

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

## General Membership/Board Meeting

January 21, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. at the Country Store. Alan Baker, Lisa Briggs, Margo Carroll, Linda Ferris, Renee Lloyd, Carla Lund, Rita Reali, Greg Recht and Gregg Upchurch attended.

### **Opening Remarks:**

### **Officers' Reports**

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email. Lisa moved to accept the December 2024 minutes as submitted. Carla seconded. The motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Alan reported. Lisa has all the documents for proceeding with her treasurer responsibilities, going forward. At the bank, Alan said they need all three signatories (Margo, Lisa and Carla) to show up together to sign papers. He's not aware of any transactions since the last report, although Margo did make one deposit of two checks. Alan is meeting with Chuck Elgin tomorrow afternoon to do the audit of the books.

### **Old Business:**

**FLAG Festival:** Meeting was this morning; plans are moving along.

**PDG:** This is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the PDG. It would be nice to have all the garden spots adopted and cared for to make it look especially nice, or revamped as necessary.

**Umbrella Committee:** Next meeting is Thursday at 9 a.m. Gregg gave an impromptu explanation of the history and purpose of the Umbrella Committee and the Plateau Discovery Gardens, and answered questions from the board.

**Member Survey:** Margo wants to know if we have additional questions to add to the proposed member survey (spouse/significant other; interests; day trip interest; speaker topics, what do you want to get out of this organization, more social activities, group gardening activities, etc.). Alan suggested we have one standardized method for collection of info for the survey, and he'll send it out to the membership.

### **New Business:**

**Greenhouse:** Greg asked Gregg whether it would be beneficial to have the 2025 intern class participate in building a greenhouse at the PDG to earn volunteer hours. Gregg said the proposed hobby greenhouse is fine for a family, but it's nowhere near close to big enough to be practical and serviceable for the master gardeners to use. Any hard structures need approval from Walt. Greg asked if we'd need to pull a permit; Gregg said we don't. Alan suggested, rather than spending money on putting up a greenhouse, why not spend the money on something educational for the community?

**Communications Committee:** Linda asked if we have a Communications Committee. Margo said Kristi Dubois is doing a fine job with publicity and newspaper articles.

**Documentation of CCMG History:** Margo said Vicki May is working on getting Adopt-a-Spot filled out, as well as documenting the history of the CCMG, which would tie into the history and creation of the gardens, as well as the individual garden spots. Carla said the dragonfly folks are compiling a book of how it came together, the history of it and how it all worked out. Book was supposed to be kept in the greenhouse, which is now up in the air. Gregg encouraged them to digitize as much info as possible. Alan said the secretary's duties previously included keeping and maintaining a scrapbook: news clippings, photos, etc. He said Erin Fletcher Conley probably has about 25,000 photos. Alan suggested this might be a good project for the incoming intern class to undertake. Renee suggested, since he's not treasurer anymore, he might take on the Historian role.

**Partnership with Friends of Cumberland Mountain State Park:** They want to partner with us; they're doing a lot of native planting ("in the dead of winter," Linda added).

**CCMG Almanac:** Margo said it's an awesome resource (she got hers in 2022).

**MG District Meetings:** She's had two phone calls from other groups about things we're doing, so it might be beneficial to have small-scale district meetings or events.

**Roundtable:** Alan hasn't spent any time checking on the new website in the past 30 days. Margo said Kelsey worked on some things last week, and she's providing photos/documents to add to it. He would be opposed to having a website that doesn't serve members' needs. Kelsey was to have opened an account in the name of the CCMG and not renew the existing hosting/editing service. Margo will send out a dues notice in the next member email. Alan will do the directory once he knows who's paid. Gregg said the Master Gardener Intern class kicks off next Tuesday at 9 a.m.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

Board Meeting

February 18, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. at the Country Store; she then introduced Laszlo and Debbie Marton and customer-care Charity from Galena Garlic, who discussed their vision for a Garlicfest in Crossville September 27.

## Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email. Linda Ferris moved to accept the January board minutes as submitted. Renee Lloyd seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Margo reported in Lisa's absence. Through 2/17/25, total income was \$660; total expenses were \$103.24 for a net operating gain of \$556.76. The ending bank balance was \$27,914.26. The memorial bench fund and the PDG support fund remained unchanged. Rita Reali moved to receive the treasurer's report. Carla Lund seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**March 1 Community Fun Fest event** hosted by Cumberland Cares Recreation Center, 712 S. Main Street. Booth space is \$35 and our booth will promote Master Gardener education and events, along with selling Bird Treats. Shalena and Vicki May are leading this project and need additional volunteers.

**Speaker Opportunity:** The FCE would like a Master Gardener to speak at their March 14 meeting at the Country Store. Margo is looking for a volunteer for this.

**20th Anniversary of the PDG:** We need ideas for how to celebrate. Discussion of a tea party or a wine reception for the Master Gardeners, perhaps even in cooperation with Bristow Road Winery. Linda Ferris moved that we send flowers, up to \$250 total, to the three originators of the PDG (Rae Hozer, Carol Burdett and Nancy Christopherson). Rita seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Planting Areas at the Fairgrounds:** The Fairgrounds president has asked if we'd be willing to take care of the two planting areas, by the main building entrance and next to the pavilion. Discussion ensued.

**MG Historian committee:** Margo is looking for volunteers to head up a committee to preserve and document the history of the master gardeners. Gregg said he ran into Roger Thaxton at lunch today. Vicki May said Nancy Christopherson documented a lot of the early years of the gardens.

**Good Samaritans garden design assistance:** Margo said Good Samaritans in Fairfield Glade contacted her and is seeking assistance in design of their courtyard. Beyond their initial inquiry, they haven't followed up with her, so she hasn't done much with their request.

**Fair Park Senior Center:** They're seeking assistance in the design and maintenance of a raised-bed garden. Gregg suggested conducting a class and letting them take the reins and run with it afterward.

**Garden Loom:** Susan Partch brought up the idea of incorporating an interactive garden loom into the PDG. She'd mentioned it last year but nothing ever got done about it.

**Garden Coordinator's report:** Vicki reported. As a group, we are a dynamic team. We have 28-30 defined individual gardens, with more than a dozen not yet spoken for. She'd like teams to adopt a garden spot, so we get them all covered. She has a questionnaire for volunteers to help give her a handle on what the PDG's needs are and what individual MGs' needs are.

**Website:** Kelsey reported. She's working on adding functionality to the new website, via Wix. She said changes are coming and if folks have event listings or photos to contribute, get them to her.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

## Board Meeting

March 18, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. at the Country Store as she breezed into the room. Lisa Briggs, Debra Brown, Margo Carroll, Janet Coe, Linda Ferris, Linda Glenn, Renee Lloyd, Don Molen, Peggy Mullett, Greg Recht, Rita Reali and Gregg Upchurch attended.

### Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email. Greg moved to accept the February minutes as submitted. Renee seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lisa reported. Through 3/11/25, total income was \$1,462.64; total expenses were \$104.27, for a net operating gain of \$1,358.37. The ending bank balance was \$29,961.90. Rita moved to receive the treasurer's report. Margo seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Linda Glenn proposed we recite the Pledge of Allegiance before each meeting. Discussion ensued. Linda noted we say grace before our meals at MG meetings, so why not the Pledge? Discussion devolved into a discussion of not having food at meetings. Renee suggested any proposed change should be voted on by the general membership. Margo said if we do that, it should be by ballot and not a show of hands, because she said folks felt strongarmed into voting in favor of funds being allocated for hospitality a few months ago. Margo said our insurance will go up by \$700 if we provide food at any group function. Discussion tabled for now.

**FLAG Festival:** Margo reported. We have four booths left; we have plenty of volunteers. We've got four speakers (including a canning class, which will incur a \$10 fee with a limit of 20 attendees; Josh from Cumberland Trails Association; a workshop by someone from Dogwood Exchange; and the "hummingbird man," perhaps). Music is booked again for both days; we're paying them \$200/day; it's all budgeted. Rita asked how the hospitality room will be handled in light of this new state certification requirements. Margo said, "we'll figure it out."

**Birds Bees Bucks & Trees** – June 14, at the complex. We'll have a booth and hand out info.

**Fairgrounds Planting:** We can bring plants from home. Donnie said if anything is put out front, outside the gates, it gets stolen.

**Rain Barrel Sales:** we'll have 66 barrels shipped to us at the PDG in a few weeks, before the FLAG Festival. There is a MG discount (with code MG20). We'll be selling them to the public for \$96 (ours are \$76).

**Garlic Fest:** The Galena Garlic folks are asking for our support with event management. We'd assist with signups and they'll make a generous donation to the CCMG (Margo said he offered 50 percent). The Fairgrounds are already booked. They want to get local garlic farmers, flower farmers, etc. as vendors. Margo said it's a great educational opportunity for us. Our next step should be to get in writing what each party will be responsible for, and lay out expectations right from the start. The owner has spoken at the Pick Tennessee conference, and is widely respected in the area. Promotion

might look something like this: “Galena Garlic, in cooperation with the Cumberland County Master Gardeners, presents GarlicFest 2025, September 27...” Linda Ferris moved we take the next step to find out what we need to do to take part in this endeavor. Rita seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 1:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

## Board Meeting

April 15, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order [on the other side of the room](#) at 1:00 p.m. at the Country Store; Mike Barron, Agnes Bosze, Dennis Bosze, Lisa Briggs, Margo Carroll, Renee Lloyd, Vicki May, Greg Recht, Sharon McKinney, Janet Coe, Susan Stoneberg, Cheryl Dean, Linda Ferris, Bear Lesko and Rita Reali attended.

### **Opening Remarks:**

### **Officers' Reports**

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email. Lisa Briggs moved to accept the March minutes as submitted. Mike Barron seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lisa reported. Through 3/11/25, total income was \$1,462.64; total expenses were \$104.27, for a net operating gain of \$1,358.37. The ending bank balance was \$29,961.90. Brief discussion of signing up for online banking so we can access our balance on a more regular basis. We have \$5,520 in FLAG Festival income from vendors, etc. \$800 in tea ticket sales and \$900 in member dues; 37 have not paid. Deadline has been extended to May 1. Discussion of forming a membership-retention committee to keep in touch with folks and urge folks to pay their dues. For Gregg Upchurch, it's all about the hours. Rita moved to receive the treasurer's report. Linda Ferris seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**FLAG Festival:** Margo reported. We have two outside spaces left. We're trying not to turn anybody away. Two speaker workshops: jam making and plant mosaic trivet tray; one workshop has two tickets sold. Discussion of Cumberland Trail building. The June tea is already sold out; September tea has about 10 tickets sold. Sign up on Eventeny.com or via the CCMGA website.

**Eventeny:** Margo reported. Renewal is coming up June 1 Renewal fee is \$3,400. Gregg asked if we could negotiate a lower price, as a 501(c)3 organization. Janet Coe suggested we look at the different plans they offer and whether we could use a lower-cost program level, one without all the bells and whistles. Mike Barron suggested Walt Hitch might want to buy in to using the program. Discussion of offering other groups access to our account; would the terms of our agreement allow that?

**Garlicfest:** Galena Garlic has four retail stores in four states, and they're present at three Tennessee farmers markets. Gregg has signed off on this. We'll use Eventeny to sign up attendees and vendors. We'll realize 40% of booth fees. By unanimous voice vote, the board decided to go forward with the Garlicfest.

**Good Samaritans Garden Project with \$400 Match:** Margo was approached by Good Samaritans in Fairfield Glade about reviving the plantings in their [depressing-looking](#) courtyard garden. Susan Stoneberg reported on the project. They're thinking about putting a tree in the middle of the round bed, with perennials around it, and annuals around the outer edge. They also have raised beds in which the facility director wants to put cucumbers and other vegetables. Their maintenance guy will take care of maintaining the gardens once they're established. Linda moved we try this project and

match the \$400; Renee seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote. Discussion of having a small sign referencing our donation/participation. Margo said she has a signmaker who will probably make the sign free. Susan said MG plant donations would be welcome. Susan asked if anyone has a cattle panel they can put into the raised bed to use as a trellis.

**Straw Bale Garden:** Vicki needs \$35 for plants. Renee moved, and Rita seconded to give her the funds she needs. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**2025 Class Project:** Greg reported. The “Madame of the Gulag” (Vicki May) approached him about being the mentor for the 2025 water feature class project. He’s twisted arms and gotten volunteers to step up to lead the project. They’ll be meeting next week to discuss the project and submit a not-to-exceed \$500 funds request for supplies, etc., for the plot. Janet asked why we’re paying for plants and not the PDG. Greg said if we can front the money and get reimbursed, we can go forward with the project. Mike said that’ll never happen, and it should come before the Umbrella Committee. Vicki said Shalena told her the projects are generally funded by the master gardeners, not the PDG. She said when she did the dragonfly project, she got 50% funding from both the MGs and the PDG. Rita pointed out that was being revamped from a project undertaken by the PDG’s summer intern. Greg asked if we can get permission to start buying low-maintenance plants, not to exceed \$500, so they can get going on the project. Margo said she doesn’t know how that was done in the past. Shalena has to approve what plantings get done. She’s the one who said the water feature needed reworking. Renee moved we commit to the project and agree to fund \$250 and ask the PDG to match that amount; and if the money is already spent before the Umbrella Committee meets and they don’t agree to match the funding, that we go ahead and cover it. Linda seconded. Discussion and clarification ensued. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Fairgrounds Plantings:** Margo reported. She has no idea where they’re getting the money or how they’re doing it, but this project is happening. Donnie has a load of mulch coming, and it may be happening this Friday.

**Birds, Bees, Bucks & Trees:** June 14 at the fairgrounds. We have a booth, but we need folks to man it.

**TEMG Eastern Region Tour:** June 5-6, 2025. Margo, Leslie and Renee (and one other person) went last year. Register by May 1 for early-bird registration.

**Rain Barrels:** \$76 for members; \$96 for the public. (CCMG20, and CCMG20.2 are the codes for master gardeners to use for the \$20 discount) These are recycled plastic, made in the USA.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

## Board Meeting

May 20, 2025

In President Margo Carroll's absence, Vice President Carla Lund called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. at the Country Store. Lisa Briggs, Linda Ferris, Carla Lund, Susan Partch, Greg Recht, Rita Reali and Susan Stoneberg attended.

Carla mentioned an email from Alan pointing out several items for discussion. The board worked its way through the items of concern, as best we could. Some couldn't be resolved, as action by Margo or other parties not present is required.

### Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email and are posted on the website. Carla moved to accept the April minutes as submitted. Greg seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lisa Briggs reported. Through 4/30/25, total income was \$17,594.11; total expenses were \$8,211.83. The ending bank balance was \$42,055.17. Some reimbursements are still filtering in to be paid. No motion was made to receive the treasurer's report.

**FLAG Festival:** No specifics were discussed at the membership meeting. Susan said the Tea Booth broke even and was not feasible to repeat. Carla reported the silent auction system seemed to work; but they finished too soon and made the mistake of tearing down the booth too soon – and they learned not to do that, because everyone else wanted to do likewise. Kathy Towles is a wizard at organization, Carla noted. She said that team is willing to do it again next year, because now there's a system that worked. There was no confusion at all, and people were really easy to work with. Greg suggested having a "Buy it Now" sign on certain items. Lisa said the silent auction generated \$2,035.41. Rita said the hospitality room ran smoothly, but for next year she has ideas on how to improve the sign-up process and perhaps get more folks to bring sandwiches and perhaps fewer sweets. Lisa and Carla both commented the yogurt bar was well received by vendors and volunteers.

**Membership Meeting:** Brad Fox of Cumberland Mountain State Park will speak about chestnut trees at our June meeting. Unsure whether we'd be returning to evening meetings, Carla scheduled the speaker for the afternoon. Margo had asked we keep the meetings in the afternoon, with no potluck meal. Greg opposed the idea, as did Rita. Greg said the potluck provided an opportunity for social engagements, and many members like to bring in dishes prepared with their homegrown produce. Folks also enjoy bringing plants to swap, and the door-prize drawings. Susan Partch said she believes several members would also prefer to return to evening meetings with a potluck dinner. Linda suggested we take it to the membership for a vote. While a murmur of general agreement circulated through the room, no official motion was made.

**Birds, Bees, Bucks & Trees:** June 14, 9-3. Margo wanted a few people to man the Master Gardener booth. Rita pointed out the first Tea in the Gardens event is the same day/time, which would preclude at least a dozen master gardeners from participating in Birds, Bees, Bucks & Trees.

**Eventeny:** Renewal is on the agenda for June membership meeting; approval thereof will have to be a separate line-item on the budget.

**Membership:** Linda moved we have our own separate membership list for paid CCMG members, as we have in the past. Rita seconded. Discussion ensued. Carla suggested we amend the motion to include the password in the directory (which Susan Partch suggested oughtn't change until members have had an opportunity to access the website and see the new password). Amended motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Posting Minutes on the Website:** Rita said she was instructed to distribute general-membership and board minutes to the board and to Alan, who would distribute them to the general membership and post them to the website. She doesn't have administrative credentials to add them herself, and there's been talk of Kelsey Whitefield not working here anymore, which kind of puts a damper on her updating the site.

**Treasurer's Reports:** Susan Partch suggested whoever is working on getting info on the website might not be putting up the treasurer's info in its entirety. Carla reviewed the 2025 committee assignments and determined Kelsey Whitefield and Alan Baker are the website-committee people.

Details of item 5 on Alan's list – the budget, and aligning the two documents (treasurer's report document and existing budget) – are still in discussion between Margo and Lisa.

**Board Policies:** This should be discussed with our president, Carla said. Lisa pointed out anything we approved would be included in the minutes.

There being no additional business to conduct, Vice President Lund adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

## Board Meeting

June 23, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. at the Country Store. Mike Barron, Lisa Briggs, Ginger Brindley, Margo Carroll, Denise Cooper, Patricia Dominguez, Greg Recht and Rita Real attended.

### Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email. Patricia moved to accept the May minutes as submitted. Lisa seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lisa reported. As of 5/31/25, the opening bank balance was \$42,055.17; total income was \$987; total expenses were \$3,450.28. The ending bank balance was \$39,591.89. She's still trying to figure out accounting numbers via Eventeny. Rita moved to receive the treasurer's report. Margo seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote. Mike Barron asked whether we had final numbers for tomatoes and peppers from the FLAG Festival. He subsequently asked, since we have so much in the account, whether we could consider some kind of investment vehicle to grow those funds, and what we're planning to do with all that money. Surprisingly, no one even mentioned a cruise to the Caribbean.

**Fundraising, etc.:** Margo reported. Two weeks ago, several master gardeners were asked to meet with Keith Harrison, who leads fundraising efforts for UT. There was talk of a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the PDG, and fundraising for an already-established endowment for paid personnel for the botanical garden. It was established some time ago, funded largely by the master gardeners. The endowment stands at about \$300,000, according to Mike Barron. Margo said we were asked what kinds of simple things we want in the gardens (e.g., edgers, tools) and more substantial things (e.g., enhanced handicap accessibility within the gardens, etc.). Mike said the endowment reportedly pays part of Shalena's salary. Extensive discussion ensued about the vision of the CCMGA, going forward. Margo said in a year's time we host some 35 to 40 events (or more) that educate the public about what master gardeners do. She asked Mike to develop a series of questions to pose to members, to figure out what direction we want to go in for the future. He suggested keeping it to five or fewer questions, and said he prefers to have it in an online format. Discussion of the efficacy of the existing Adopt-a-Spot program ensued as a precursor to possibly funding, building and maintaining a greenhouse out at the PDG. A first step might be to establish a greenhouse team comprising folks who know how to manage and care for it. "We need a roadmap," Margo said, concluding the discussion. "Everything we do needs to have a sustainability plan, going forward." Mike resumed the discussion, saying it has to start with a vision. "I don't think we need to do more," Margo added. "I think we need to use what we have."

Patricia wondered how to engage more members. Rita reminisced about the good ol' days when we would troop out to Spike's for pizza, burgers, beer and baseball on TV. She mentioned past field trips to the lavender farm in Jamestown and the tulip farm in Dayton. Margo moved we recruit Patricia to be our field-trip coordinator. Lisa seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**President Elect's Report:** Greg said he's resigning as president elect. He'll remain in a support role.

**Good of the Order:** Patricia said she was at a recent pollinator event attended by three home-school families (with 8+ children). While one of the moms was engaging with Shalena, a girl about 12-13 kept trying to pull a plastic butterfly off one of the KinderGarden displays. A younger child (about 10) kept flicking all the bees off the pollinator plants, then tried to rip the covers off two outdoor electrical outlets. Patricia went on to say the dragonfly habitat has been vandalized twice. She wondered how to curb this kind of unruly behavior in the future. Several suggestions were advanced. It was decided alerting Shalena and letting her deal with it was probably the best idea, with advising parents misbehaving children would have to be removed as a backup solution.

There being no further business to come before the board, President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

## Board Meeting

August 19, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. at the PDG Indoor Classroom. Alan Baker, Lisa Briggs, Margo Carroll, Janet Coe, Patricia Dominguez, Linda Ferris, Bear Lesko, Julie Lesko, Carla Lund, Sharon McKinney, Sid Morgan, Rita Reali and Tracy Scrimsher attended.

**Opening Remarks:** “We’ve had a busy few months, haven’t we?” Margo observed. She invited folks to move forward. The peanut gallery was ripe, so they stayed in back.

### Officers’ Reports

**Secretary’s Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email. Carla Lund moved to accept the July minutes as submitted. Linda Ferris seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Lisa Briggs reported. As of 6/30/25, the opening balance was \$39,591.89; total income was \$1,091.00; total expenses were \$317.66. The ending balance was \$40,365.23. One dues, three rain barrels, almanacs and donations from classes made up the Rita moved to receive the treasurer’s report. Carla seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Budget Review:** Margo reported. We have a projected budget expenditure of \$29,986; we stand at \$20,261.10, \$10,514 short of expected expenditures. It includes budgeted amounts for PDG costs, the Fall Gardeners Festival and the summer intern. Alan read from the by-laws, clarifying the board would have to determine the necessity of changing the budget, as long as it doesn’t exceed the total budget by 10%. He suggests, “unless income is way, way off, why change anything?”

“How much money can we legally have in the bank as a nonprofit?” Margo asked. Alan said there’s no restriction. “There’s no requirement to spend ‘so much’ of your money,” he said.

Discussion of the projected budget income for the FLAG Festival – why was it so high when the actual profit was considerably lower? Sid suggested taking projected income vs. actual income for the past five years and go with an average.

Extensive discussion of the “Cheers to 20 Years” PDG anniversary fundraiser to benefit the PDG endowment for UT.

**Tools:** Vicki May had requested money for tools, without benefit of a list previously requested by Margo. We now have a list (which includes stirrup hoes and a tomahawk tool). We have a battery-operated weed eater (with one battery, one charger). Bear bought several tools and batteries to try out here at the PDG, then to continue using at home. Batteries are hugely expensive (upwards of \$300 apiece). A gas-powered edger would necessarily have a two-cycle engine, requiring mixing of oil and gasoline, which would require instruction for users. Extensive discussion of who’s responsible for what, regarding maintaining the gardens. That includes paying for said maintenance/upkeep, etc. “It’s UT’s land, it’s their program; we’ve got conservatorship of the gardens,” Margo summarized.

“This garden was built by master gardeners, who came out to a cow field and said, ‘We want to build a garden,’ and Walt said, ‘Go for it.’”

Margo suggested forming a committee to research and plan what to do with the gardens; she asked Sharon to serve on the committee. Bear suggested having the committee meet with the Umbrella Committee, so we can communicate with Walt, Shalena and Gregg all at once.

Back to tools: (stirrup [hula] hoes, tomahawk tools) Weed-attacking tools. Margo wants to get three to four of each. Estimating each one to be roughly \$20, that would be about \$140. Lisa has agreed to order the tools. Sid said we’ll get people complaining we didn’t get any ‘lady shovels.’ We’re not going to get shovels now “because we don’t dig too many holes, but weeding tools are high priority,” Margo said. Lisa said Shalena told her they need 11 hand pruners and a set of loppers. Margo took exception to that quantity. Discussion of crappy tools vs. quality tools.

**Cheers to 20 Years:** Sid Morgan reported. At the last meeting, they finalized how Friday evening will go. Gregg will be the “chief greeter” for the evening. We need folks to help Gregg direct folks. He and Sue Partch will help Gregg for about 15 minutes. The event will be out at the pavilion. Folks will be greeted at a pop-up tent set up for the occasion. People will mingle, drink, hit the charcuterie table from 5-6. At 6, everyone goes to one of the tents designated for a 30- to 40-minute presentation about the gardens. Master of Ceremonies Mike Barron will invite everyone back to the pavilion for cake. It wraps up officially at 7, except for folks who want a second piece of cake.

**Funding for the fundraiser:** Sid asked the board, “the high council,” to consider a donation to the funding of the Cheers to 20 Years celebration. He’d like us to match Gregg’s ~\$500 donation, if not \$1,000.

**2026 Board Candidates Committee:** Margo would like the board members to contact folks who might make good candidates.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

Board Meeting  
September 16, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. at the Country Store. Alan Baker, Mike Barron, Margo Carroll, Bear Lesko, Julie Lesko, Renee Lloyd, Carla Lund, Sharon McKinney, Sid Morgan, Rita Reali, Tracy Scrimsher and Susan Stoneberg attended.

## Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email and are posted on the website. Carla Lund moved to accept the August minutes as submitted. Tracy Scrimsher seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Margo reported in Lisa's absence. Through 8/31/25, the beginning bank balance was \$40,365.23; total income was \$1,258.32; total expenses were \$3,077.06. The ending bank balance was \$38,546.49. Rita Reali moved to receive the treasurer's report. Margo Carroll seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote. Lisa purchased tools for the PDG and has delivered them to the toolshed. Bear and Julie Lesko will appropriately update the tool inventory.

**Umbrella Committee:** Margo reported. "It was a great meeting," she said. Regarding the Fall Gardeners Festival, she said, "I thought the UT crew and the master gardener crew just came together and made an exceptional event."

**Tomato/Pepper Committee New Leadership:** Mike Barron reported. He's done it for six years and "would like to give that to someone else." He said maybe Rita Rice would be a good person to take over. "It's not a difficult task at all, but it gives somebody else to do some leadership," he said. We order them in November/December timeframe, pick them up in March and nurture them until the festival.

**Fall Gardeners Festival:** Margo said, "To me it was just such an awesome event." The food vendors pretty much kept up with demand. "We need faster ice-cream scoopers," Margo said.

**PDG Committee Formation:** Margo reported. "We have committees – there's a stack of committees that we have on our website, but we don't have a [dedicated] Discovery Garden committee. We should have a cohesive group to go to the Umbrella Committee when we discuss items." Everything we do, all the education, comes from the Garden," she said. "That's our core: classes in the garden, fall festival... UT publications. All of that pretty much stems from the Garden." Emails going out to everyone about watering aren't as useful as targeted emails to a coordinated committee to care for the PDG. Margo said a one-year plan would be helpful to guide procedures and events going forward in the immediate future. Discussion ensued. Margo asked about scheduling a brainstorming session to discuss some of the things that need to be undertaken and asked for volunteers to serve on this [ad hoc] brainstorming committee: Carla Lund, Julie Lesko, Bear Lesko, Sharon McKinney and Susan Stoneberg agreed to be in on the brainstorming group. Discussion of what the UT employees do at the Research Center. Alan suggested at least two board members should be on the committee and, as much as possible, the adopt-a-spot people should be on the committee.

**Benches for PDG:** Margo wanted to ask the board if we could use unspecified donations, in addition to the existing bench funds, to purchase two benches for the PDG. Alan said the benches we have were \$750 apiece three or four years ago. Mike concurred about the timing of the prior bench purchases, adding they still look brand new because we paid the extra money for quality materials. Margo said we need seating in the gardens. Alan said memorial-bench donations must be spent on memorial benches. Renee moved we use the \$750 from Jean Hoyt's family, in addition to the memorial-bench fund, to go toward two memorial benches, not to exceed \$2,500 (including shipping). Carla Lund seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Long-Range Planning:** Sid Morgan suggested having five-, 10- and 20-year increments as our short-, medium- and long-term plans. Discussion of what those plans might be ensued. Margo said we shouldn't just have fundraisers to raise money unless we have a plan of what to do with that money. "I need a vision," she said. The committee will be an advisory committee to the MG Board. Discussion of what to call this nebulous committee. PDG Advisory Committee, Ad Hoc Brainstorming Committee, PDG Steering Committee, Garden Planning Committee and Strategic Planning Committee were advanced as possible titles.

**2026 Board Nominations:** Mike asked where we stand. Margo said Tracy would like to be a director. Carla said she'll stay on for another year. Margo said if we can get a president elect to be her right-hand man, she'll stay on for another term. Renee's thinking about it. Susan Stoneberg told Margo, "I might be interested in shadowing you." Sharon has agreed to be secretary, as long as Rita helps out.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

Board Meeting

October 21, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. at the Country Store. Lisa Briggs, Margo Carroll, Janet Coe, Bear Lesko, Julie Lesko, Renee Lloyd, Carla Lund, Vicki May, Sharon McKinney, Rita Reali and Tracy Scrimsher attended.

## Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email and are posted on the website. Renee Lloyd moved to accept the September board minutes as submitted. Carla Lund seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lisa reported. Through 8/31/25, opening bank balance was \$38,346.49; total income was \$1,042.00; total expenses were \$7,242.39 for a net operating loss of \$6,200.39. The ending bank balance was \$32,390.10. Rita moved to receive the treasurer's report. Carla seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**PDG Advisory Committee Report:** Carla Lund reported. She said the committee includes Janet Coe, Bear and Julie Lesko, Sharon McKinney and Susan Stoneberg. Julie put together the results of the two surveys (one from earlier this year and the other from the October general meeting). The board has approved the purchase of two benches, which Ron Drechnik will be assembling and discussing with Walt as to where they should go. Kevin Howard built a swing, which is out in the garden already. Carla recommended we determine our priorities for one, five and ten years. She said a cement walkway will take money, but we've got a couple of big fundraisers slated for next year. Vicki asked whether concrete was a good option for the walkways. She said "more natural pathways" can still be wheelchair friendly and have adequate drainage as opposed to hard surfaces, for compatibility with our SmartYard parameters. She suggested pavers or hard pack with crushed gravel, "as long as it's wheelchair friendly and ADA approved." Margo said Sid Morgan wants to be on the PDG Advisory Committee; he'll be back in November. She added Sue Partch should probably be on the committee, too. Margo said Rae Hozer, Carol Burdett and Nancy Christopherson might also want to serve on the committee. Janet said paving is important, but signage also needs to be larger. It should specify "UT Botanical Garden." Julie said it needs to look friendly; Renee said it needs to look welcoming to the public. Bear suggested a sign on I-40 under "Attractions" to direct folks to the gardens. Discussion ensued. Rita pointed out those signs are hugely expensive and asked who would pay for that. Someone suggested Mike Barron might know who to talk to about getting that particular ball rolling. Discussion of signage ensued: design, content, logos, etc. Carla will reach out to Natalie about signage, and send her a picture of her monstrous sweet potato with tree bark.

Tracy said he's thinking about building a 10-by-15-foot memorial arbor to honor the founders and people who should be recognized at the PDG. Where could he put it in the gardens? And whose names should go on the arbor's four posts? He suggested Nancy Christopherson, Carol Burdett, Alan Baker and possibly Rae Hozer or Gregg Upchurch. Carla and Vicki suggested doing a brick fundraiser for paving the paths.

Julie asked whether we want to start projects for the incoming intern class. How do we go about it? Margo said if there's something that needs revamping, we can do that. We can't be adding anything new. Vicki said Shalena told her the conifer garden needs refreshing. Extensive discussion of the conifers and all the work that needs to be done. Vicki said the new conifers will "be planted in various places." The only currently active trial is the hibiscus trial. Vicki complained the hydrangeas never bloom, they just need to be weeded, mulched and pruned. Discussion turned to the Adopt-a-Spot people and the efficacy of their plot tending. "I personally think the ones that were not adopted are the ones that need the most love," Julie Lesko said.

**Membership:** Renee reported. She'd like to discuss the membership-update list. She said two of her classmates have told her they've been dropped. She wanted to know why we're losing people. Lisa said multiple emails had gone out stating dues were owed. Julie and Bear will be taking a little more active role in letting interns know what their responsibilities are, with regard to logging their hours, getting in their hours, etc. Discussion of the (abandoned) mentor program ensued. Discussion of how hard it can be for introverts to feel like a part of the organization. "We shouldn't lose people because they don't feel included, and they don't feel valued," Renee said. Extensive discussion ensued.

State conference is coming up in mid May. Discussion of informal field trips. Discussion of ways to make the membership meetings more fun and informative. Maybe not have a speaker every month; maybe just every quarter. Do more interactive membership things. Maybe meet offsite. Extensive discussion ensued.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

Board Meeting  
November 18, 2025

Vice President Carla Lund called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. with great force at the Country Store. Lisa Briggs, Tracy Scrimsher, Sharon McKinney, Carla Lund, Vicki May, Julie Lesko, Bear Lesko, Janet Coe, Rita Reali, Susan Stoneberg, Gregg Upchurch, Sid Morgan, Rae Hozer.

## Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email and are posted on the website. Lisa Briggs moved to accept the October board minutes as submitted. Carla Lund seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Treasurer's Report:** Lisa reported. Through 11/3/25, opening balance was 32,390.19; total income \$1,586.00; total expenses were \$318.91. The ending bank balance was \$33,657.28. She just received \$200 from Rae Hozer. Rita Reali moved to receive the treasurer's report. Carla seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

**Vice President's Report:** Carla reported on the PDG Committee. She said Julie sent her a press release from the *Crossville Chronicle*. Cumberland County has been awarded a \$60,000 tourism grant. It mentioned signage and ADA. She distributed it to the committee for their perusal and review. Susan Stoneberg has an application for an I-40 highway "Attraction" sign. Discussion of signage, who handles it and who pays for it ensued. Gregg said UT's "Power T" logo is controlled by the Athletics Department. He suggested going to Marketing and Communications instead of the Dean's office. Discussion of existing signage at PREC/PDG facility.

**Specialty license plates for Cumberland County Master Gardeners.** Discussion ensued. The consensus was we should contact Marketing and Communication at UT to explore viability. Gregg said Hailey Harven would be our contact there.

**State Tourism Magazine:** Susan Stoneberg asked how to get into the 2027 issue. She also asked how to publicize that the facility has a suitable RV turnaround.

Carla mentioned we need to get two 100-foot hoses for the gardens. Discussion of underground irrigation system. Vicki said until we can run the underground irrigation throughout the PDG, we can use "quick connect" hoses to access the existing underground system.

Discussion of removing the long-completed hydrangea-trial plot, which has been there since 2009. The daylily bed conundrum also needs to be addressed. Discussion of repurposing prior years' garden plots. Gregg suggested we assess what kinds of beds we need: annuals, screens, edibles, etc. We should look at the gardens from a teaching standpoint. We could also establish a wish list of teaching beds. He said he wants a true research associate faculty member housed at the PDG to help with teaching curriculum. We could use the endowment fund to hire five summer positions to tend the gardens and pull weeds. Extensive discussion ensued.

Discussion of classes in the gardens, and registration for events. We need to get names of actual attendees, rather than someone came with three guests. Vicki May suggested we use Eventeny,

“which we’ve paid so much money for,” for names of registrants/attendees. Rae Hozer read from a sheet that was revised in 2002, “we didn’t have any of that electronic stuff,” but they evaluated each class, indicated interest in MG training, and asked for recommendations of topics they’d be most interested in learning more about.

**New MG Database:** Gregg said they’re revamping the MG database to streamline and facilitate tracking of hours. Meanwhile, Eventeny could be used more efficiently for the Fall Gardeners Festival, as well as the Flower, Lawn & Garden Festival and Garlicfest.

**MG class signups:** We’ve got “nine and a half” folks signed up, Bear said. The half, Gregg explained, is someone who may or may not make a good volunteer.

Vice President Lund adjourned the meeting at 2:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary

# Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.

Board Meeting  
December 16, 2025

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at precisely 1:00 p.m. at the Country Store; Dave Armbruster, Mike Barron, Margo Carroll, Janet Coe, Linda Ferris, Bear Lesko, Julie Lesko, Carla Lund, Vicki May, Sharon McKinney, Peggy Mullett, Rita Reali, Stacy Scrimsher and Susan Stoneberg attended.

## Officers' Reports

**Secretary's Report:** Rita Reali reported. Minutes of the previous board meeting were distributed via email last night and are posted on the website. Carla Lund moved to accept the November minutes as submitted. Margo seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote. As one of her last official acts as secretary, Rita thanked the board for the opportunity to serve as secretary the past three years. Applause ensued.

**2026 Budget:** It takes \$15,000-25,000 to run the group, Margo said. That's all spent on items for the gardens. None of it is spent on us. It goes out into our programs. She said she tried to cut back on expenses where possible. The PDG got an "astronomical" quote for paving the pathways. She asked if there are sponsors we can bring in. Rita mentioned how Oktoberfest organizers seek sponsors for the biergarten, the entertainment stage, etc. Discussion ensued. Vicki suggested having a committee approach local businesses, seeking corporate sponsorships for the FLAG Festival. Margo suggested drawing up a concrete vision, and presenting it to County Mayor Allen Foster to help drum up support. Carla said P.J. Barnes from the Chamber of Commerce would be happy to publicize our events. Discussion ensued. Carla will check to see whether our program flyers are stocked there at the Chamber office, as well as at the visitors center. Line-by-line discussion of budget items followed.

Discussion of costs for PDG paving project. The committee has met three times, and the estimate they received from Lawn Rangers was nearly double what they expected, and didn't provide the components and materials the committee requested. Margo would like an overall scope plan, not just bits and pieces of the project.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita M. Reali, Corporate Secretary