

BIG COUNTRY MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING

JANUARY 16, 2024

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:20pm by President Jackie Sledge.
2. Minutes from the November '23 business meeting were reviewed and approved by Dawn Graham's motion and John Geib's second.
3. The November and December 2023 Treasurer reports were reviewed by Kathy Turner. After reviewing the balances in the checking account, savings account, and money market account for those months approval was given for the final balance of accounts of \$ 63,556.18.
4. President Jackie Sledge has prepared a list of Events/Workdays/Meetings scheduled for January through February was made available to membership their information. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings and programs, there is the Pepper Palooza scheduled for February 24 and the BCMGA's participation in the Farm, Ranch, and Wildlife Expo and Women's Fair on February 29.
5. Committee Updates:
 - A. Awards – Ann Clark presented the Busy Bee award for November to Teri Shuffield and for December to Stephanie McKee. November recipients of the You Rock Award was Stephanie McKee and for December was Rachel Perkins. Ron Tinney who had not been present in Oct to receive his You Rock Award was given the award.

Award considerations for the association are being prepared to submit to the state for the January 31 deadline.

- B. Budget and Finance – The FY 2024 budget was approved via email and has been distributed to the membership.
- C. Membership – There were 305.5 volunteer hours in Dec and 49.25 Education hours that month for a total of 354.75 hours reported by 24 Master Gardeners and Interns. For the 2023, BCMGA reported 9399 hours for a value of \$298,998.05.
- D. MG Intern Training – Dawnyel Luckie gave a report on the upcoming 2024 training to begin Feb 8 and ending April 30. Thus far, eleven applications have been received and there was a very good turn out tonight for the first "Greet and Meet" the MGs for prospective applicants. A committee meets this Friday to review the applications and make decisions for acceptance to the program. Applicants will be notified that afternoon. A schedule of the training dates and class subjects was made available to the membership.
- E. Plant Sale – The Modern Living Mall has been reserved April 8 -14 for the spring plant sale and Oct 7-13 for the fall sale. A meeting will be held soon to make specific plans for the spring sale.
- F. Projects – due to the absence of Sandy Shaw, the projects were not reviewed. Jackie noted that Thomas Elementary will be added to the project list.
- G. Recurring Special Events – Chairperson Stephanie McKee reported the committee had rec'd an offer from Donna Long Wolfer to have the picnic, the "Spring Fling", at her home. A tentative date is May 11 which may conflict with Mother's Day. There will be a survey distributed to see if that is a problem reg the picnic. The survey will also include opportunity to express whether membership wants the food catered or brought by membership, games to be played, etc.

The Christmas party will be held in the Big Country Hall with Dec 10 being the date. Stephanie said the charity for gifts from the MGs was New Beginnings who had expressed much gratitude and thus will be the recipient again next year.
- H. Resource/Marketing, website, facebook, and newsletter – nothing new to report. Previously, garden articles were published in the Abilene Reporter News but they discontinued that public service in Aug'23. The public wanted to see more articles so they are now being published on the BCMGA website. Sara Adams who had ensured articles were

available for the newspaper is preparing a monthly article series entitled "Bug of the Month". Grace Broyles will follow suit with "Plant of the Month". These talented MGs are greatly appreciated.

- I. Training/Programs – Saturday Seminars will begin in January with the first program on "Lawn Care". Persons wishing to participate as presenters are asked to contact Kathy Turner ASAP. The February program will be the "Pepper Palooza" and plans are already being developed as well as pepper seeds being planted.
John Geib stated the monthly library programs will continue on the first Tuesday and second Friday of each month. He is requesting any interested presenters on lawn care please contact him.

There are three Advanced Training Opportunities already this new year. Junior Master Gardening will occur in February and Jackie Sledge and Emily Harding will participate. Tree Care is also being offered this spring. However, currently BCMGA has several members advanced trained in this topic and it is felt that is adequate for the demand. Just opened are applications for the advanced training in propagation offered by Tarrant County on May 2-4. Interested members should contact Jo Rake if interested in attending.

- J. Strategic Planning – A meeting will be held soon for this committee.
 - K. Maple Street Project – Jackie Sledge explained the county had resurveyed the property resulting in additional area belonging to the MGs. It was identified the north boundary actually extends to the fence of the neighboring property. Other boundaries remain the same. A meeting to discuss how to deal with the newly identified property will be held.
6. Old Business
 - A. Policy and Procedures/ByLaws Review – New information from the state Tx Master Gardeners Association will need to be put into policy and procedure form as well as other changes which are needed.
 - B. Repair of Trailer – The MG trailer which suffered break down in Austin, TX, in October was returned to Abilene by Ron Tinney. It is currently at the shop owned by Donna Long Wolfer's husband being assessed for damage and the cost of repairs vs the value of the trailer. A decision as to action to take will then have to be made.
 7. New Business
 - A. Changes in Membership Categories – Among the news coming from the state association are changes in membership categories which will significantly affect some of the associations valued members, specifically those with "Lifetime" status. Jackie explained in detail the concerns expressed to the state regarding the ramifications of some of the state's decisions. Membership also voiced concerns about what seemed to be "unfair". Following lengthy discussion, Jackie continued to assure the membership there would be additional discussion with the state and ultimately, a way determined not to devalue our members.
 - B. Use of Chike Nutrition Grant – The Chike Corporation donated a \$1000 grant to BCMGA. No decision has yet been made as to how it will be best used.
 8. Extension Office News – A few new personnel are on board in the extension office including Pam Jones who has replaced retired Tammie Belyeu. MG will be participating in Farm & Ranch Show with a booth as usual and Jackie will ask for a volunteer to head up that effort.
 9. Open Discussion – None
 10. At 8:50, Teri Shuffield made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by John Geib. Jackie Sledge stated members can get credit for 1 ½ hrs vol and if they attended the Meet and Greet, add 1 hr educ.