

Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 6:30 PM

In-person at 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 6:40 PM. The president directed members to review the agenda and asked for additional agenda items. No additions were requested.
2. **Roll call** – Vice President Shelby MacLeish did roll call, and the board members present were Tina Douglas, Lynn Dunn (via Zoom), Christine Edwards, Deborah Gansinger Hall, Betsy Jensen, Shelby MacLeish, Andrew Marietta, Carol Phelps, Tom Pullyblank, Steve Sinniger and Alicia Terry (via Zoom). Also in attendance were staff Liz Callahan and Mayra Richter. Absent were James Bryant and Danielle Hautaniemi.
3. **Secretary's Report** – Deborah Gansinger Hall asked for any corrections or additions to the July 22, 2025 meeting minutes. With no corrections voiced, Lynn Dunn moved to approve the minutes as presented, Christine Edwards seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Standing Committee Reports** (*Committee meeting minutes previously provided for review*):
 - a. **Executive Committee** – The committee met on September 6, 2025. No action items or additional comments presented.
 - b. **Finance & HR Committee** – The committee met on September 16, 2025. The committee presented the following action items:
 - The committee recommended to the board that the Schoharie and Otsego finance reports through August to be approved as presented pending the addition of belated In-Kind Donation entries. Betsy Jensen made the motion to approve the Finance Reports as presented subject to audit; Carol Phelps seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
 - c. **Fund Development Committee** – The committee met on August 25, 2025. No action items presented. Board gave thanks for the well done MVG advertising emails & Facebook pushes done by staff. Tentatively this campaign earned \$1,440. Christine Edwards recommended that next year we should simplify the FB post with the link directly to *our* campaign, then distribute to the Board and PACs so that they too can publicize from their FB and Instagram accounts and watch for matching days.
 - d. **Buildings & Grounds Committee** – The committee met on September 15, 2025. No action items presented. The parking lot in Cobleskill has been paved, and some exterior repairs and painting has begun at the Cooperstown office.
 - e. **Nominating Committee Report** – The committee met earlier today. Lynn Dunn reported that they have come up with some names to contact. They are still looking for more candidates; we have 3 or 4 Schoharie and 1 Otsego vacancies to fill.

- f. **Annual Meeting Committee** – The committee did not meet this period. As the event approaches, we will send email announcements including directions & parking instructions. Liz Callahan noted that we received a Yeti cooler from Amish Barn that we could offer as a door prize. Andrew Marietta suggested that we instead look to auction the item to generate revenue. Suggestion was very well received, and Liz will explore online options such as Gallery 53. Mayra Richter will send members a PDF of the Donation Acknowledgement form to facilitate paperwork needed for the raffle donations.

5. Executive Director's Report:

- a. Liz Callahan reported that she and Deborah Gansinger Hall went to the Executive & Board Leadership Conference in Ithaca. Staff is now moving into program reporting season.
- b. Liz reported that we were previously informed that SNAP Ed is funded through the end of December (originally October). With direction from the Executive Committee, we offered Maegan the extension which she accepted. This week OTDA is reporting that they will continue to run a scaled back program through the end of September 2026 using SNAP Ed reserved funds. The Administrative overhead will be reduced to 10% from 25% and Michelle Leveski will no longer be supervising the position. All variables and the specifics of the allowable expenses are still being sorted out by the project contractor CCE Onondaga. The lack of nutrition education benefits to southern & western regions of Otsego will be felt, yet we must be fair to our employees. General conversation ensued including options for supplemental funding for project resources, impact to staff, and present lack of a written agreement. Christine Edwards made the motion to approve continuation of the SNAP Ed project through the end of September 2026 as grant funding allows; Tom Pullyblank seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Review of proposed change to the Association Constitution:

- a) Deb asked for comments from the Board after reviewing the materials sent prior to the meeting. Tom clarified that the new Board members needed to be elected at our annual meeting and that we need either three or four new members from Schoharie and one new member from Otsego depending on the Constitution format decided. Steve Sinniger offered to remain on the Board if an Otsego candidate is not found/elected.
- b) Liz reviewed the notes she had sent from the working committee and CCE Admin clarifying the options. CCE Associations are required to comply with open meetings laws and regulations because we are a quasi-governmental organization. This means that anytime 3 or more Board members are together to discuss the business of the Association, meetings held must be open to the public allowing for in-person participation. Therefore, our Standing or ad hoc Committees must continue to be operated with in-person access.
- c) That being said, if we switch to an all At-Large Board and no longer assign members from our Program Advisory Committees as Board members, then PAC meetings can be more flexible and do not require in-person attendance. In theory, this would allow for greater recruitment, participation and retention of PAC members.
- d) The PAC will continue to exist, just not with direct Board participation. Their meeting minutes will continue to be presented to the Board for review and communications shared through the committee chair/liaison.
- e) Staff could also be asked to participate directly with the Board with scheduled updates and/or presentations. Impact on staff time would be minimal due to frequency.

- f) Concerns were raised about not including board members who have experience with the association through their participation in the PACs. However, we can still recruit for the Board through a PAC they just wouldn't be able to remain on both.
 - g) Christine recommended rotating members between PACs when possible so that a greater understanding and connection between program areas can be achieved.
 - h) The established nominating committee process and subsequent elections by our constituents at the annual meeting for members of the PACs and Board would remain the same.
 - i) The Board of Directors shall continue to be composed of six members from each county plus the appointed members.
 - j) The PAC members shall continue to include equal representation between both counties consistent with the current composition established. Details of the procedures for creating and staffing the advisory committees shall be contained in the annual Operating Guidelines of the association.
 - k) Tom Pullyblank made the motion to recommend calling for a membership vote at our annual meeting to change the Association Constitution from requiring Program Advisory Committee member participation as Board Members, to all At-large Board Members only; Shelby MacLeish seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
7. **Otsego Board of Representatives Report:** Our proposed budget for 2026 has been submitted to the county for review. Andrew Marietta reported that the Otsego County is facing a substantial shortfall and many options are being investigated including targeted program reductions in all areas to get to a sustainable place.
8. **Schoharie Board of Supervisors Report:** Alicia Terry reported that Schoharie County is also struggling due to decreased sales tax revenue among other things. Does not look like they are going to exceed the property tax cap at this time. The budget process will begin in early October. Separately, the contractor that has worked with the county for decades for our public transportation has given notice of termination of that contract. The county has taken action in the short term to assume more of the day to day activities of this service, and they are actively seeking new RFQs for a new subcontractor to partner with for the county's public transportation. The broadband service project is also progressing well. She doesn't see any major budget changes for CCE or other partners this coming year.
9. **Old Business:** There was no old business discussed.
10. **New Business:** Tina Douglas put out an invitation for members to join us at the Otsego County Farm Bureau's annual meeting on September 30 at the Upstate Bar & Grill. Liz added that you can also join us at the Schoharie County meeting this Friday on September 26 at the Olde Tater Barn.
11. **Adjournment** – Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 PM on a motion by Tina Douglas, seconded by Betsy Jensen. Our next Board meeting is on November 25, 2025.

Minutes submitted by: Mayra Richter

Reviewed by: Liz Callahan