

Ohio Christmas Tree Association –

Board Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2025



President Gary Hite called the meeting to order. The Board meeting took place Hampton Inn Meeting Room, Columbus, Ohio.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Alan Binger, Amy Galehouse, Jeff Greig, Gary Hite, Bev Keener, Roger Koch, Matt Perdulla, James Stribny, and Robin Saum.

Absent: Joel Berry

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

President Hite called for motion to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2025, OCTA board meeting. Robin Saum motioned to approve; Jeff Greig seconded the motion. Motion approved.

TREASURER 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 \$29,583.70; National City Savings 294 \$24,769.38; Edward Jones account \$10,500.00 for a total of \$76,185.39. Fund balances of Operating Fund \$45,023.07; Operation Evergreen \$5,867.22; Research Fund \$10,067.85; Scholarship Fund \$4,395.00; and Scholarship Endowment \$10,832.25. Treasurer Binger reported that he would request that the board move a motion allowing him to renew the CD with Edward Jones when it matures in April. He stated that with the CD and the interest earned there would be approximately \$11,000.00 to invest in the new CD and he also stated that the current rate of interest would be lower on the renewal CD. Roger Koch moved that we allow Mr. Binger to renew the CD at the lower rate. Discussion was heard by the board regarding term length. Matt Perdulla seconded the motion. Motion approved. Mr. Binger reported that memberships are coming in and there should be over one hundred members in the coming weeks. James Stribny moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Jeff Greig seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

Farm Signs:

Gary Hite shared information regarding the Ohio Christmas Tree Association sign project. He provided the board with three sample designs, two size options 18"x18" and 16"x16", four options of types of material used for making the signs, and ten options of combinations of size, material. Pricing based on a

base order of one hundred would be \$7.50 - \$27.25 each. Discussion was heard by the board. James Stribny motioned that we give the signs away, option 3, 3mm PVC, 18"x18", design option C, two hundred pieces to be ordered. This is a benefit for holding a membership, one per member farm and additional signs to be sold at a price determined later. Bev Keener seconded the motion. Motion approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Scholarship Committee:

Roger Koch reported the committee had met and it decided the meeting was not necessary. No policy changes were made, and scholarship fund balances were reported. He also urged member farms to notify their employees of the scholarship. Valerie reported she had received the first scholarship application.

Internet Presence/Website Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger reported the following.

Website Updates

- Winter meeting agenda
- Updated upcoming summer meeting schedule.

Social Media

- Facebook update: 1028 followers up from 988
- Post about winter meeting
- Post about winter meeting hotels
- Post about scholarship program with a link to application
- Post about Real Christmas Tree program payment deadline

Operation Evergreen:

Amy Galehouse reported she would be in contact with UPS. Discussion was heard by the Board regarding the difficulties experienced with shipping trees to Jordan. President Hite questioned whether the Board is interested in continuing with the project and ask the Board to give it thought. Amy reported using a product that is a type of bouquet wrap that would provide moisture to the tree and hopefully would prolong the freshness of the trees shipped or dipping the tree stump in wax to seal in the moisture. The topic of ever-increasing shipping costs was heard by the board. Amy reported that UPS is giving us a discount on shipping costs. President Hite thanked Amy Galehouse for her continued work with Operation Evergreen.

Meeting/Education Committee:**Winter Meeting:**

Jeff Greig reported there have been continual changes made to the Winter meeting schedule. The Michigan meeting date played part in the speaker changes that were made to the meeting agenda. He also reported everything is set with the meeting tomorrow. Discussion was heard by the board regarding scheduling the date for next year's winter meeting.

Summer Meeting:

Valerie reported that she and Jeff had a virtual meeting with the Reece family regarding the upcoming summer meeting. The meeting fee is set at \$42.00 per attendee.

Friday only attendees' cost - \$42.00 per person; \$20.00 per person for dinner

Saturday only attendees' cost - \$42.00 per person; \$23.00 per person for meals

Friday and Saturday attendees' costs - \$42.00 per person and \$43.00 per person for meals

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)

Roger Koch motioned setting the meeting fee at \$110.00 for one day and \$160.00 for both days. Alan Binger seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Valerie reported that the current vendor booth rate is set at \$180.00. Roger Koch motioned raising the fee to \$200.00. Jeff Greig seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finance Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger had nothing else to report.

NCTA Report:

No report.

Membership Committee:

No report.

Research Committee:

No report.

State Fair Committee:

Valerie Graham reported that everything is set for fair. The contest will be held July 21, 2025. She signed the contract for the contest. Valerie provided an update on the specialty crop grant. Valerie reported in-kind funds were utilized to gain grant monies. By giving \$5,000 in-kind funds from Valerie's wages and taking the travel costs of ten members which added an additional \$5,000.00 of in-kind funds, OCTA was listed on the application for the grant funding. This funding will be utilized for the new facility at the State Fair. The new building should be ready for the 2026 fair.

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry was absent, so no report was provided. Dave Reece's name will be announced at the meeting tomorrow.

New Grower Sessions:

There was discussion to continue to provide the sessions.

Next Meeting:

Monday, May 5, 2025, 7:00 pm via Zoom

Adjourn

Bev Keener motioned to adjourn the meeting. Alan Binger seconded the motion.

8:43pm

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Keener

Secretary