

UNOFFICIAL TMGA DIRECTORS ZOOM MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2024

Attendance – 133

President Elisabeth Castro - Montgomery County, called the meeting to order at 12:30. She welcomed attendees and noted that this will be a short meeting and that there will be no action items at this meeting. There will be a motion on the minutes and one to adjourn but otherwise the meeting will be purely an informative meeting.

The invocation opening prayer was given by Bill Swantner, Bexar County.

Louie McDaniel, McLennan County, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Elisabeth Castro offered the minutes from February 2, 2024, as previously distributed, prepared by Kelly Linder, Williamson County. Lisa Rodriguez from Nacogdoches County made the motion to accept the minutes and Vicki Blachman, from Travis County seconded the motion.

Jeff Hargrave from Denton County raised the issue of an omission in the minutes, he believes the audit report as stated in the Directors & Officers Reference Guide page 11 should be attached to the minutes. Elisabeth stated that she would review the question and return to the minutes.

The Treasurer's Report for the first quarter of 2024 was given by Treasurer Sarah Lawson, Rockwall County. There has been a drop in membership, although the last county has now sent their dues in, so there will be a slight increase in dues received from the numbers reflected in the report. The judges' honoraria will be under budget. The agent's conference funding has been paid. The micro-grants have been paid out, so we have spent \$1,000 – to Kaufman and Little River Basin for \$500 each. We are under budget by \$24,667.44, we have no uncleared checks, and our bank balance is \$88,852.25.

Committee Reports

Outreach Committee

Kathleen Hunstman from Midland County gave the report as the committee chair, Barbara Porsch is in the hospital. The remaining two counties have turned in their reports this week. Barbara would like to ask the Directors to urge their associations to turn all reports in on time.

Elisabeth noted that there was a question in chat about what reports are being referenced. Nicky Maddams supplied the information, stating that the New Officer/Director Reference Guide on the website lists the reports and due dates. Examples of reports due include the Charter, the officer/director roster, and the dues payments.

Elisabeth returned to the issue of the inclusion of the audit in the minutes. She reviewed the bylaws and stated that the bylaws do not require the audit report to be attached to the minutes. She stated that the audit report was presented to the membership in February.

There was a question in the chat about approval of the minutes. Nicky stated that minutes were approved as there was a motion and a second.

Awards Committee

Debby Hopkins-Higham, McLennan County, hoped everyone saw the awards presentation. With the Search for Excellence awards, big congratulations to all the associations, with a total of 67 winners, are in order. Certificates and plaques will be mailed after June 1 to the Extension offices. If you are interested in having those presented in person a presentation to your group may be set up. Please email Louie McDaniel if you want that presentation. (Note for local associations, all trips for Louie require prior approval from Jayla, Nicky (State Office) and the President of TMGA).

She offered a big thank you to Sharon Zaal of Galveston for all the support on intake and tracking scores and to Bill Swantner for securing out of state judges.

Sharon began sending out the judge's comments to all participants right after the awards presentation. She wanted to encourage everyone to participate in the 2024 awards. If you turned in an entry, there was a 91 percent chance that you would receive an award. This represents a 91 percent success rate. If there is an area where your association would like a refresh or assistance on the entries, take a moment to review the entries to be inspired and informed. She demonstrated how to find the spreadsheet on the website with all the data on the entries and links to submissions. She gave some additional examples of inspiring and award-winning entries.

Financial Review Committee

Becky Ferrara, Little River Basin County, noted that associations need to file the 990-N tax return by May 15 if on a calendar year. This filing must be done every year. If the filing is not done for three years in a row, the association will lose the tax exemption under the Texas Master Gardener umbrella.

Nominating Committee

Louie McDaniel, Chair, no report.

Scholarships & Grants Committee

Elisabeth Castro, Montgomery County, stated that work on the scholarships is in progress, and that the grants application opening period will be September 1 for a total of six weeks. This will give the Executive Committee time to review the applications to present the winners in December and pay out the grants in December. There will be six grants at \$500 each available to the associations.

State Program Manager

Nicky Maddams, Program Manager, offered congratulations to the award winners. She suggested associations start now and jump in to taking pictures and preparing for next year's entries. She noted that it is National Volunteer Week and April is National Volunteer Month. We have 7,643 Master Gardeners in Texas and they have donated 580,490 hours, with an estimated value of \$18.46 million in the past year.

Nicky played a video about the International Master Gardener Conference.

She stated that we have had a few more donations towards the Endowment. We are very grateful that people believe in this program. Elisabeth had asked for the total and that is approximately \$34,000. Our goal is far above it. There is information on the Endowment tab on the website.

The Directors voted on the advanced training pins at the February meeting. They have been created. The pins are beautiful. The final cost for the pins came in under budget by almost \$2000.

Nicky noted that she continues to review any needed changes to VMS to accurately reflect hours spent on demonstration gardens. She is working with five pilot counties to illustrate where those hours are going; however, it is too soon to report on any structural changes.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Roberts Rules of Order and Rules and Conduct at Meetings

Elisabeth Castro, Montgomery County, noted that the February meeting was very lengthy. She mentioned the guiding principles of Roberts Rule of Order. When there is a motion on the floor, then a second is needed, then debate starts and that is all we can discuss.

One of the things that has changed in our current environment is that, with virtual meetings, it is more difficult to follow the discussion.

We do not have rules in our bylaws to limit time during debates on action items.

However, Elisabeth notes that she is going to propose that for action items, people cannot speak for more than 10 minutes, unless given permission to speak for more than 10 minutes by a vote of 2/3 of the members. The discussion must be relevant to the item under discussion.

She proposes to use the chat feature to give equal time to members.

She states that we recognized that there was an issue with the February meeting and so we are taking action to address that.

Elisabeth shared her screen to demonstrate the current Management Guide does not have a specification about the audit raised by the question by the gentleman about inclusion of the audit in the minutes. Kathryn noted that the document referred to by Jeff Hargraves is the New Officer/Director Reference Guide.

Elisabeth clarified that minutes do not technically need a motion to be approved but this is done by tradition/custom.

Sarah Lawson, Treasurer, noted that the audit report is on the TMGA website with the 2023 records AND is also filed with her hard copy records.

Elisabeth asked for a motion to adjourn.

Leslie Hagen of Waller County moved to adjourn, and Judi Benestante, San Jacinto, seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:13 pm.

Submitted by Kelly Linder, Secretary