

Highland Lakes Master Gardener Association
Executive Board Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2024
Burnet AgriLife Classroom

Call to Order: Terri Winter called the meeting to order at 1:32pm

Attendance: Terri Winter/President, Jennifer McMillan/Vice-President, Celia Manlove/Treasurer, Marybeth Edeen/Corresponding Secretary, Terri Clark/Recording Secretary, Carolyn Stephens/Past President, Patti Young/Member at Large, Kerry Nyquist/Member at Large, Kelly Tarla/AgriLife Extension Agent

While reviewing and setting up 2024 Certification Class Associates online for the new Background check procedures, it has come to our attention that a few associates who reside in other counties registered for our class here in Burnet county. This is an area of concern for many reasons.

- One associate lives in Llano county, and one lives in Dripping Springs in Hayes county. Both of those counties have their own certification classes. The concern here is our limited class size being further reduced by out of county applicants, which means less availability for applicants who reside in the counties we serve (Burnet & Lampasas).
- The associate residing in Hayes County missed the deadline for registration for our class, and showed up the 1st day here to register that day and join the class.
- Another concern is that Hayes county has a 2 year wait list for their Master Gardener Certification class, which could result in applicants seeking another avenue to obtain certification instead of having to wait. Also, after certifying, they can then request a transfer to their county of residence. This provides a "loophole" which does not serve our local communities.
- Where are the out of county associates going to complete their volunteer hours to become certified? Are they going to continue to drive long distances to volunteer?

After discussing these concerns, a motion was made by Celia, that "all HLMGA Certification Class applicants must be residents of Burnet or Lampasas county. Any exceptions must be approved by Kelly Tarla on a case by case basis. Also, deadlines for registration must be strictly adhered to." Carolyn seconded the motion and all present were in favor. Motion passed. This will be discussed with Certification Class Coordinators, and also noted in the Certification Class Operating Manual.

Background Check discussion: The entire background check process has been changed by Texas A&M for all County Ag Extension Volunteer Organizations. The process requires completing a volunteer application form from A&M, a 3 hour on-line training in "Volunteer Standards" in the AgriLife Learn system, and finally, submitting background check information in the Sterling System. The 3 hour training will be required every 3 years, and will also count as 3 AT hours.

Motion was made by Terri Clark ,seconded by Carolyn and all present in favor of members earning 3 hours of AT for completing the 3 hour "Volunteer Standards" on-line training. Motion passed.

Kelly is working out how to pay the background check fee as this has already been paid with our dues payment. She is also working on a spreadsheet that will show when it is time for each member to complete this process.

Christy Stephens, who monitors our Facebook page, has requested that if any posts are made regarding upcoming HLMGA functions to please give her a heads up. She is monitoring the posts/comments.

Joan Altobelli has reported that our 2024 Certification class associates have fulfilled their required classroom hours and are all set to "graduate" this coming Wednesday, 3/17/24.

Update on Dig It editors: Marylynne Norman is working hard on getting the newsletter rolling. She completed the April newsletter and it looks WONDERFUL. Anelicia Cheny-Campbell's participation was very limited.

Visitors at HLMGA monthly general meetings: Visitors are welcome to attend our monthly meetings as a guest of members. There are a few visitors who are attending regularly and this should be handled carefully as we do not want to offend or dissuade any guest from potential membership. However, if it is noticed that a visitor is consistently attending without making any effort to join the association, it is unfair to membership who pay dues and have a vested interest in the cost of our speakers, etc. In other words, we should gently encourage visitors to take the necessary steps to join the association to benefit from the presentations at the meetings. We do offer free educational classes to the public via our Green Thumb program for those who are interested.

Celia presented the budget report. Roxanne Dunegan has requested an additional \$100 for advertising for the Burnet County Fair, it was not budgeted. Marybeth motioned to approve this request, Kerry seconded and all present were in favor. Motion passed.

Celia has filed the registration for non-profit paperwork with Secretary of State office. The annual tax return has also been filed.

The nominating committee will meet in September to begin the officer nominations for 2025.

Our next Executive Board meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2024.

Meeting adjourned: 3:18pm

Submitted by:

Terri Clark/Recording Secretary