

Board of Directors Organizational Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 28, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Cobleskill Extension Center, Cooperstown Education Center & Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to order** – President Tina Douglas called the Association Board of Directors to order at 6:33 PM. The president directed members to review the agenda and asked for additional agenda items. No additions were requested.
- II. Roll call** – President Tina Douglas did roll call and the board members present were James Bryant (via zoom), Tina Douglas, Lynn Dunn (7:45 PM), Christine Edwards, Deborah Gansinger Hall, Betsy Jensen, Shelby MacLeish, Andrew Marietta, Carol Phelps, Tom Pullyblank, Steve Sinniger and Mahla Zare (6:37 PM). Staff in attendance were Liz Callahan and Mayra Richter. Absent were Danielle Hautanami, Leslie Judd and Alicia Terry. A quorum was present.
- III. Secretary’s Report** – Tina Douglas asked for any corrections or additions to the March 26, 2024 meeting minutes. Deborah Gansinger Hall voiced one correction to the annual meeting committee report, minutes should have said “Same format as last year but highlighting garden somehow, garden items may be used for passport drawings.” Tom Pullyblank also pointed out an omission of text regarding the executive session sentence: “...to discuss personnel matters.” With no further corrections voiced, Steve Sinniger moved to approve the minutes as distributed with corrections, Deborah Gansinger Hall seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board then went into executive session at 6:37 PM to discuss personnel matters. The board reconvened at 7:03 PM and the Board meeting resumed.
- IV. Nominating Committee Report** – The committee has not met.
- V. Standing Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):
 - **Finance & HR Committee** – The committee met on May 16, 2024.

Tom Pullyblank noted the highlights of the meeting reporting that Non-financial Contributions revenue for each county is higher than anticipated in the budget due to properly recording the annual Seed Swap donated seed packets in accounting. Correspondingly, Teaching Materials reflects this expense increase as well.

Contracted services for Otsego is high due to the payment to DeNicola Design for their interactive signage designs for the GAC. This expense is covered under the Musser Grant revenue received back in 2022.

Interest revenue is higher for Schoharie branch due to less liquidity available for Otsego.

With no questions voiced, Tom moved to approve the Financial Reports through April 2024 subject to audit; Steve Sinniger seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - **Fund Development Committee** – The committee met on May 20, 2024.

Shelby MacLeish reported that the Fund Development Committee discussed different ways to convey messages to the community. They also reviewed the progress of current grant applications. They discussed the possibilities of having a BBQ at each County fair for county representatives and board members. The committee also discussed grants asking for information on Board financial giving.

Liz explained that it is not about the dollar amount the board members donate to the association, it is asking what *percentage* of board members give financial donations to the association and that we need to strive for 100% giving participation. General discussion ensued. In-kind and/or services donated are generally not counted towards cash giving participation. Board giving guidelines and procedures to track board hours and donations will be discussed at the next Fund Development Committee meeting.

- **Buildings & Grounds Committee** – The committee met on May 15, 2024.

Tom Pullyblank mentioned that part of the driveway apron was paved at the Cooperstown office. The report regarding Cooperstown building improvements is included in the Fund Development report.

- **Annual Meeting Committee** – The committee has not met. However, they are in communications with SUNY Oneonta about a possible venue. An expenditure plan needs to be decided at their next meeting in July.

VI. Program Advisory Committee Reports: (*Committee meeting notes previously provided for review*)

- **Agriculture/Horticulture** – The committee met on April 25, 2024.

Besty Jensen reported that the Master Gardener plant sales were in progress as well as Family Farm Day preparations. Personnel transitions were also discussed.

Betsy also mentioned that there was a discussion regarding the low attendance and engagement among PAC members and if anyone has ideas on how to engage members more; the Ag/Hort committee is open for suggestions. Further discussion ensued regarding the in-person attendance component of open meeting laws.

Andrew suggested looking into having meetings only via zoom; their municipal meetings have switched to not voting on any motions so that a remote only method can be used. Liz said she would look into it again, but we do have meeting requirements as set forth by our agreement with Cornell.

Shelby MacLeish mentioned that there is not enough engagement between the PAC members and staff; meetings are just staff progress reports without much engagement or input from PAC members. Christine Edwards confirmed that their “expertise” is not being utilized. Carol Phelps noted that this could be what causes disengagement.

Carol Phelps reported that the Otsego County Plant Sale was very successful, and the gross receipts were roughly \$10,000. Betsy Jensen and Mayra reported that the Schoharie Plant sale went good as well. General discussion about the difficulty of getting contact information from customers ensued.

- **4-H** – The committee met on April 23, 2024.

Steve Sinniger reported that the PAC is still looking for a third representative for Otsego County on their committee. He also stated that Otsego County has over 200 enrollees for this year and Schoharie is close to that number as well; 4-H might be getting back up to pre-COVID enrollment levels. The PAC also reviewed the list of programs in the 4-H curriculum and are trying to revive programs that haven’t taken place since COVID. Steve is going to look into a tractor safety course for Otsego County youth, while Catherine is working with surrounding counties for Schoharie County youth. Suggestion made for a possible collaborating with NYCAMH while still using the 4-H curriculum.

- **FCS** – The committee met on April 25, 2024.

Deborah Gansinger-Hall reported that the SNAP-ED program is still pending but we are under the assumption that we will be granted the award because of the funding that was granted in the last two cycles. Liz mentioned this program would bring two new staff to our association, one staff would be the current SNAP-ED staff in Delaware county plus a new hire. Liz is seeking out additional space in Rowe House in Oneonta for SNAP-ED. Deb also reported that Michelle has been busy with EFNEP and is trying to expand her programming to the young adult age group. Kimberly has been working on meetings and alliances alike. The new Farm to School grant proposal just came out and is due by June 27.

VI. Executive Director's Report:

Liz Callahan reported that the Schoharie County Ag Networking gatherings in Carlisle and Middleburgh had a great turn out, about 50 attendees total. There was great feedback and plans made to continue to work with Ag stakeholder groups, as well as more networking events with Farm Bureau.

Liz is evaluating the Ag program staff job description and is working with regional Ag development staff to clarify the job description fits exactly what it needs to be. The association has hired a very part-time, interim Ag staff to assist Nicole Thompson at the Cobleskill office with Family Farm Day preparations; FFD is on track and in a good place.

Liz reported that the staff is working on finalizing the existing Farm to School reporting and has begun preparing the proposal for the new available funding from AG & Mkts.

There will be a collaborative staff training with CCE Herkimer County and CCESO in July with the topics of communication skills and respect, and then in September with the topics of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

The association strategic plan ends in 2024. Liz suggested that at the September board meeting, the board should start to evaluate the current strategic plan which will be posted on the web portal for permanent access and review.

- VII. Otsego Board of Representatives Report** – Andrew Marietta didn't have anything new to report on but would like the Fund Development committee to set a date for the possible fair BBQs soon so the invite can get out to county boards and representatives. Liz said that both dates are being negotiated with the fair boards.

- VIII. Schoharie Board of Supervisors Report** – No report available

- IX. New Business:** Mayra showed the board that the meeting minutes are all publicly accessible on our website now, is up to date and meets our legal requirements.

- X. Old Business:** No old business to discuss.

Adjournment: Meeting Adjourned at 8:21 PM on a motion by Shelby MacLeish, seconded by Carol Phelps. Our next meeting is on July 23, 2024.