

Central Gorge Master Gardener™ Association

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Next meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 2019, OSU Extension Service Office

Attendees: Bailey, Jean; Bosler, Eric; Bosler, Shari; Bradley, Christie; Kilkenny, Barbara; Reese, Helga; Rousseau, Sandi; Slagle, Nancy; Stender, Bill; Stevens, John; Taylor, Renee; Wickersham, Megan; Winfield, Bill

Secretary's Report: The minutes from November were approved.

Treasurer's Report (Nancy): Nancy sent out the financial report. She pointed out that we were over budget for the OMGA Rep. expenses, but we also have things that are under budget. The insurance is due by the end of December (the policy information). Nancy has been working with Patrice on the charitable activities reporting. She will be making changes on the balance sheet as directed (for example, expensing the greenhouse rather than have it as an asset and also take the unexpendable endowment money off the balance sheet). These will be reported on a separate report.

There was a discussion about increasing the budget for the OMGA Rep. The distance they travel and the necessary expenses vary substantially.

Sandi wants a copy of the report we presented at graduation with the actuals put back in.

OSU/Extension (Megan): Megan is working hard coming up to speed. Our classes start soon and she needs to get the email announcements out. The date after which we will no longer accept applications is January 10. In the past, the deadline has been a very hard one, which makes sense for new Master Gardeners, who need to take all of the classes. For returning Master Gardeners, we can be more flexible. Shari has been involved in a group in the past that contacts people who have not submitted their applications. There are people from last year who did not complete the program, take the exam, or turn in their hours. Someone will need to make these contacts this year.

There was a discussion on whether any application is ever rejected. Rachel did interviews of applicants, but primarily to ensure they understand the commitment. We need to make sure we are communicating that without discouraging them.

OSU is making the online training modules available to all of the coordinators, so this will add another way for people to get their classroom hours.

Retention is another thing we have discussed for a long time and we need to continue to look at. People leave for a variety of reasons; it is not always the time commitment.

Megan has started talking to potential applicants to see if they are still interested. She is telling them about the summer series and the community classes so, even if they do not join, they know about the various offerings.

Someone mentioned that Douglas County charges members who join but do not complete the program, but the board was not interested in doing this.

A question was raised whether we have ever limited the number of new members based on the number of members we already have, and we have not.

Sandy wanted to review all the new applications at the first mentor training meeting on January 15, but we may want to do an initial screening before that. We have 17 mentors signed up now. A few people still have mentees from last year that they need to work with on plant clinics, but they will probably need a lot less intensive mentoring than the brand new people.

Megan has a service guide for the Master Gardener program and she will be sending that out to the board members.

We are communicating with the county about the value of the program, but we need to be doing a better job proving the value of our outreach to the community. Megan will be reaching out to the project leaders to fill in some of the blanks for that data. We need to let the community know more about what we do. One suggestion was to try and have a monthly newspaper article focusing on project work. This year's focus will be to continue on the public relations messages and promoting the community classes and the summer series. We also need to ensure the projects are as visible as possible. Megan also sees value in encouraging more diversity in the membership.

Margo is putting together an article about the greenery event and she will be adding information about the classes. She is also creating a public service announcement (PSA). Eric will be talking to the radio station to see if they have an opening for one since we do not have a radio spot in December. It would be great if Megan and Eric could both be on the radio in a short slot.

Megan would like the contact information for all of the presenters, which Renee will give her. We need to add the Intro to OSU and CGMGA Essentials somewhere, since they are required for new Master Gardeners, and Renee

suggested these could be added to the technology day. Some of the other things that will be covered in that session are how to report hours and using the scheduling software. The OSU Intro will also be done at the mentor/mentee meeting, so maybe we just need to add clarification, if necessary, at the technology day.

OMGA Report (Barbara): At the retreat, Mini College was discussed and there was an extension update. Funding for extension positions is not good in Oregon, and Master Gardener programs may need to take a more active role in raising funds. We have a few experienced grant writers in our organization and could leverage off that. The Gorge Community Fund has a grant for which the Parkdale Memorial Garden may be a good candidate.

Gardening to Save the World (Renee): The summer series will be entitled *Gardening to Save the World*, and most of the speakers are finalized.

Parkdale Memorial Garden/Fair (Renee): Gail was concerned about the CGMGA board having reinstated the Parkdale Memorial Garden and Hood River County Fair as a projects without going through her. Eric, Shari, and Renee discussed it with her and gave her the background on these and the criticality of these for community outreach. They explained that the decision to cancel them was done unilaterally. In addition, the board was recommending these be reinstated, but that the final decision would not be made until Megan was on board.

Parkdale - We have a lot of members in Parkdale, but this was the only project there. The Parkdale Memorial Garden was a collaborative project with the CGMGA, the Parkdale Grange, the garden club, and local churches. We have had an ongoing discussion about increasing the educational components of projects in a meaningful way by using criteria about how we meet the goals on all of our projects. We would want to ensure this was done with the Parkdale Memorial Garden.

This garden has a long history and it was cancelled at the beginning of 2019 when Rachel noted that we had too many projects to sustain. The general consensus of the board was that this project is maintainable.

Megan noted that there is a big data-driven drive at OSU now to probe that projects are paying off and reaching enough people in the community. We need to provide Megan with this data and she will continue to research this. She will be the one making the decision on whether the project is reinstated, but she wants to look at the data first.

It was noted that we have several projects with this data, but it is hard to estimate how many people were affected by the various projects. We need a

better way to quantify the effectiveness of our community outreach. We may want to do more presentations or something that promote the projects. Wasco County Master Gardeners has “Coffee at the DIG” and if we can emulate this in some way, it may be a good way to do this.

Hood River County Fair - For the Hood River County Fair project, the board has been discussing ways to improve the experience. The real problem was the location. There were several people who have been active with this project and it has great displays. The fair provides an educational and informational outreach forum, and, for several years, the displays were unmanned. Over the past few years, plant clinics were added and they may not have been as effective or helpful, especially considering the heat of the room in which the display is done. If we went back to just a display, the current venue is fine.

At the project leaders meeting, it was determined that we need to be at the fair with a plant clinic, if possible. Some of the ideas were to either take a canopy and move outside for that, or move to the air-conditioned community building.

Having a manned booth would give us the opportunity for more community involvement. One idea to attract more visitors was to add child-friendly activities, like scavenger hunts, seed planting, or giving out potted flowers.

Any change in venue would need to be discussed with the fair board. The fair is scheduled for July 24-27 in 2020.

Project Presentations (Renee): The group discussed possibly presenting projects again in classes, which might be done during lunch breaks. The project visit did not seem to be as effective for introducing new members to the various project opportunities. People liked the idea of having project tables where everyone could go by and learn about the projects. We could even add this to one of the Saturday classes, maybe even on a day when the community is invited so that they can see the projects.

Holiday Greenery (Shari): Holiday Greenery (Shari): 12 people participated in the Holiday Greenery event and they created 50 items to donate. They donated wreaths and swags to the FISH Foodbank and the Washington Gorge Action Program.

Dinner at Three Rivers Grill (Shari): The date is set for Thursday, February 20, and it will be a buy one/get one free special.

Newsletter (Shari): Shari has been working with Camille on using Publisher software for the newsletter. Shari added a section for queries. They want to

add a note in the mid-month newsletter about the query section so that MGs will look for it and hopefully respond.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

Meeting minutes taken by Christie Bradley