

Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 24, 2026, 6:00 PM

Cobleskill Extension Center, Cooperstown Education Center & Virtual Meeting

ACTION ITEMS:

1. **Call to order** – President Shelby MacLeish called the Association Board of Directors Meeting to order at 6:06 PM. The president directed members to review the agenda and asked for additional agenda items. No additions were requested.
2. **Roll call** – Secretary Jessica Hill did roll call, and the board members present were Tina Douglas, Christine Edwards via Zoom, Deborah Gansinger-Hall, Jim Hayes, Jessica Hill, Jerry Hughes, Betsy Jensen, Shelby MacLeish, Andrew Marietta (at 6:08 PM) Carol Phelps via Zoom, Tom Pullyblank, Jason Stone and Alicia Terry. Association staff were Liz Callahan and Mayra Richter. A quorum was present. Public guest present was Sarah Page from Schoharie County. Absent were Danielle Hautaniemi and Kianny Lugo.
3. **Secretary’s Report** – Shelby MacLeish asked for any corrections or additions to the January 27, 2025, meeting minutes. With no corrections voiced, Jessica Hill moved to approve the minutes as distributed, Tom Pullyblank 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 March 18, 2026. The committee recommended to the board the following for approval:
    - 2025 Non-capital Asset Disposals: Tina Douglas made the motion to approve the Non-capital Asset Disposals as presented; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
    - 2025 Designated Funds & Temp Restricted Usage Transfers: Jason Stone made the motion to approve the 2025 Designated Funds & Temp Restricted Usage Transfers for Otsego County as presented; Christine Edwards seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.  
  
Deb Gansinger-Hall made the motion to approve the 2025 Designated Funds & Temp Restricted Usage Transfers for Schoharie County as presented; Betsy Jensen seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
    - 2025 Yearend Financial Report: Jessica Hill made the motion to approve the 2025 Yearend Financial Report as presented; Jason Stone seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
    - 2026 Association Operating Budget: Tom Pullyblank presented the 2026 Association Operating Budget to the board.

Liz Callahan briefly discussed the Buildings & Grounds Committee's requests to allocate money from the General Fund for both the Extension Center in Cobleskill and the Education Center in Cooperstown this year for repairs as presented in the Building's & Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes.

Christine Edwards asked for clarification on the increase in the staff development budget for 2026. Liz explained that several grant funded staff have training commitments to complete, and that in addition to expected program related staff development, our Finance & HR Assistant is taking a discounted Human Resources Certification course through Cornell for \$600 and all admin staff will be attending a Cornell/NYCON Camp Finance conference day at the end of April that costs about \$300.

- Carol Phelps made the motion to approve the 2026 Association Operating Budget as presented; Jessica Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- b. **Fund Development Committee** – The committee met on March 20, 2026. Andrew Marietta presented the idea of an online silent auction starting on May 1 through May 17. The committee is asking to vote on requesting the Board of Directors to solicit 2 items at minimum per member for the online auction. This auction will be promoted at both plant sales and Earth Fest. General discussion ensued. Betsy Jensen made the motion to approve the request as presented; Tom Pullyblank seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously. Please have all items to Liz or Nicole by April 20.
  - c. **Buildings & Grounds Committee** – The committee met on March 16, 2026. No action items or additional comments presented.
  - d. **Annual meeting** – The committee has not yet met.
  - e. **Nominating** – The committee has not yet met.
5. **Program Advisory Committee Reports** – Liz reported that none of the Program Advisory Committees have met yet. She is working with staff, committee members and board liaisons to schedule. Board members can attend PAC meetings if they wish.
  6. **Executive Director Report** – Liz reported that the newsletter will be distributed on April 1 with a lot of upcoming program events. Some bigger events are the Schoharie Master Gardener Plant Sale on May 2 at SUNY Cobleskill, Earth Fest at SUNY Oneonta in partnership with OCCA on May 9, and the Otsego Master Gardener Plant Sale on May 16 at Fenimore Farm and Country Village. Liz will send the Board a separate pullout of the Spring events.

Recently, Liz has been writing grants focused on the rehabilitation of the Cooperstown Education Center and for the renewal of the Farm to School grant, with 12 participating schools between Schoharie and Otsego Counties.

Liz gave a shout out to Deb Gansinger-Hall for helping with getting CRCS to finally join the Farm to School program. Mayra has been working on year end closing, while Liz continues to support program staff as they prepare for a wide variety of events this year including but not limited to Family Farm Day, both county fairs, 4-H Quiz Bowls, plant sales, tabling events and more.

Liz also reported that the 2 annual Ag Solutions and Networking Expo were very successful. CCESO collaborated with Schoharie County Agriculture Office, SUNY Cobleskill, Farm Bureau and other local partners on this event which had about 180 in attendance.

Carol commented that she was asked to be an evaluator for Otsego County 4-H Public Presentations at the end of February and said she enjoyed the day very much and everyone did a great job, including the staff. Liz mentioned to keep in mind that as the programs continue to grow, the need for more involvement by community members as evaluators will also grow. Christina Edwards suggested that the Board and PAC need to be asked to participate and/or solicit peers to participate, including descriptions of the particular roles for the project. Participating across both counties based on expertise, preferences and availability should increase available evaluators.

7. **Schoharie Board of Supervisors Report** – Alicia Terry wanted to highlight the Ag Solutions and Networking Expo on behalf of Schoharie County Board of Supervisors as an amazing collaboration. The county is pleased to have resources from CCE, Farm Bureau, SUNY Cobleskill and Institute for Rural Vitality for our community. The new Schoharie County Farmers Market planning is underway, and the board has been formed. The new destination farmers market will be starting in May and running through October at the Hall of Agriculture at the Schoharie County Sunshine Fairgrounds, on Sundays.

The broadband project is still on time, on budget and is looking forward to continuing work throughout the county. The county government is keeping close on the budget with the 2025 decrease in sales tax revenue.

8. **Otsego Board of Representatives Report** – Andrew Marietta reported that the county strategic plan and budget are all publicly accessible online through Clear Plan. The county continues to face fiscal challenges because of approving expenses more than current revenues. To help remediate that deficit, county government officials are working with the department heads on current service levels of each department versus their budget allocations. They continue to find improvements.
9. **New Business** – Liz has identified a potential board member for Schoharie County. Shelby MacLeish presented Dr. Nicole Blanchard, the Director of The Schoharie County Health Department, to be invited to our Board of Directors. Tom Pullyblank motioned to approve the appointment of Nicole Blanchard to the Association Board of Directors; Alicia Terry seconded. Motioned approved unanimously.
10. **Old Business** – N/A
11. **Adjournment:** Meeting Adjourned at 7:16 PM on a motion by Tom Pullyblank, seconded by Betsy Jensen.

Minutes submitted by: Mayra Richter

Reviewed by: Liz Callahan