

Board Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2025



President Gary Hite called the meeting to order 7:03pm. The Board meeting took place virtually.

ROLL CALL:

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

Absent: Joel Berry, Robin Saum and Roger Koch.

Also Attending: Executive Director, Valerie Graham.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

President Hite called for motion to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2025, OCTA board meeting. Jeff Greig motioned to approve; Amy Galehouse seconded the motion. Motion approved.

TREASURER REPORT:

Alan Binger presented the Treasurer's report. Mr. Binger reported that we will run into a deficit this year. 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 \$27,794.66; National City Savings 294 \$24,770.61; Edward Jones account \$11,030.27 for a total of \$75,371.46. Fund balances of Operating Fund \$41,974.90; Operation Evergreen \$7,351.19; Research Fund \$10,197.85; Scholarship Fund \$4,485.00; and Scholarship Endowment \$11,362.52. The general fund decreased by \$1112 from the end of the previous year but increased by \$3800 compared to July of the previous year. The operation evergreen fund is nearly \$5000 behind compared to the previous year. The endowment fund is \$11362, primarily held at Edward and Jones, earning good interest. Treasurer Binger reported that one of the scholarships has been paid and with the payment of \$1,000.00 for the other scholarship, the money left will cover a few more years of scholarship without getting into the endowment monies. Valerie Graham reported that the remaining scholarship has also recently paid. Mr. Binger reported membership numbers have declined by thirteen members. Summer meeting profits were \$5,100.00 and it was reported that we had a great response to the sponsorship opportunities which led to a larger profit. Mr. Binger discussed the meeting survey. It was decided that mostly the decline in attendance is due to people being busy. **The Treasurers' report was not motioned or approved.**

OLD BUSINESS-

Recap of Michigan meeting: Gary Hite and Jeff Greig shared their experiences at the Michigan and Pennsylvania meetings. The Michigan meeting was large, with one thousand attendees, but the Ohio meeting was considered better in terms of learning opportunities. In summary, it was discussed that we do a fantastic job with our meetings in Ohio.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Scholarship Committee:

See attached committee report. The 2025 scholarships are paid.

Internet Presence/Website Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger reported the following.

Website Updates

- Updated the scholarship winners.
- Added May Minutes

Social Media

- Facebook update: 1072 followers up from 1037
- Eleven posts were made promoting the summer meeting, Jeff Riley's death, State Fair tree contest, National meeting tree contest featuring Jeff's tree, Cleveland TV report regarding Jeff Greig's winning tree, and promotion for September new growers' meeting.

Operation Evergreen:

Amy Galehouse reported she has been in contact with Arcent and has asked for a quote. Discussion was heard by the Board regarding billing issues. Amy is working to finalize shipping arrangements for operation evergreen, dealing with billing issues and seeking quotes from UPS. There are concerns about rising shipping costs and the need to stay within budget, potentially limiting the number of trees shipped overseas. Valerie Graham asked the board if the board wanted to decide on the amount of money we should agree upon for shipping. Jeff Greig suggested we should send fifty trees abroad and should we have more trees donated, additional trees could be donated to Wright Patterson or to military facility outside of Youngstown, Ohio. Amy added that she can request a quote now, however, the quote will change 30 days out. This year's Operation Evergreen event has been scheduled for Wednesday, November 12, at Ohio Department of Agriculture, Reynoldsburg, Ohio. She is looking to use a different shipper. DHL may be a possibility or shippers who specialize in Middle East shipments. President Hite thanked Amy for her work. James Stribny reported his findings on the use of soil moist. He reported utilizing a 6x6 soil moist pad with a quart sized bag and zip tie would add an additional pound to the shipment. Mr. Stribny reported that JRM would donate the product.

Meeting/Education Committee:**New Growers Session:**

Jeff Greig reported that the new grower session is scheduled at the Minneman Farm on Saturday, September 20. Valerie reported that she has received some registrations for the event. Gary Hite oversees the event, and he reported he has tentative locations for this event to occur in 2026 and 2027.

Winter Meeting:

Jeff Greig reported the winter meeting agenda is in draft form, with confirmed speakers for various sessions. The Agritourism and tax sessions from the summer meeting will be brought back due to popular demand.

Summer Meeting:

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

2027 summer meeting - Hidden Pines, Clyde, Ohio, (June 25-26, 2027) Mr. Binger is contemplating having a new grower session during the morning of June 25, 2027. Jeff Greig and Alan are making a three-year comparison of shearing styles for the meeting.

2028 summer meeting – Mr. Greig to contact Sugar Pines

Finance Committee:

Chairperson Alan Binger had nothing else to report.

NCTA Report:

No report. It was discussed whether to move forward with this report. It was decided that we will table it for now.

State Fair Committee:

Valerie Graham reported 2026 fair will be in new facility. It was brought up that we may possibly have a tree skirt contest and wreath contest. It may be incorporated into the winter meeting activities. Mr. Greig reported that our new building will be huge, and we need to figure out how to fill our space. He reported a few ideas that could be done in the booth to attract more visitors, i.e., demonstrations, etc. Valerie reported only trees in the contest, the area flooded, due to the extreme heat some of the trees did not hold up. The facility will be air conditioned, which will help keep the trees fresh. We must request the amount of space we want for our display. She also commented that we need to up the quality of the display. Mr. Greig suggested that we ask for 1500sq ft. Valerie reported that it is in the works to have the winner of the champion tree to provide the tree for the Governor's mansion. It was suggested to have a large/tall focal point tree in the booth. It would make a statement and would also provide a place for families to take pictures.

Hall of Fame Committee:

Chairperson Joel Berry was absent, no report was provided. Tabled for October meeting.

New Grower Sessions:

Nothing else to report.

NEW BUSINESS –

New Board Members Needed:

- Reese family declined. Possibly Jane Neubauer pending her departure from the NCTA.
- It was discussed whether to allow two members from the same farm on board. Tabled the thought for now.

Membership Fees for 2026 – tabled to October meeting.

Fees for Winter Meeting – tabled to October meeting.

- Jeff Greig suggested a committee be formed to investigate possibilities of ways to improve and increase attendance at the meetings. Matt Perdulla, Alan Binger, Gary Hite and Valerie Graham will be on the committee along with Jeff Greig.

Wisconsin Christmas Tree Association:

- A proposal from the Wisconsin group to start a regional meeting was discussed. The consensus was that it would be like what MACT does. The concern was expressed regarding splitting meeting profits and the idea of a regional meeting.
- The board decided to remain on the sidelines for now and focus on enhancing Ohio's own meetings.

Next Meeting:

Monday, October 13, 2025, 7:00 pm via Zoom

Adjourn

Gary Hite moved to adjourn.

8:55pm

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Keener

Secretary