

Unofficial Minutes of the February 1, 2014 Meeting

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TEXAS MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, INC.

College Station, Texas

Secretary, Nicky Maddams

The following offers were present:

President Ginger Bason; 1st Vice President Dick Coupe; 2nd Vice President Donna Hagar; Secretary Karen Colwick; Treasurer Doug Richards; and Past President Brenda Cunningham.

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

Aransas/San Patricio, Fayette/Washington, Bell, Bexar, Blanco, Brazos, Burnet, Cherokee, Collin, Comal, Dallas, Denton, Ector/Midland, Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Guadalupe, Henderson, Hood, Jefferson, Johnson, Kerr/Kendall/Gillespie/Bandera, Limestone, McLennan, Milam, Montgomery, Parker, Smith, Somervell, Tarrant, Tom Green, Travis, Van Zandt, Victoria, Walker, Waller, Wichita, Williamson, and Wood. Counties participating via LYNC included: El Paso, Kaufman, Nueces, Taylor and Tom Green, however several left when they could not hear the proceedings.

Guests from the following associations also attended:

Bell, Burnet, Collin, Comal, Dallas, Guadalupe, Leon, McLellan, Tarrant, and Wichita.

Call to Order:

President Ginger Bason called the meeting to order at 12:31pm by welcoming Directors, Alternates and guests in attendance, especially those attending for the first time, and those connected via LYNC.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance:

The invocation and pledge were led by Wayne Rhoden of Williamson County. Mr. Rhoden paid tribute to Dorothy Babbitt, the wife of Past President Homer Babbitt, who passed away in December 2013.

Introduction of Speaker:

President Bason introduced Dr. Douglas Steele, Director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Dr. Steele provided a brief background of his credentials and how he came to Texas A&M in November 2012. He acknowledged he inherited the Cost Recovery program and while he had no part in authoring it, he would take ownership of it now as Director. He stated he would not offer apologies for the \$350,000 spent on the 100th Anniversary of Extension as it allowed agents from all over the state to congregate together and discuss issues as well as commend them on reaching such a milestone together.

The Cost Recovery program was instituted at a time when funding for Extension was being phased out at a federal level. Guidelines were developed at A&M but were not communicated well and were not

uniform in their application. A target of four million dollars was driven from the top down. The majority of the actual \$1.5 million procured was used to bridge 65 positions within Extension by covering salaries. This money came from Master Gardeners, 4H and private pesticide applicator licenses.

Dr. Steele conceded there was low return received by those who generated the money and distribution needs to be assessed. While some of the monies should indeed go towards development, innovation, and improvement of curriculum for sustainability of programs, there should be incentives at the county level also. Dr. Steele promised transparency moving forward and dismantling the hierarchy which currently resides within Extension. He is compiling feedback from agents, with a planning session planned for May 19th, 2014 and hopes to roll out a new program by October 1, 2014 at the latest.

Numerous questions were received from the floor and this entire session will be made available on the TMGA website in the coming weeks.

Approval of Minutes:

Before proceeding, President Bason announced that new directors are encouraged to join committees; Past-Presidents are being recruited to resume activities within the TMGA such as assisting with nominations but that directors are also encouraged to keep in mind those within their own organization who might make a good candidate for office or committee. President Bason also advised that the night of December 5, 2014 (the night before the December Directors Meeting) is already showing few hotel vacancies within College Station and those Directors who typically stay in the area should book accommodations as soon as possible to ensure a room.

President Bason asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the October 17, 2013 posted on the TMGA website. As there were none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report:

President Bason introduced Treasurer Doug Richards, Hood County. Mr. Richards reviewed the 2013 Budget which was made available on the TMGA website prior to the meeting as well as at the meeting. Mr. Richards then presented the 2014 Proposed Budget, noting major income and expenses. There being no questions, President Bason called for a motion to approve the proposed budget for 2014. Homer Babbitt, Parker County, made the motion, which was seconded by Kathy Murray, Hood County. The motion was approved.

Standing Committee Reports:

Awards: Lisa Nixon, Bexar County, provided hand-outs for those in attendance, outlining the changes and format for the 2013 awards. Mrs. Nixon outlined the new sizes of membership categories, the new research category and covered questions (FAQ's) that had been forwarded to her committee. These will be attached to the manual on the website. The deadline for the receipt of submissions is March 12, 2014.

Conference Planning: Collin County intends to make a bid for the 2016 Conference, which will be held in May of that year. Collin County has the support of nine surrounding counties and plan to utilize Myers Park in McKinney, TX.

Bell County gave a themed presentation for the 2015 Conference, to be held April 16-18, 2015. The theme will be "Trails to Rails – Blooms on the Old Chisholm Trail" and will be held at the Expo Center in Belton. Surrounding communities include Killeen, Salado, Temple and others on the I35 corridor. A list of potential speakers was provided. President Bason called for a motion to approve the bid for the 2015 Conference. Barbara Porsch, Midland/Ector County made the motion, which was seconded by Lonnie Matthew, Aransas/San Patricio County.

The Permian Basin Master Gardeners (Ector/Midland counties) provided a PowerPoint presentation for their 2014 conference, to be held September 25-27, 2014. They advised that information would be provided on their website www.westexasgardening.org. They are holding a raffle for a hotel stay during the conference.

Newsletter: Nicky Maddams, Grimes County, read a note from Burnet County, who will be featured in the February newsletter, in which Burnet County thanked the TMGA for giving them a platform on which to showcase their accomplishments. Blanco County inquired how counties are informed of their turn and indicated they were missed. Counties are notified in each newsletter, on Facebook and the association president and CEA are notified via email. Blanco will be featured in March. Two new counties on the roster were welcomed: Limestone and Waller.

Outreach: Eleanor Tuck, Tarrant County, outlined the responsibilities and focus of the Outreach Committee, which is to reach out to all counties who may have questions or need direction and to assist with soliciting the Officer/Director lists (previously known as rosters), charters, and dues. The Office/Director lists are used by the TMGA and Outreach to identify and contact the appropriate person with a local association when necessary to provide or obtain information. Mrs. Tuck also announced a trip to Cuernavaca, Mexico in June 2014, which is the second time Tarrant County is organizing this trip.

Tax: Wayne Rhoden, Williamson County, advised there are currently 47 associations under the TMGA group exemption, representing 54 counties. Mr. Rhoden indicated that the due date for the 990-N filing is May 15.

Website: Webmaster Ron Williford, Comal County, assured the membership that when there are problems with the TMGA website; he is notified immediately and begins working with IT Services to ensure it is rectified in a timely manner. Presently, there are updates every two weeks, each one coming with minor glitches that he works to iron out.

Audit: In the absence of Pam Braak, Tarrant County, President Bason advised that the books were signed by the Audit Committee on January 10, 2014. The books and records were in excellent condition.

Unfinished Business:

No unfinished business was presented.

New Business:

President Bason announced that the topics for future Directors meetings would be: Parliamentary Procedure in May and Social Media in December.

Election of New Officers:

Nominating Chair, Brenda Cunningham, Dallas County, gave a reminder that the TMGA Executive Committee takes care of the daily business of the organization but we rely on the Directors to assist with the overall management of TMGA. She reiterated that we rely on the Directors as a source from which to draw candidates for the Executive Committee, as well as all other standing committees, and encouraged them to consider serving. Mrs. Cunningham also encouraged the Directors to invite those from their local associations who might want to serve to future meetings to get to know more about TMGA. She thanked the present candidates for their commitment to the TMGA. After a motion by Lonnie Matthew, Aransas/San Patricio County, that the 2014 slate of officers be elected by acclamation and seconded by Donna Campbell, the following were elected to serve:

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

State Master Gardener Coordinator Update:

Jayla Fry advised that the Volunteer Agreement is to be signed by all Master Gardeners on an annual basis and kept on file at the county level. This agreement has been put in place to protect the MG from potential situations that might adversely affect them. Texas is one of the last states to adopt this agreement. It is crucial not to change the document except the fields that include county name, and hours required, as this differs from county to county.

Mrs. Fry presented President Bason with her Past President pin, a plaque commemorating her service, and indicated Ginger's name and year that she served as President will be added to a plaque that is kept in the AgriLife offices. President Bason spoke of her enjoyment of her term as President and passed the gavel to President Coupe, who assured the directors that the executive committee represents them.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicky Maddams, Secretary, TMGA