

Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 6:30 PM

Cobleskill Extension Center, Cooperstown Education Center & Virtual Meeting

ACTION ITEMS:

- Review draft strategic plan and results of the NOISE analysis for review at our next meeting
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1. **Call to order** – President Deb Gansinger-Hall called the Association Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:51 PM. The president directed members to review the agenda and asked for additional agenda items. No additions were requested.
2. **Roll call** – Secretary Leslie Judd did roll call and the board members present were Tina Douglas, Lynn Dunn, Deborah Gansinger Hall, Betsy Jensen, Leslie Judd (via Zoom), Shelby MacLeish (6:55 PM), Andrew Marietta (7:00 PM via Zoom), Carol Phelps, Steve Sinniger, and Alicia Terry (via Zoom). Also in attendance were staff Liz Callahan and Mayra Richter. Absent were James Bryant, Christine Edwards, Danielle Hautaniemi, Tom Pullyblank and Mahla Zare. A quorum was present.
3. **Secretary's Report** – Leslie Judd asked for any corrections or additions to the January 28, 2025 meeting minutes. With no corrections voiced, Tina Douglas moved to approve the minutes as presented, Lynn Dunn seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Nominating Committee Report** – The committee did not meet since last report. Lynn Dunn volunteered to be committee chair. Will work on recruitment of members with Liz.
5. **Standing Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):
 - a. **Finance & HR Committee** – The committee met on March 7, 2025. The committee recommended to the board the following for approval:
 - 2024 Non-capitalized Equipment Disposals: Carol Phelps made the motion to approve the Non-capitalized Equipment Disposals as presented; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 2024 Fund Balance Transfers: Alicia Terry made the motion to approve the 2024 Fund Balance Transfers as presented; Lynn Dunn seconded the motion. There was a comment to clarify that these funds had already been spent in 2024, and these transfers are being made to cover those expenses. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 2024 Year-end Financial Report: Carol Phelps made the motion to approve the 2024 Year-end Financial Report as presented subject to audit; Steve Sinniger seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - 2025 Budgets: Alicia Terry made the motion to approve the 2025 Budgets as presented; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. **Fund Development Committee** – The committee met on March 5, 2025. No action items or additional comments presented.

- c. **Buildings & Grounds Committee** – The committee met on March 7, 2025. No action items or additional comments presented.
 - d. **Annual Meeting Committee** – The committee has not yet met
6. **Program Advisory Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):
 - a. **Agriculture/Horticulture** – The committee met on February 25, 2025. No action items or additional comments presented.
 - b. **FCS** – The committee met on February 24, 2025. No action items or additional comments presented.
 - c. **4-H Youth** – The committee met on February 25, 2025. No action items presented. Lynn Dunn added that Teresa is starting a teen group in Otsego County, and they are going to be fundraising for activities and are questioning how to handle the finances of the group. Liz and Mayra will follow up with Teresa regarding this club.
7. **Executive Director's Report:**
 - a. Liz reported that Kelley Doolin, our new Agriculture and Food Systems Educator started early February and has hit the ground running. Kelley helped with the Ag Solutions and Networking Expo in collaboration with Schoharie County Farm Bureau, NYSERDA, National Grid, Institute for Rural Vitality and Schoharie County Ag Development office. Kelley has also started working on Family Farm Day, is planning programs and is orienting well. Kat Cordero is our new Association Program Coordinator who started two weeks ago; she is doing 3 days a week in Cobleskill and 2 days a week in Cooperstown. The association has received over a dozen applications for the Special Projects Educator position and will be scheduling phone interviews and in person interviews in the next few weeks.
 - b. Liz also reported that Madelyn Sanchez Taylor, the Operations Coordinator at the Cooperstown office provided her retirement notice. She will be retiring at the end of April after 28 years of service to the association. Liz and Mayra are working on creating a temporary position to fill some of Madelyn's duties while they assess the needs of the association and create an appropriate position description for a full-time replacement.
 - c. Liz is going to be submitting a congregationally directed spending grant on March 31st to Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand's offices. Liz is also working with a staff member, Michaela Fisher on a Restore Americas Nonprofits grant through Sustainable Westchester, to be submitted at the end of April in hopes of raising funds for the Cooperstown Office restoration projects.
8. **Otsego Board of Representatives Report:**
 - a. Andrew Marietta reported that the county continues to focus on county capital infrastructure needs and is in a positive financial position at this time. Andrew will continue to advocate for continued increased funding for CCESO.
 - b. Andrew also reported that this is an election year for the Otsego County Board of Representatives and all current representatives are running for reelection.
9. **Schoharie Board of Supervisors Report:**
 - a. Alicia Terry reported it is also a big political year for the county. Fourteen of 16 Supervisors will be up for election this year. Schoharie County has had healthy discussions about the

potential changes at federal level but are confident that they won't affect our county's rural initiatives and are also going ahead with the broadband project as planned to impact 4,800 homes.

- b. The county has also successfully challenged the assessment model made by the state for wind and solar installations to be valued at their worth.
- c. The county is working with an outside firm for the ongoing recruitment efforts for the new County Administrator.
- d. The Schoharie County Ag committee is having extended discussions about bio-solids – wastewater treatment sludge that is dried and made into bricks and/or pellets – as a low cost fertilizer application on land that is used to grow livestock feed, not allowed for human consumption. There are concerns about the forever chemicals that are in wastewater that would be contaminating our agriculture land for generations. NYS is projected to run out of landfill space in 16 years where this sludge would normally be destined for, so there is a push to return it to food chain via bio-solids.

10. New Business:

- a. Liz asked everyone to review the draft strategic plan document and the results of the NOISE analysis exercises completed by staff and each committee. NOISE stands for: Needs, Opportunities, Improvements, Strengths and Exceptions of the association. Liz has sorted each topic discussed into potential goals to be discussed at the next committee meetings. The committees will then take those goals and objectives into a strategic plan which each committee will be responsible for stewarding. The strategic plan will be reviewed at the next board meeting.
- b. Deb announced that the annual plant sales are coming up, Schoharie County MGVA are partnering with SUNY Cobleskill again for their plant sale on May 3 and the Otsego County MGVA are having their plant sale at the Cooperstown building on May 17. On April 26, staff will be tabling at Schoharie County Maple Festival while Otsego County Master Gardener Volunteers table at Earth Fest in Milford, sponsored by Otsego County Conservation Association.
- c. Deb wanted to give shout outs to Lynn Dunn for helping at Schoharie County 4-H Public Presentations, Kelley Martin on the FCS program advisory committee for continuing to help grow the program and Mayra Richter for all of her help and support to the board of directors.

11. Old Business – Cornell has paused signing of the annual *Comprehensive Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion Plan* at this time due to changing federal regulations/guidelines.

12. Adjournment – Meeting Adjourned at 7:51 PM on a motion by Carol Phelps, seconded by Lynn Dunn. Our next meeting is on May 27, 2025.

Minutes submitted by: Mayra Richter

Reviewed by: Liz Callahan