

Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 27, 2025, 6:30 PM

Cobleskill Extension Center, Cooperstown Education Center & Virtual Meeting

ACTION ITEMS:

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1. **Call to order** – President Deb Gansinger-Hall called the Association Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:35 PM. The president directed members to review the agenda and asked for additional agenda items. No additions were requested.
2. **Roll call** – President Deb Gansinger-Hall roll call and the board members present were Christine Edwards, Tina Douglas, Deborah Gansinger Hall, Betsy Jensen, Shelby MacLeish, Andrew Marietta (7:00 PM), Carol Phelps, Tom Pullyblank and Steve Sinniger. Also in attendance were staff Liz Callahan and Mayra Richter. Absent were James Bryant, Lynn Dunn, Leslie Judd and Mahla Zare. A quorum was present.
3. **Secretary's Report** – Deborah Gansinger Hall asked for any corrections or additions to the March 25, 2025 meeting minutes. Carol requested "...congregationally directed..." be corrected to "...congressionally directed..." under section 7c. With no further corrections voiced, Steve Sinniger moved to approve the minutes as presented, Shelby MacLeish seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Standing Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):
 - a. **Finance & HR Committee** – The committee met on April 17 and May 22, 2025. The committee presented the following action items:
 - The committee recommended to the board that the Schoharie and Otsego finance reports through March to be approved. Carol Phelps made the motion to approve the Finance Reports as presented; Tina Douglas seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - The committee also recommended to the board that we decline the USDA NIFA FASLP grant transfer as the grant does not fit within the scope of the Association's current capacity. Tina Douglas made the motion to approve this request; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. **Fund Development Committee** – The committee met on May 21, 2025. No action items or additional comments presented.
 - c. **Buildings & Grounds Committee** – The committee met on May 22, 2025. The committee presented the following action items:
 - Carol Phelps made the motion to approve spending of approximately \$35,000 of Schoharie General Funds to re-pave the parking lot at the Cobleskill Extension Center; Tom Pullyblank seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Carol Phelps made the motion to approve the purchase of a pavilion/ pergola with a maximum spending limit of \$27,000 from Garden Activity Center and Horticulture program Designated Funds for the Garden & Activity Center at the Cooperstown Education Center; Steve Sinniger seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- d. **Nominating Committee Report** – The committee has not met yet.
- e. **Annual Meeting Committee** – The committee met on May 16, 2025. The committee presented the following action item:
 - Tom Pullyblank made the motion to approve a budget of \$1,000 for the 2025 Annual Meeting; Shelby MacLeish seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Betsy is working with SUNY Cobleskill to reserve a room for October 21st or 22nd.
- 5. **Program Advisory Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):
 - a. **Agriculture/Horticulture** – The committee met on April 22, 2025. No action items were presented. There are 46 farms participating in Family Farm Day this year, which will be a 2-day event on August 23rd and 24th, with more than half of the farms participating on both days. Liz reported that both plant sales were very successful and thanked all who helped make it possible.
 - b. **FCS** – The committee met on April 25, 2025. No action items were presented. Deb Gansinger Hall noted that since the meeting, the SNAP-Ed contract has been executed, and we will be receiving payment for 4th Quarter 2024 and 1st Quarter 2025 in the next few days.
 - c. **4-H Youth** – The committee met on April 15, 2025. No action items presented. Liz noted that staff is well underway with fair preparations, animal and non-animal clinics and working with MGVI in both counties on gardening clinic series.
- 6. **Executive Director's Report:**
 - a. Liz requested a budget of no more than \$1,000 be approved for a small catering event at each fair for the Elected Official gatherings. Tom Pullyblank made the motion to approve a budget of \$1,000; Tina Douglas seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - b. Liz reported that CCE Executive Directors and CCE Administration have been discussing the need to update Human Resources Policy Manuals and for it to be done at a statewide level for consistency among all associations. Liz stated that the Executive Directors are looking into using HR One and/or other consulting services to review and update the current HR manuals. Liz is requesting a budget not to exceed \$1,000 be approved for Human Resources Policy Manual review. Tina Douglas made the motion to approve the requested \$1,000 budget for Human Resources Policy Manual review; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. Liz reported that in compliance with Executive Order: Cornell outlined steps to comply with the executive order and the EEO statement was revised based on legal advice to: "*Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for providing equal program and employment opportunities in accordance with applicable laws.*"
 - d. Liz reported the next Board of Directors meeting on July 22, 2025, will be in person at the Cooperstown Education Center. A light meal and orientation to the garden and building will start at 5:30 PM, with the Board of Directors meeting starting at 6:30 PM, a zoom link will be available for those who can't attend in person.

- e. Liz is working on a regional economic development council consolidated funding application grant for rehabilitation of the Cooperstown Education Center, to be submitted by July 31.
 - f. As Deb Gansinger-Hall stated during the FCS Committee report, Liz reported the SNAP-Ed contract has been executed, and the check is in the mail. However, the federal budget reconciliation bill that was passed by the House of Representatives last week, eliminated the SNAP-Ed program and is now in the Senate. If any board member is interested in and willing to advocate for this program to our representatives, Liz will send out talking points and the petition in the next few days. Smith Lever funding is not affected by the reconciliation bill because it is appropriation funding.
 - g. Liz also reported to operate 4-H Afterschool Program for the 2025-26 academic year, the minimum participation is 11 youth paying \$400/month.
7. **Otsego Board of Representatives Report:** Andrew Marietta reported that the Otsego County Board of Representatives is focusing on strategic plan, with the anticipation of being passed at the end of the year. The county is using a new software system, Clear Plan, to work with department heads and the board to collaborate on strategic plan in line with the budget etc.
8. **Schoharie Board of Supervisors Report:** There was no report given in Alicia Terry's absence.
9. **New Business:** Liz reported that fair preparations are underway for both counties. The program staff has a meeting tomorrow to begin the planning process to increase staff presence at the fairs. The board suggested a QR code flyer be made to encourage small dollar donations for our education and outreach programs, with illustrations of what a small donation can do.

Deb announced that Seed to Supper series is starting on June 11th in Schoharie County, as well as all offices will be closed on June 19th in observance of Juneteenth and July 4th in observance of Independence day.

Deb wanted to give shout outs to Carol Phelps for being the Otsego Master Gardener Plant Sale chairperson and to Betsy Jensen on the Ag/Hort program advisory committee for continuing to help grow the program.

10. **Old Business – Strategic plan**

Liz provided the draft strategic plan document and all in attendance reviewed it prior to the meeting. This 3-year strategic plan is derived from committee meetings and NOISE analysis exercises completed by staff and each committee. This plan was described as a realistic representation of goals which include but are not limited to stability (financial, programmatic, physical plant stability) and communications (telling our story, intercounty communications and inter staff communications) to respond to the needs of our community in uncertain times, while the vision remains the same. With no further discussion, Carol Phelps motioned to approve the strategic plan as presented; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

11. **Adjournment** – Meeting Adjourned at 7:56 PM on a motion by Betsy Jensen, seconded by Tina Douglas. Our next meeting is on July 22, 2025 in person at Cooperstown Education Center with light meal at 5:30, followed by Board of Directors meeting starting at 6:30 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Mayra Richter

Reviewed by: Liz Callahan