

Board Meeting Minutes – June 26, 2015

The Red Barn
Union Gap (Yakima County), WA

Attendance:

Board Members:

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| George Frey (Pierce), President | Margaret Morris (Yakima), Treasurer |
| John Strong (Yakima), Secretary | Lorraine Fritsch (Klickitat) |
| Bob Taylor (Lewis) | Judy Callahan (Skagit) |
| Sandy Atkinson (Thurston) | Nancy Dillon (Mason) |
| Sherry Kanode (Kitsap) | Ronda Welling (Asotin) |
| Kathy Brenberger (Benton-Franklin) | Kathleen Eaton (Shohomish) |
| Karen Russo (Pacific-Grays Harbor) | Angela Martin (Kittitas) |
| Diane Threlkeld (Jefferson) | Barbara Guiland (Grant-Adams) |

Guests:

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| Nicole Martini (WSU) | Chris Bailey, Membership (Benton-Franklin) |
| Terry Casey (Yakima) | Kat Satnik (Kittitas) |
| Ken Tolonen (Yakima) | |

1. President George Frey called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.
2. George asked for agenda additions. There were none.
3. Consent Calendar: Mary Dillon moved and Karen Russo seconded a motion to approve the consent calendar. Passed.
4. Committee Reports:
 - a) Membership: Chris Bailey read her report. It is attached in the addendum to these minutes.
 - b) Awards: Kathleen Eaton reported that there have been no nominees, to date, for either the Ed LaCrosse Distinguished Service Award or the Media Award. Kathleen will be nominating Nancy Davidson-Short for the Media Award.
Kathleen has asked CJ Wilson, and is seeking one more person to serve on the committee.
Kathy Brenberger reported that there are six nominees for Master Gardener of the Year. She has recused herself from judging MG of the Year, since one of the nominees is from her home county.
Kathleen will prepare "bullet-point" criteria for the awards, in the hope that criteria will be clearer, nominating procedure simpler, and thus may encourage more nominees in future years.
Judy Callahan suggested formal application / nomination forms might help, also.
 - c) Fiscal Year change: Margaret Morris reported that, with the help of Mary Clear (Yakima), she has determined the requirements to change our fiscal year:
 - i) A return will be filed including November 1,2014 through October 31, 2015.
 - ii) Another return will then be filed including November 1,2015 through December 31, 2015 with Form 1128 attached.
 - iii) The original form is sent separately to the IRS, Attention Entity Control. This files a request for the change but under "automatic request" approval.
 - iv) No fees have been identified for this process.Judy Callahan is also changing to a calendar year, and she asked how this might affect dependent county reporting, to which Margaret replied that it would simply mean a change in the date that reporting is due to her.

Bob Taylor moved to proceed with the change, and after a second from Kittitas County, the motion passed unanimously.

5. County Input / Ideas:

- a. Kathy Brenberger shared the recent “remodeling” of the pond area in the Benton-Franklin MG Demo Garden. With contributions and help from their Foundation, Steering Committee, City of Kennewick and private donations and hard work, the pond was replaced with an event venue, including amphitheater seating, water feature and plantings, which can be used for educational classes and rented out by the City for events such as weddings. Benton-Franklin MGs are very proud of this fine improvement.
- b. Judy Callahan shared information about a one-day forum last year, sponsored in part by the Secretary of State’s office, specifically for board members of large non-profit organizations. Several counties’ MG Foundation board members attended this facilitated seminar where a myriad of topics were discussed including setting goals and objectives, self-evaluation, fiscal procedures and more. She also recommended the Soroptomist’s as a good source for grant funds.
- c. George asked if all county foundations are doing regular fiscal reviews, and stressed the importance of same. Bob indicated that such reviews should be specified in Foundation By-laws. Several representatives shared their practices.
- d. Sherry Kanode inquired, as a new representative to the MGFWS, about the history and purpose of the State Foundation. She also wanted to know more about WSU Extension’s reach into counties around the state, and if all counties have MG programs and foundations. George responded that the primary purpose of the MGFWS is to promote sharing of best practices and to facilitate the Advanced Education Conference each year. Several others around the table shared information about their local foundations, finance matters, and more. Sherry’s questions sparked good discussion.
- e. Barbara Guiland wanted to know if, and if so, how other counties pay for their Coordinators. It was soon clear that we are all over the board on that topic, ranging from full salaries to fully volunteer coordinators and many variations in between.
- f. George expressed an interest in fund-raising ideas. He will send out a survey to learn what counties do around the state to fulfill their fiscal needs.
- g. The topic of public garden tours as fundraisers came up. It was noted that liability issues make it very difficult to justify the relatively small income generated by these.
- h. The discussion of liability issues spawned a brief discussion of “Officers and Directors” and “Errors and Omissions” insurance policies. While it is quite expensive, it is highly recommended that each county obtain such insurance for their foundation officers. It may be worthwhile to investigate if MGFWS could purchase such insurance to cover all county boards.
- i. Sherry related the discussions her local foundation (Kitsap) is having about becoming a “non-member” foundation. An independent board of officers, who would select their own replacements, would run it. Members in her county seem to think this would be better than the current organization because of a general lack of interest in foundation issues on the part of MGs other than the officers. There were a number of questions. The group will look forward to learning more about this as Kitsap proceeds.

6. 2016 and 2017 Conference plans:

- a. No county has submitted a proposal to host the 2016 conference. At this late date, this likely means that there will be no conference in 2016.
- b. George will put out a Request for Proposals for the 2017 conference.

- c. There was discussion about the job and the benefit of hosting one of these conferences. Some counties have had very positive experience and made significant profit by hosting a conference. Others haven't had as good an experience. Those who have hosted in the past recommended making an honest assessment of a county's ability to marshal committed leadership and volunteers who are willing to put in long-term effort to pull it together.
 - d. It is clear that past hosting counties are very willing to share their recommendations with other counties considering hosting.
 - e. An option to consider is two or more neighboring counties working together to co-host.
 - f. On a related note, Ronda (Asotin) shared that her county is considering hosting an "experience" in 2016. It would be a sort of mini-conference, with perhaps a day of seminars and a day of tours/activities. More to come!
7. September and October meetings: George asked how much business to plan for the September meeting, to be held on the Thursday morning prior to conference opening. Because of cross-state travel concerns, it was suggested that we do more business at the September meeting than we have normally done in the past, and forego the October meeting.

The meeting was recessed at 12:05 for lunch, which was provided by the Yakima Foundation and prepared by Yakima MG, Diana Pieti.

8. Upon reconvening at 12:55, Nicole Martini gave a program update.
- a. She announced that WSU Regents have asked Daniel Bernardo, WSU's provost, to act as University President until they can meet to formally name an interim President while a search is conducted to replace recently deceased President Elson Floyd.
 - b. A recent County Coordinators' Meeting was held in Ellensburg, where the full agenda included the importance of vetting educational material, and the importance of ensuring that the official non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation statements are included in all MG publications and announcements. Requests for reasonable accommodation must be referred immediately to WSU Human Resources by going through the local County Director, local MG Coordinator, or Nicole. Counties should not presume they can "take care of it themselves".
 - c. The new Gardening website, developed by the Gardening Team is still a work in progress. The Team is aware that more information is needed, and they are working on it.
 - d. Nicole wants to do more webinars for statewide MG access. There have been some struggles finding the right software to enable quality webinars that are simple to access. For now it has been decided to stay with Adobe Connect. Be aware that there is a 100 person limit, so it is advised to check in early if you plan to attend a webinar live. Webinars will, however, be archived at the State MG website for viewing later. Nicole hopes to be able to provide about three continuing education webinars annually.
 - e. Another opportunity for CE is coming at the end of July. It will be First Detector Training on the four new-to-our-area invasive pests, and is scheduled for July 28th. And the Tree Stewardship training announced at our last meeting is now scheduled to be complete by June of 2016 – sooner than originally planned.
 - f. The Issue of recording travel time by MGs is under consideration. It is a complex topic, and Nicole is working with Human Resources to figure out the best policy. It is not likely to allow recording volunteer credit hours for travel, but rather to record them to support L & I coverage for injuries incurred during that travel.
 - g. The meetings with Local County Coordinators are important venues for training and sharing of information to help our programs. Nicole's budget, however, has not been ample to support

two such meetings annually. In addition to the June meeting normally held in Ellensburg, she would like to be able to host a similar meeting in September, at the Conference. Her budget, however, only allows her to host a social lunch for Coordinators who are attending the conference, and those who can travel to the lunch on their “own dime”. Some counties are able to pay such expenses for their Coordinators, but a number cannot. Given this situation, Nicole asked the State Foundation if it would consider giving some funds to help defray the cost of a September Coordinators’ meeting.

The discussion that followed seemed to show a general understanding of the issue, but reservations about a solution. There were questions about how the money, if given, would be allocated. To individual counties? How would they be selected? Spread among all counties, even those who can afford to support their Coordinator? Why is it that WSU Extension cannot provide additional moneys? And more.

Eventually, Sherry Kanode moved and Sandy Atkinson seconded that the MGFWS donate \$2,000 for the September 2015 Coordinators’ meeting in Vancouver. There was more discussion and many questions. George finally asked if there were any new questions or comments, or if the question could be called. A vote was taken, and, with five dissensions, the motion passed.

9. Travel Reimbursement – A survey of counties will show how counties are dealing with the question of reimbursing members for travel expense.
10. A’Key Grant – George would like to have two reviewers from the MGFWS to work with two reviewers from King County to evaluate applications for this grant. He has two, but both are from the same county. He would like to have one from another county. Barbara Guiland volunteered.
11. Van Bobbit Scholarship – The committee has selected Joshua Lackey (Pierce Co.), a hearing-impaired 16-year-old MG.
12. Foundation Questionnaire – The survey that was sent out spawned some responses and some comments. Some questions dealt with Program issues, and so were dropped. Given the questions and poor response, the whole survey was dropped. George still believes that sharing of best practices and normal procedures is important, but, at this time, he plans no new questionnaires of this type. Diane Threlkeld asked if there was any useful information that came from the few surveys that were returned. George said that they didn’t really accomplish the sharing objective.
13. Meeting was adjourned at 2:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by

John Strong, Secretary

George Frey, President

Attachment:
Membership Committee Report

Addendum

MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF WASHINGTON STATE Membership Committee Report June 26, 2015

Since the beginning of our fiscal year, charters were sent to 14 member counties asking for approval signatures. Of those 14, ten signed charters have been returned. Those still outstanding are Clark, San Juan, Snohomish and Thurston.

Invitations for charter membership were extended to three counties. Chelan, King and Walla Walla. Up to this point there has been no response.

There are five dependent counties. Asotin, Kittitas, Mason, Okanogan and Pend Orielle. Dependent counties are not charter members; however, they have appointed representatives to the State Foundation board and have voting privileges.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Bailey, Chair
Membership Committee