

Minutes from Executive Committee Meeting

January 19, 2016, Jordan Extension Office

The meeting was called to order at 6:24 p.m. by Chair, Anne Thoresen

In attendance were: Shelly Esse, Bob Strawn, Anne Thoresen, Mandy Urness, Donna Herman, Ruth Peterson, Patti Tibbs, Kate Erion, Mary Selck, Marcia Walters, Dave Daubert, and Jackie Smith

Not present: Nancy Guldborg, Georgiann Keyport, Jane Horn, Meredith Kurzhal, Tom Welch

Anne welcomed new member Marcia Walters, along with new Category C Vice-Chair, Mary Selck. Marcia was given a new member packet, and select contents from the packets were distributed for members who may not have received them in the past.

Minutes from the November, 2015 meeting were read and approved. 1) Patti 2) Bob Unanimous

Jackie report on **Extension:** A new round of interviews is scheduled for January 22 for the coordinator position since the initial candidate selections declined the job.

She went on to compliment the EC and volunteers for the job they have done in the past four years by really stepping up to keep the program running smoothly and taking on a heavy burden of responsibility for program management.

This upswing in volunteer responsibility has led to some communication gaps between the coordinator and volunteers along with a void of documentation at Extension. Because of a recent volunteer illness, the coordinator needed to step in to cover, and no documents from the past several years were available.

Another limiting issue for program coordination is the lack of a calendar of events. Shelly Esse has volunteered to look into the possibility of updating the SUG calendar to a more comprehensive calendar which will reflect the full range of program activities.

Financial Report – final quarter 2015

Our bank account total at the end of the year was \$30,694.37. Along with PayPal total of \$175, our total account total on 12/31/15 was \$30,869.37

The group reviewed several year-end financial documents and voted to approve the 2015 financial statements. 1) Patti 2) Donna. Unanimous

In discussion, the group was reminded that a vote is needed to approve any future purchases that go over a budgeted line item amount, or any purchases that are not specifically covered in our budget. This documentation of approval is necessary to cross-check our financial records during any future audits.

There were no purchases during the final quarter without prior approval.

Jackie mentioned that the previously approved 2016 budget was not a balanced budget since it reflected expenses totaling almost \$3,000 higher than expected income. Jackie, Patti, and Ruth will meet to revise the budget for the April meeting.

Discussion regarding future purchases:

- A motion was made and approved for Donna Herman to purchase garden gloves to sell at a small profit at our events. Jackie will double check with our state office regarding sales tax policy, but assuming that is favorable, Donna is authorized to purchase 90 pair of gloves at a cost not to exceed \$500 in time for Garden Fever (3/5/16). 1) Mandy 2) Kate. Unanimous
- Motion made and approved for Ruth Peterson to purchase two Square readers which have the capability to read chip cards along with magnetic strips, at a cost not to exceed \$60. 1) Jackie 2) Bob. Unanimous

Old Business

- **Executive Committee Policy (Guideline) document** was distributed to members. This historical document has been condensed to include only adopted official policies, continuing active guidelines, and expense entries for items we still own. Coordinator strongly urged committee to continue this document in future to prevent lost time re-creating policies that are already in existence.
- **Strategic Plan** developed by former coordinator, Sue Riesgraf, with a committee that included Kate and Patti, was reviewed. The decision was reached to table action on this document until a new coordinator is in place. Jackie will send her comments to Kate and Patti for future reference.
- **Bylaws revision (Operating Guidelines & Volunteer Leadership Position Descriptions)** After many months of review, the committee submitted these documents for approval which was granted by the Executive Committee, following discussion regarding comments submitted in writing by another member who could not attend. These comments and our responses are attached at the end of these minutes. The documents, as submitted, will be attached to the February newsletter for vote by the entire program at the February 8, 2016 meeting. 1) Patti 2) Mandy. Unanimous
- **Revised Organizational Chart** distributed and discussed. Several positions still remain open, and EC members have been asked to help fill some of them, particularly the Vice Chair position to assist Judy Hart with the Plant Sale. In addition both Donna Herman and Meredith Kurzhal are looking for replacements in their categories, and we have been asked to help them search for volunteers.

- **Years of Service** is a designation for each volunteer that indicates actual years they have contributed at least the minimum of volunteer hours. After discussion, it was decided to keep this designation in the hard copy Directory, though it has been removed from the online Directory. 1) Kate 2) Mandy. Motion passed with one dissenting vote
(Note from coordinator: as time permits we will follow Shelly's suggestion and develop a separate spreadsheet to track YOS. Once this is in place, the EC can revisit if YOS should remain in the published directory)
- **Recognition Banquet** was a lovely event at Ridges on Sand Creek in rural Jordan, but concerns were raised regarding the low attendance numbers, with only 51 actual EMGS (active and emeritus) out of 86 in attendance. Possibilities for lower attendance included cost, location, and time of day. The selection of venue is the responsibility of the Vice Chair, and Dave will look into 2017 possibilities to report at the next meeting.

Committee Updates

Meredith Kurzhal submitted a written report on Category B activities. Jane Horn asked to present a report at a later date since she is out of state.

Jackie asked about current procedures for obtaining speakers for one-time events. Several members offered to forward to her the list of prospective speakers for future use. (*Received – thank you all!*)

New Business

Membership changes

- Previous 2015 losses include: Ethel Smith, deceased. Resigned: Linda Carlson, Paula Flom, Beverly Foster, Chris Kirchoff, Stefanie Klein, Karen Potter, Jess Sanford, Heidi Sporre, Michelle Waite, Cathy Walerius
- Recent resignations: Beth Billstrom, Cindy Colson, Joyce Stuewe, Holly Zimmerman
- Two members have indicated intent to return from leave: Terri Booth and Sue Morgan.
- Emeritus additions on the state database since the beginning of the year include: Flossie Finnicum and Helen Sjostrom

Speaker Ideas were requested from the group by Anne for our regular monthly meeting. Donna will send her a list of ideas, and other members are encouraged to contact Anne as soon as possible with ideas. She'd like to have the speakers set for the year within the next few weeks.

Equipment Donation/Update EMG Michael Gray has donated laptops to the group, and is in process of evaluating the equipment we have on hand. Dave has volunteered to follow up with Michael and present his recommendations at the next meeting.

Suggestions

None this month

Other Business

Shelly let us know that she will be moving to Arizona by the end of July. We will all miss her presence at meetings, events, and most especially running our SignUp Genius program. She has indicated that she will make every effort to find and train a replacement before she leaves. Best of luck to Shelly in her newest adventure!

Next meeting - Set for Monday, April 18, 6:30 p.m. at the Jordan Extension Office.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. 1) Bob 2) Ruth. Unanimous

Comments/Discussion on the submitted Operating Guidelines

1. A quorum shall consist of 40% of voting members as described in Program Participation (above)

Thought: As we get bigger, 40% will be a tougher and tougher hurdle. Many large non-profits have a much lower hurdle, such as 10%. While we may not want to go that low, I think 40% is too high.

Response: This may prove difficult in some circumstances, but the general feeling is that out of 100 members, a majority vote of only 21 people should be the minimum to pass an action.

2. In some cases voting may be done by electronic means, but 100% approval is required for action to result. If there is less than 100% approval, further action will be held until the next committee meeting.

The above refers to voting at EC meetings. This is vague as it is not clear in what "cases" electronic voting allowed? I think it would be ok to allow electronic voting any time we want and to apply the same quorum rules as in person meetings. It would be a nice tool to have during holidays or snowstorms when we need to act on an item.

Response: This refers to time-sensitive items, such as purchases or volunteer status changes which come up just after an EC meeting and shouldn't wait until the following meeting. In the past, this has almost always involved a purchase. The feeling is that unless 100% of the VOTING EC members says yes, discussion should wait until the next meeting. If, of course, it is an item of critical nature, a special meeting can be called.

The trick to getting this to work is that voting members need to respond, promptly, to any email from a coordinator designated as "Your Vote Needed"

3. INTERN/MENTOR ADMINISTRATOR and SIGN-UP ADMINISTRATOR

Regarding these two positions I don't see that it is necessary that they attend all EC meetings. We eliminated the category chairs attendance in order to make the EC a smaller working body. Why not just apply the same rules to these positions? Have them attend once or twice a year as needed. While these are important positions it seems to me to be asking a lot for them to attend all EC meetings.

Response: Looking at the org chart you'll see that these are administrative positions. In fact, these tasks are so critical they rightly belong with the program coordinator. I feel strongly that anyone performing these tasks must be aware of and a part of what is happening on the EC. Both of the gals involved are willing to attend when possible. And like everyone else on the committee, they can have excused absences for conflicts, but in that case will be immediate recipients of all documents and minutes to help them stay up to date.

Comments/Discussion from the Position Descriptions

4. "Elected annually, the Treasurer can serve an unlimited number of terms."

Something about this language does not ring right with me and I don't think the optics are good. I think it would be a good practice to have the Treasurer step away from the books and money handling periodically. I suggest we limit the Treasurer to three or four consecutive one year terms. After a year off they would be eligible to serve again.

Response: We all agree with the practice you suggest, but realism convinces us that this is the hardest position to fill on the board. As long as we have a good treasurer, it seems prudent to do what we can to keep her on board. And of course, it is an elected office, so there's nothing stopping anyone from running against the current treasurer at any election. I, for one, would love a good election battle.

5. Lastly... I would remove any reference to Hennepin, Sibley and Dakota counties.

I understand we may have a few members from these areas but I don't think it is appropriate to recognize those counties as meriting official standing or representation in our leadership. As the new language stands our Chair, Vice -Chair, and at-large members do not have to live in Carver or Scott County. I don't think that is our intent but that is how I read the new language.

Response: If we remove this reference it means that none of our residents of the "other" counties could hold an office. We currently have quite a few Hennepin County residents, and, in fact, our Treasurer resides in that county. As the very first chair, I lived in Sibley County and historically many of our EC members have been out-of-county residents. The

point here is to align those residents with an appropriate county affiliation, in order to achieve a balance between the two main county interests. Hennepin Co residents are representing Carver County while Sibley and Dakota residents represent Scott. The verbiage could probably be re-written to better describe this situation, but it seems to serve the purpose now, and can always be changed at a later date.

The committee that designed these revisions strongly believes they constitute pretty good working guidelines but are aware there is always room for improvement. However, overriding the desire to have a "perfect" document is the desire to have operational guidelines approved and in place before a new coordinator starts.

One final comment: these guidelines may always be amended or changed if they no longer fit our needs