternoon, and he had hit the highlights on the topics. He also stated that information was shared as to where to go to get additional help on these topics. Jake Nicholson, OSU, was present and provided Christmas tree grower handouts to those in attendance. President Greig thanked the Hite's for offering the program. Discussion was had by the board as to how to move forward with New Grower sessions. It was suggested to offer sessions at the Winter meeting. The Board was reminded that when covering topics pertaining to nutrition, chemical application, etc. an OSU Extension service person should be in attendance. It was also suggested that a survey be conducted by those in attendance at the Winter meeting to learn the type of topics attendees would be interested in learning about.

MACT Meeting Update:

No additional information was shared.

Board of Directors Nominations Update:

Matt Mongin reported two openings. There are no candidates for the open positions. Discussion was heard by the Board. He reported that he and Bill Cackler would be leaving the Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Scholarship Committee:

Roger Koch reported the committee had not met so no report was provided. He wanted to thank everyone for their donations. Valerie Graham reported that the recipients from last year have been paid their scholarship money.

Social Media Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger reported the following.

Website Updates

- Added state fair results
- Updated scholarship winners
- Added date for winter meeting
- Added June 29 board minutes
- Updated Operation Evergreen information

Social Media

- Facebook update: 988 followers up from 981
- Post about State Fair results
- Post about New Growers meeting
- Multiple posts about summer meeting at Timbuk
- Post about Shearing Clinic at Hidden Pines

Operation Evergreen – GoFundMe

- Updated site for dates

Valerie Graham reported Makala Graham had updated the farm and consumer listings on the website.

Website Committee:

See above Social Media Committee report

Education Committee and Research Committee:

Bill Cackler reported he completed a study during the summer using the seed orchards from Ohio Graphed Orchard, Rockis and Peterson's. He noted Peterson's uses Ohio Graphed Orchard seed. He reported David Keener had given him 80mm and 120mm Ellepot stock to use in his studies. Valerie asked about possibly using Specialty crop grant funds to update outdated Christmas tree grower handbook. The Board had worked previously with Kathy Smith, OSU. Valerie will be in contact with Kathy Smith and Jake Nicholson regarding the grant fund.

Operation Evergreen:

Amy Galehouse reported UPS is working on shipping quote. She also reported the trees shipped this year will be sent to Jordan and she plans on shipping 100 trees this year. Operation Evergreen will be held on November 12 at Ohio Department of Agriculture facility in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. Valerie requested permission to provide cookies, hot chocolate and water for those who would be volunteering during the day's event. Roger Koch moved to authorize Valerie to spend \$300.00 for food/supplies during packing day. Gary Hite seconded the motion. Motion carried. Valerie asked the Board if we should have signage on vehicles transporting trees to the Ohio Department of Agriculture on packing day for advertising. Amy Galehouse suggested signs be posted prior to the packing day to gain attention and possible donations.

Winter Meeting:

President Greig reported Valerie had sent out a draft agenda for the Winter meeting (see attached) and a couple of speakers had backed out. He reported the NCTA report would be offered by Jane Neubauer. Jake Nicholson, OSU, would be in attendance and would be providing an update on his current project.

Irrigation 101 was to be presented by an individual from Michigan State, but that individual was already committed to the Michigan meeting. He is researching the possibility of providing a session on drought relief. He further went on to discuss the items on the draft agenda. Valerie reported that the fee for the meeting needs to be set. Last year the fee was \$100.00 and late registration was an additional \$10.00 member rate and \$120.00 and late registration was an additional \$15.00 for non-members. It was discussed the fee had been changed sometime during the past two years. Mr. Binger asked if the fees charged by Quest International would be changing. Valerie reported no significant change in fee charged. Mr. Koch asked if the Association made money at last year's meeting. It was reported that the Association made profit from the Winter meeting in 2024. Matt Perdulla motioned to keep registration fees for the 2025 Winter meeting consistent with 2024 meeting fees. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Motion carried. Valerie asked Joel Berry, Hall of Fame committee member, if the Hall of Fame inductee had been decided upon or announced. Mr. Berry reported there is one applicant, and he had not forwarded the information to the other committee members. He also reported that this decision is slated for November.

Summer Meeting:

Valerie reported that Matt from Kaleidoscope was working on hotel and catering information. President Greig mentioned Matt had a good list of possible topics to be covered at the summer meeting and he and Valerie would be working on the meeting agenda.

2025 summer meeting - Kaleidoscope Farms, Mt. Cory, Ohio, June 13-14, 2025

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

2027 summer meeting Hidden Pines, Clyde, Ohio, (tentatively June 25-26, 2027)

Finance Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger had nothing else to report.

NCTA Report:

Chairperson Matt Mongin reported the meeting held in Nova Scotia was a success.

He also provided the following:

- There will be a new Executive Director and to expect changes.
- 2025 meeting will be held at Northern Pines/Dutchman Tree Farms, Manton Michigan.

Valerie asked whether Matt Mongin would be able to continue as our Representative to the NCTA. Amy Galehouse clarified there is nothing in the Bylaws preventing him from continuing in this capacity should he choose to do so. Matt reported he would give it thought. The representative must be an NCTA member.

Membership Committee:

No report.

Research Committee:

Chairperson Bill Cackler reported he is performing a study on shading, Irrigation and weather.

State Fair Committee:

President Greig reported the contest went well despite change in location. He stated the contest will be in a holding pattern until the new building is finished.

Publications/Public Relations:

Chairperson Gary Hite had nothing to report. Valerie reported the deadline for the newsletter is November 8, 2024. Valerie reported she was approached by Agra-Tastic wanting to do a podcast with President Greig and herself on the show Agra-Tastic. The podcast is tentatively scheduled for some time between November 5 – 9, 2024 between the hours of 11:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry provided his report during the Winter Meeting report.

Evaluation Committee:

No report. Mr. Berry stated should anyone have any questions or concerns regarding Valerie’s work, please text or email him and he will forward the information to the Executive Board.

NEW BUSINESS-

Membership Fees:

Valerie stated the Board needed to address membership fees for this year. Discussion was heard.

Current membership rates:

- 1 – 5 acre \$105.00
- 6-15 acres \$125.00
- 16-24 acres \$145.00
- 25-74 acres \$160.00
- 75 + \$205.00
- Seedling \$70.00
- Supplier/Retailer \$135.00
- Retiree \$60.00

Valerie also reported she had spoken with Amy, Michigan Christmas Tree Association and there would not be an increase in the fee for the Great Lakes Journal. Mr. Binger stated that he would recommend keeping the fees the same. Gary Hite motioned to keep the membership fees the same as in 2024. Roger Koch seconded the motion. Mr. Binger asked Valerie if she keeps track of how long a member stays on the seedling membership rate. Valerie reported it works on the honor system. Motion carried.

Officer Elections:

The floor was open for nominations.

Roger Koch nominated Gary Hite for President for 2025 – 2026

Joel Berry second

Gary Hite accepted the nomination

Motion carried

Jeff Greig nominated Matt Perdulla for Vice President 2025 – 2026

Matt Perdulla declined the nomination

Alan Binger nominated Jeff Greig for Vice President 2025 – 2026

Roger Koch second

Jeff Greig accepted the nomination

Motion carried.

Alan Binger nominated Bev Keener for Secretary 2025-2026

Gary Hite second

Bev Keener accepted the nomination

Motion carried.

Bev Keener nominated Alan Binger for Treasurer 2025-2026

Gary Hite second

Alan Binger accepted the nomination

Motion carried.

2025 – 2026 Officers

Gary Hite, President

Jeff Greig, Vice President

Bev Keener, Secretary

Alan Binger, Treasurer

Gary Hite reported he has information to share with the group regarding Ohio Christmas Tree Association membership signs. He would like to provide the information at an in-person meeting. It was decided for Gary to present his sign information to the Board during the zoom meeting on January 13, 2025.

NEXT MEETING-

The next meeting is scheduled via Zoom, Monday, January 13 at 7:00 p.m.

There will be an in-person meeting at the Hampton Inn, Friday, February 28 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

Bill Cackler moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Roger Koch. Motion approved. 8:36pm

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Keener

Secretary