

*Northeast Tennessee Master Gardener Board Meeting*

Mary Cain's Home

Date: July 7, 2025

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Brenda McKinnis, Janet Smith, Karen Rowell, Susie Morrison, Mary Cain, Donna Fowler, Nancy Shilling, Michelle Hejny, Don Davis, Sherry Ragsdale, Carl Voight, Barbara Voight, Brenda Snead, David Snead, Melody Rose, Mille Sue Hawk

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Betts Leach, Gwen Ellis, Heather Duby, Mary Todd, Heather Duby, Sarah Cox, Beth Cox, John Hitchcock, Adam Watson

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

Karen Rowell called the meeting to order.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

After reviewing the 2025 March Report, the board members felt there was no need for any corrections. Nancy Shilling made a motion to accept the report, and Michelle Hejny seconded the motion. The Board Members approved the report.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Michelle Hejny presented the budget as of 07/07/2025.

She indicated that she is having difficulty locating/accessing the educational account that is supposed to be used for presenters at membership meetings. Melody Rose stated that she would look in to locating it since the previous Extension Agent formally managed the account.

Karen Rowell stated that NETMGA was not receiving the dues from the Intern Training Class. Melody Rose will investigate that issue as well. Carl Voigt made a motion to approve the Treasury Report and Don Davis seconded the motion. The report was approved.

**PROJECT REPORT AND GRANTS FOR 2025: Don Davis**

Don Davis stated eight projects have been approved for 2025. Karen Rowell asked if the grants for those projects had been paid to the project leaders. He said that the grants had not been issued yet.

Don Davis asked the following questions about projects to the board:

1. Can churches develop a NETMGA project?

Answer: Only if the project is open to the public and the project leader is a Master Gardner. (Melody Rose)

2. Can a Master Gardener give out door prizes concerning his/her business during an event?  
Answer: Karen Rowell stated that she thought that would be ok.
3. Should the Unico Hospital Project be kept on the list of NETMGA projects if there are no specific plans to rebuild the Hospital because of the flooding soon?
4. Answer: Master Gardeners should work on other projects until the Hospital has been rebuilt. (Karen Rowell)

Barbara Voigt asked if the Branch House was still a NETMGA project. Don Davis replied that he was not sure, but he would investigate. Brenda McKinnis asked if the 2025 Master Gardener Class had a class Project. Brenda Snead replied that some members of the class were not happy with the blood test requirement by Veterans Hospital to work on the site, so the project has been placed on hold for now. Karen Rowell suggested the new class develop some fundraising projects for NETMGA. Barbara Voigt asked the question Why do we need new projects when the established projects are in need of volunteers? Don Davis agreed that more volunteers are needed at the project sites.

#### **PROGRAMS FOR 2025: Brenda McKinnis**

Brenda McKinnis presented the following list of membership meetings:

**June 9, 2025-** There was a field trip to Midfield Lavender Farms. The cost was \$8.00 per member. Carpooling was provided due to a lack of parking. 30-40 members attended.

**August 4, 2025-** There will be a field trip to Deery Inn in Blountville, TN. Sign up will be required. Guests with a master gardener will be charged \$5.00 to attend.

**October 6, 2025** – There will be a presentation on planting Spring bulbs at the Ramsey Agricultural Center. Shawn Barr from Evergreens Nursery will be the presenter. The meeting will include a covered dinner.

**December 8, 2025** - Eugene Wolf will be entertaining the members during the Annual Christmas Dinner.

Brenda indicated that more NETMGA brochures and a brochure box were needed for events. Don Davis stated that a NETMGA sign was needed at Derry Inn Museum to identify it as a Master Gardner Project. Melody Rose said that she would order new brochures and get a sign for Deery Inn Museum.

Karen Rowell stated that the Extension Office should focus their resources on the home gardeners than farmers. Melody Rose agreed that the population of the area is changing in that there are more home/urban gardeners than farmers but currently both are covered under Tennessee horticulture. She did feel that eventually the emphasis would move from farmers to the home gardeners. Sherry Ragdale added that the population in East Tennessee is growing rapidly from people moving from other states and that the number of farms is shrinking.

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

Mary Cain sent out emails to members who have paid their dues but have not recorded their hours. If they do not record their hours within six months, they will be designated as inactive. She stated that a few members have refused to pay their dues because they believe they have reached lifetime status. Mary enters hours for seven people because they have difficulty doing it themselves.

Melody Rose stated that the Volunteer hours recording system is being updated. She will personally remove the members from the County Roster that are deceased. Karen Rowell suggested that the removal be completed by the end of the year.

Mary Cain stated that hours can be recorded until 12/31/25 but Melody Rose suggested that 12/01/25 be the deadline to make qualifying active members easier. Carl Voigt asked how members should record December volunteer hours if the deadline shifts to early December. Melody Rose replied that members may have to estimate the number of hours they will volunteer for the month.

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

Brenda McKinnis stated that the "Asked a Master Gardener" article is being published in both the Johnson City and Kingsport Newspapers as well as being published online. Master Gardeners have volunteered to draft articles for the next two months. Kate O'Lenic oversees the articles. A logo has been created for the series.

#### **2025 Intern Class Report: Susie Morrison**

Susie Morrison stated that the class had ended, and Interns should be out volunteering in various projects. Barbara Voigt requested a roster of the class. Susie will send it to her.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS: Sherry Ragsdale**

Sherry Ragsdale indicated that the "Signup Genius" is working well in helping members sign up for event. Karen Rowell said that NETMGA paid \$188.00 for the App License. Melody Rose states that she uses Google Share to give information concerning events.

#### **NEWSLETTER: Betts Leach (Absent)**

#### **FACEBOOK: Sarah Cox (Absent)**

#### **MENTORS: John Hitchcock (absent)**

Karen Rowell stated that John Hitchcock had called the 2024 graduates and reported back that most of them are volunteering at various NETMGA projects.

#### **WEBSITE: Carl & Barbara Voigt**

Barbara Voigt asked if Adam Watson is still an advisor to NETMGA and should he be listed on the website. Karen Rowell replied that his name should still be listed on the website. Carl Voigt requested that Melody Rose provide information to him concerning new classes,

important links, and articles to place on the website. Melody stated she did not author articles but would provide links to gardening information.

**WASHINGTON COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT: Adam Watson (absent)**

**SULLIVAN COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT:**

Melody Rose asked the board for Grace and patience while she settles into her new role as Sullivan County Extension Agent and Master Gardeners Coordinator.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Karen Rowell challenged the members of the Board to produce Fund raising ideas. Some of the ideas that were offered included the following:

- Plant Sale (Melody said there are certain rules about selling plants)
- Asking for donations at events
- Garden Fair
- Educational Programs for the public.

Barbara asked if the next Intern class could be held in the evening to attract younger people. Melody Rose said she would work on that and provide dates for the class during the September Board meeting. Barabara suggested a morning and evening class.

Finally, the NETMGA banners used at events have misspelled words. Melody will order some new ones.

**NEXT MEMBERSHIP MEETING plans:**

**October 6,2025** – There will be a presentation on planting Spring bulbs at the Ramsey Agricultural Center at 6:30 pm

**Next Board Meeting Plans:**

The next Board Meeting will be at the Ramsey Agricultural Center on September 8,2025 at 6:30 pm.