

Ohio Christmas Tree Association –

Board Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2025



President Gary Hite called the meeting to order 7:00pm. The Board meeting took place virtually.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Robin Saum.

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

President Hite called for motion to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2025, OCTA board meeting. Jeff Greig motioned to approve; Roger Koch 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 \$11,775.92; National City Checking 3131 \$24,132.53; National City Savings 294 \$24,771.01; Edward Jones account \$11,030.27 for a total of \$71,709.73. Fund balances of Operating Fund \$38,863.17; Operation Evergreen \$7,801.19; Research Fund \$10,197.85; Scholarship Fund \$3,485.00; and Scholarship Endowment \$11,362.52. Treasurer Binger reported that the scholarships have been paid, the money left will cover a few more years of scholarship without getting into the endowment. Mr. Binger reported the endowment is up from the beginning of the year and is doing well due to the additional funds received from generous supporters and from interest earned. Mr. Binger reported membership numbers have declined due to timing of membership dues being paid. He also reported that our revenue is down (\$4,327.57) compared to last year and is due to timing of receipt of meeting and membership revenue. The sign project was an added expense for the year. Membership numbers are 129, down 13 from the previous year. President Hite called for a motion to approve the treasurers' report. Roger Koch motioned to approve; Jeff Greig seconded the motion. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS-

Board Members Needed: Jeff Bielek has shown interest. Gary Hite stated Mr. Bielek had reached out to him regarding joining the Board. Discussion was heard by the Board regarding potential candidates. President Hite to reach out to the possible candidates. The following current Board Members will be placed on the ballot for the upcoming election: Joel Berry, Jeff Greig, Bev Keener and Roger Koch with the remaining two slots left to be filled by appointment later.

Membership Fees for 2026: Mr. Greig reported his group recommendations.

--provide a letter about benefits of membership

--raise membership fees five dollars across the board

--personalized outreach planned for lapsed members to highlight benefits of membership

President Hite called for motion to raise the membership fees by five dollars. James Stribny moved the Board to raise the membership fees by five dollars. Jeff Greig second the motion. Motion passed. President Hite stated the information regarding member farms receiving an OCTA farm sign as a benefit of membership needs to be added to the membership request form.

Fees for Winter Meeting: The Winter meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2026. Discussion was heard by the Board regarding fees for the Winter Meeting. Mr. Greig reported the group had a suggestion as a one-time offer for 2026 to offer a discount of 50% of registration cost after two full-price registrants from the same farm. They also recommend offering member rate to registrants who are members of another state association. They also recommend raising the current membership price by five to ten dollars. They also recommend raising the fee for non-members by seventy dollars, which is the cost for seedling membership rate. They also recommend a separate mailing as a save the date type of notification listing Winter and Summer dates be sent out. President Hite called for a motion to raise membership fees by five dollars. Executive Director Graham reported she had recently discussed Winter meeting fees with Quest. She reported the per registrant cost of \$85.00. The breakdown includes a service fee and tax. She expressed concern over offering a 50% discount off multiple registrations from the same farm. Discussion was heard by the Board. Amy Galehouse recommended raising the fees by ten dollars. Additional discussion was heard by the Board. After the discussion, it was decided that the Board should research the possibility of moving to another location. Mrs. Keener moved that we raise the Winter meeting fees by ten dollars. Mr. Binger second the motion. Motion passed. Mr. Binger moved to have third and after registrants pay seventy-five dollars. Motion dies due to lack of a second. Non-member meeting fees increase to \$190 and \$205 after deadline. Jeff Greig motioned to raise non-member meeting fees to \$190 prior to the deadline and \$205.00 after deadline. James Stribny second the motion. Motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Scholarship Committee:

Chairperson Koch reported his committee had not met. They have received a scholarship application for 2026.

Internet Presence/Website Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger reported the following.

Website Updates

- One post
- Engagement was tree farmers. It shifts to non-tree farmers during Operation Evergreen season

Social Media

- Facebook update: 1072 followers up to 1077
- He will start sharing NCTB posts in the future, along with some other additional content

Operation Evergreen:

Amy Galehouse reported this year's Operation Evergreen event has been scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, at Ohio Department of Agriculture, Reynoldsburg, Ohio. She also reported difficulties in obtaining clear quotes and billing information for tree shipments. There is uncertainty regarding shipping logistics, including palletization and location. It was recommended to limit shipments to 50 trees due to high costs.

Meeting/Education Committee:

New Growers Session:

President Hite reported a successful new growers session hosted by Dexter Minneman, despite his farm's tree losses. There were observations on new growers' challenges, including seedling quality and moisture management. He reported eight farms were in attendance. Follow-up with potential new growers' sessions including one planning proper pre-planting steps.

Winter Meeting:

Jeff Greig reported they are in the process of confirming speakers for various sessions.

Summer Meeting:

2026 summer meeting - Feisley Christmas Tree Farm, Belmont, Ohio June 26 – 27, 2026

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

2028 summer meeting – Mr. Greig to contact Sugar Pines

Finance Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger had nothing else to report.

State Fair Committee:

- Planned participation in the Ohio State Fair with educational and contest components
- Need to develop educational content comparing past and present tree farming practices
- Collaboration with Jim for contest portion and space allocation

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry reported he had received a nomination. Open to additional nominations.

NEW BUSINESS –

NAPP: see attached

Discussion was heard by the Board. Jeff Greig motioned to opt out of the NAPP program. Roger Koch second the motion. Motion passed.

Valerie's Contract Renewal – Mr. Binger noted that we must address the Executive Director's Contract.

- Joel Berry to draft an evaluation
- Mr. Binger moved to offer contract roll over for two years with the option to change compensation in the contract for 2027

Mr. Berry second the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Berry to draft an agreement for Executive Director Graham and President Hite to sign at the Winter meeting.

Next Meeting:

Friday, February 20, 2026, 7:00 pm Hampton Inn Polaris, Columbus, Ohio

Adjourn

Gary Hite moved to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Keener

Secretary