

Unofficial Minutes
TEXAS MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
College Station, Texas
August 3, 2013

Officers Attending:

President, Ginger Bason, Tarrant County; First Vice-President, Dick Coupe, Dallas County; Second Vice-President, Donna Hagar, Somervell County; Treasurer, Doug Richards, Hood County; Secretary, Karen Colwick, Bell County; and Past President, Brenda Cunningham, Dallas County.

Directors/Alternates and Committee members from the following Counties were present:

Angelina, Austin/Fayette/Colorado/and Washington (Bluebonnet), Bell, Bexar, Brazoria, Brazos, Burnet, Collin, Comal, Dallas, Denton, Ector/Midland (Permian Basin), Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Guadalupe, Henderson, Hood (Lake Granbury), Houston, Jefferson, Johnson, Kerr/Kendall/Gillespie/Bandera (Hill Country), Leon, Liberty, McLennan, Milam (Little River Basin), Montague (Red River), Parker, Somervell, Tarrant, Tom Green, Travis, Victoria, Walker, Wichita, Williamson, and Wood.

There were ninety-six people present, including twelve guests, seventy-five TMGA Directors and nine Officers/Committee chairs and Committee members attending. Six counties including El Paso, Hidalgo, McCulloch, Randall, Wood, Aransas/San Patricio, and Nueces participated online via LYNC, adding another eighteen people.

Call to Order and Opening Remarks – President Ginger Bason, Tarrant County

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am. President Bason welcomed all Directors, Alternates and guests in attendance, and all who were attending for the first time. President Bason asked for a show of hands of all those in attendance with ten or more years as a Master Gardener. She also asked that all past TMGA President's stand to be recognized. President Bason encouraged all Directors and Alternates to take copious notes to share with their local association.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:

The invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were led by Wayne Rhoden of Williamson County.

Review and Approval of May 4, 2013 Minutes - Ginger Bason, Tarrant County

The President asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the May 4, 2013 minutes that were posted on the TMGA website. As there were none, the minutes were approved as submitted. Secretary, Karen Colwick, Bell County, requested that everyone verify that their information on the Sign-in forms was correct, and she asked that they also review the information for the other members of their local association to see if there were any glaring errors. Secretary Colwick reminded those in attendance that the information on the Director/Officer list is what is used to make contact so it is critical that this information be accurate.

Treasurer's Report – Doug Richards, Hood County

Doug Richards presented the 2013 Banking Summary through July 29, 2013 and stated that this information is also on the TMGA website. He explained that TMGA still needs to pay for the plaques and certificates to be presented at the annual Awards banquet in October so those figures are not yet reflected. Treasurer Richards also reported that due to the increase in costs for lunch for the Directors meetings, the amount allocated in the budget for Directors lunch is already tapped out, and there are still two meetings left this fiscal year. He also stated that he anticipates that additional requests for Specialist reimbursement will be received later in the year.

Standing Committee Reports:

A. Awards Committee – Paul Meredith, Victoria County

Mr. Meredith reported that 156 awards submissions have been judged and the judges have been paid. Ninety-nine award plaques will be presented at the Awards Ceremony in October. Pictures are still needed for the entries for the categories of Outstanding Individual Master Gardener and Outstanding Master Gardener Association.

Lisa Nixon, Bexar County, 2013 Awards Committee Chairperson, stated that she is looking for volunteers to serve on the Awards Committee.

B. Conference Committee - Homer Babbitt, Parker County

Mr. Babbitt stated that he and committee members Donna Hagar, Somervell County, and Doug Richards, Hood County have finalized the "TMGA Conference Handbook". Mr. Babbitt reported that the Handbook is succinct but comprehensive, in that it has the necessary elements needed to assist any group that wants to host an annual TMGA Conference, while still allowing for the hosts flexibility. In addition to providing overall guidelines, the Handbook also has several sample documents that could be used as a reference in planning. Mr. Babbitt stated that the Handbook will be posted on the TMGA website and encouraged everyone to review the document and see that hosting Conference is not as daunting as it might seem. Mr. Babbitt did report that the Handbook states that the annual Conference is to be held between April 1 and May 15 each year beginning after the 2014 Conference.

A discussion ensued over the bid process and how far out planning should begin prior to a Conference being held. It was agreed to leave the wording in the Handbook that a potential host could make a formal bid two years prior to their anticipated date, but that they could begin their planning before that.

C. 2013 TMGA Conference

Cameron and Hidalgo Counties were unable to provide an update at this meeting due to technical difficulties with the LYNC system. Barbara Porsch, Ector/Midland Counties, announced that the Permian Basin Master Gardeners are taking a charter bus to McAllen from Midland. Anybody who is interested in participating should contact Barbara. There are several locations along the route to McAllen where people can board the bus.

D. Outreach - Eleanor Tuck, Tarrant County

Ms. Tuck reported that the Outreach Committee has been assisting with the collection of the names of Master Gardeners across the state that had completed 15 years, 20 years or 25 years of active service as a Master Gardener as of December 31, 2012. This information was originally requested by Jayla Fry, State Master Gardener Coordinator, in May but since there were several counties that had not responded, Outreach stepped up and began contacting each county by telephone.

The Master Gardeners who reached those milestones in 2012 will be recognized at the 2013 TMGA Conference, and an electronic certificate will be sent to their County Agent for presentation at the local level. Ms. Tuck encouraged those Counties that have not submitted the requested information to do so as soon as possible. In addition to the list of Master Gardeners with a milestone anniversary, Ms. Tuck requested that each county notify her of the date that their local association was formed. She asked that each group respond even if they do not have members who achieved the milestone anniversary so that the date the group was formed could be recorded. Contact information for Ms. Tuck can be found on the TMGA website.

F. Special Tax Advisory - Wayne Rhoden, Williamson County

Mr. Rhoden said he is currently verifying the counties that are active under the group TMGA 501(c) (3) umbrella for his annual report to the IRS. He asked that if anyone is aware of an association that is no longer active or has split, to please notify him.

After the break for lunch, the meeting reconvened at 12:50 pm.

State Sales Tax & 501(c) (3) Presentation:

Guest speaker, Michael Stegint from the Enforcement Division of the State Comptroller's Office was introduced and welcomed. Mr. Stegint provided a review of tax exempt purchases, examples of tax-free sales, fundraisers, how to handle donations, and tax-free days. He stressed the importance of identifying tax-free dates or events before they occur, since an event cannot be determined to have been tax-free after it has occurred.

Mr. Stegint referred to several IRS applications and rules during his presentation and advised that additional helpful information can be found at exempt.org@cpa.state.tx.us or www.window.state.tx.us. Mr. Stegint's presentation will be posted on our website.

Standing Committee Reports were continued following the presentation by the speaker.

G. Nominating Committee - Brenda Cunningham, Dallas County

Ms. Cunningham presented the following slate of officers for 2014:

- President - Dick Coupe, Dallas County
- 1st Vice President - Donna Hagar, Somervell County
- 2nd Vice President - Mary Means, Collin County
- Treasurer - Doug Richards, Hood County
- Secretary - Nicky Maddams, Grimes County

The Director's will vote on the proposed slate of officers at the December 7, 2013 meeting.

There were no Standing Committee reports given for Newsletter, Website or Audit.

Unfinished Business:

There was no unfinished business.

New Business:

- A. Conference Chairman, Homer Babbitt, Parker County, asked if there were any Associations that were intending to bid for the 2015 TMGA Conference that had not already expressed their interest. None came forward.

At that time, Mr. Babbitt announced that Bell County has indicated that their group is interested in hosting in 2015. Mr. Babbitt introduced Gary Slanga from Bell County who said their plan is to bring the Conference back to the "Heart of Texas". Mr. Slanga has reviewed the responses to the survey and said their group will try to incorporate the preferences provided through those responses. He stated that the 2015 Conference would be shortened to two days since it will be held about six months after the 2014 Conference that will be hosted by the Permian Basin Master Gardeners. Even though the 2015 Conference will be shortened, Mr. Slanga said there will be six educational seminars and a banquet. Bell County will present a formal bid for the Conference at the December Directors Meeting.

- B. The President announced that the Executive Board has studied the feasibility of continuing to serve lunches at the Directors Meetings. Due to the increasing expense of the lunches, it was determined that the best use of TMGA monies is to eliminate the lunches at the Directors Meetings. Starting in December, there will be a social time beginning at 11:45am with cookies, coffee and tea. The Directors Meeting will convene at 12:30pm and end at 3:30pm.

State Master Gardener Coordinator Update:

- A. Jayla Fry announced that Texas A&M is beginning a new initiative that will result in the Howdy Gardens being moved closer to the Horticulture building and a new landscape makeover for the University grounds. Ms. Fry encouraged everyone to go online and view the Texas A & M Gardens & Greenway Project to learn more.
- B. Ms. Fry announced that Dr. Douglas Steele will be at the December 7, 2013 Directors meeting and will discuss cost recovery.
- C. Ms. Fry announced that there are currently 189 participants who have signed up for the 2013 Conference, and there are currently 26 vendors who will be there.

TMGA Director's Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2013

Announcements:

President Bason offered a special thank you to Lou Kellogg and Bexar County for the lovely vinca plants and tomato plants they donated for door prizes that were given out throughout the meeting.

There being no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at 3:00pm with the reminder that the next meeting will be Thursday, October 17 in McAllen at the annual Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Colwick, TMGA Secretary