

Northeast TN Master Gardener Board Meeting  
Ron Ramsey Agricultural Center and Zoom  
Date: September 12, 2022

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Andrea Belcher, Mary Cain, Barbara Voigt, Brenda McKinnis, Don Davis, Karen Rowell, Kathy Wagner, Larry Wagner, Linda Spisak, Millie Sue Hawk, Teresa Gaffner, Chris Ramsey, John Hitchcock, Mary Ann Lovelace

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Carl Voigt, Karen Todd, Nancy Shilling, Barb Radice, Betts Leach, Gwen Ellis, Heather Duby

**GUESTS:** Susie Morrison (intern for T. Gaffner), Joyce Bolden, Evelyn Bolden, Edith Early,

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

The meeting was called to order by the President, Karen Rowell.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT: Mary Cain**

The minutes were reviewed from the July 11 meeting and were approved. Don Davis made the motion to approve and the motion was seconded by John Hitchcock.

**TREASURER'S REPORT: Karen Todd**

Mary Ann Lovelace presented the budget as of 9-12-22.

The motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Linda Spisak and seconded by Don Davis. The motion was approved.

**PROJECT REPORT AND GRANTS FOR 2022: Don Davis**

Concerning the Miller Farmstead, Don reported that he had attempted communication with the project leaders, Jennifer Garsoni and Mary Ann Orday, concerning the new project for Miller Farmstead but was not successful. The form has been filled out.

There was discussion about Tennessee and Virginia Master Gardeners working on the same project. Each project must have a project leader who is a Master Gardener in good standing.

Don reported that there are new signs for any NETMGA project who would like one. Brenda McKinnis volunteered to get a sign for Carver Peace Garden.

It was reported that Tipton-Haynes State Historic Site, the Discovery Garden at the Hands On! Discovery Center, the Hospital Gardens in Johnson City, and the project at the Exchange Place Living History Farm received grants from NETMGA.

**PROGRAMS FOR 2022: Teresa Gaffner**

Teresa and her intern, Susie Morrison, reported that the August program at the Nature Center at Steele Creek Park was moderately attended. They reported that the speaker had a good program on winter gardening.

There was some discussion concerning the need for a meeting with Andrea Belcher to work out details for the Christmas Program on December 5 at the Ron Ramsey Agricultural Center at 6.30 p.m.

Susie Morrison will speak on Self Sustainability and Regenerative Gardening at the next membership meeting, October 3, at Ron Ramsey. Dinner will begin at 6.00 p.m. with the program to continue at 6.30 p.m.

#### **MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION REPORT: Mary Cain**

Mary reported that there had not been any changes in the membership roster. There are still discrepancies between the UT roster and the NETMGA roster but Andrea Belcher said that steps were being made to correct the UT roster. Inactive members still need to be deleted and several current members have not registered on the UT site. Currently there are 147 on the NETMGA roster with 8 of those not having paid dues for 2022. The 2022 class still needs to be added to the NETMGA roster. Mary Cain said that the membership letter for all members will be ready to be mailed out after the board meeting. Karen Rowell raised the issue of increasing the membership dues from \$20.00 to \$25.00 with the cost for a couple to increase to \$35.00 due to overall price increases and an increase in the stipends to guest speakers. It was suggested that the membership should be told at the October meeting of the upcoming dues increase. John Hitchcock made the motion to increase dues; it was seconded by Susie Morrison. The motion was approved by those present.

#### **PUBLICITY: Nancy Shilling (Brenda McKinnis)**

There are currently 5 people to write articles for the "Ask a Master Gardener" in areas newspapers. They will work on calendar items for the "Ask a Master Gardener" column. There was some discussion about making a booklet of the "Ask a Master Gardener" articles; the proceeds of the sale of the booklet could go back into the general fund to pay for the printing costs.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS: Barbara Radice**

In Barbara's absence, a report from her was read. She said, "Communications have been going smoothly. Letters are still being mailed to the four members who do not have email. Appreciation was given to the "heads up" via text about communication that are time sensitive." Barb said she was greatly appreciative of Betts Leach for covering for her when she is out of town.

**NEWSLETTER: Betts Leach**

(absent)

**FACEBOOK: Heather Duby**

(absent)

**MENTORS: HEATHER DUBY**

(absent)

**WEBSITE: Carl & Barbara Voigt**

Barbara said that the website is currently up to date.

**HOSPITALITY: Larry & Kathy Wagner**

Kathy reported that they may partner with the program committee. Teresa Gaffner made a motion that if this was done, there could be 2 co-chairs. The motion was passed. Kathy also reminded the board that there needs to be an interim for the existing hospitality committee.

**SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT: Chris Ramsey**

Chris reported that more information was needed for Mike Blevins in reference to the Christmas dinner meeting. More information should be available by the October membership meeting.

The Extension Office will be hosting the Sullivan County Commissioners for a meal on October 6.

Chris also reminded the board of the “Lunch and Learn” information on the NETMGA website for the Sullivan County Garden Series offered September 13, September 27 and October 4. These sessions are open to everyone; CEU credits are available.

The new 2023 class for Master Gardeners will be held from January 31 through May 2. Barbara Voigt said she could attach an application for the new class to the NETMGA website.

Chris gave a final reminder for the “Farm to Fork” dinner sponsored by the Extension Office. The tickets are \$100.00 per couple; West Ridge High School culinary will provide the four-course meal.

The Bull Riding event was mentioned for Oct 1. Since Master Gardener hours must support the efforts of the Extension Office, volunteering to help with the activities of the Extension Office will count towards the annual hours requirement.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Teresa Gaffner mentioned that the jobs descriptions may need revising. She said that she would be available to help with that.

There has been much discussion concerning the new Master Gardener group in Washington County. It would meet in their Extension Office. Chris Ramsey, Adam Watson, Karen Rowell, and John Hitchcock met to discuss how to align the Master Gardeners in both groups. They will continue to work out details. Karen stated that more people create a stronger Master Gardener program. Washington County members can participate in upcoming NETMGA programs and activities.

Joyce Bolden introduced the Seed Library formation at the Blountville Library. She said that Master Gardeners are needed to teach 6 classes on how to plan and how to plant, one class early in the year and one later in July. Another class could be on how to plant a fall garden. Another focus will be to form a seed library. She requested 6-10 Master Gardeners to be available to divide and organize seeds at the library. There is money available (\$500.00?) by the Friends of Blountville Library. It was suggested that a Sign-Up Genius could be used to fill positions to sort seeds or teach classes. The motion was made by Teresa Gaffner and seconded by Susie Morrison to create this new program. Joyce Bolden would be the lead person and has turned in the form for a new class. It was recommended that Joyce talk to Heather Duby for more information.

One last item of new business pertained to having new leadership to fill existing leadership roles. This will be mentioned again at the October Membership meeting.

## **NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The next membership meeting is scheduled for October 3 at the Ron Ramsey Agricultural Center for a potluck dinner beginning around 6.00 p.m. with the program by Susie Morrison beginning at 6.30 p.m.

## **NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The next board meeting is scheduled for November 7 at 6.30 p.m. at the Ron Ramsey Agricultural Center.

Meeting was adjourned by Karen Rowell