

## FCBGF Board Meeting Minutes – May 21, 2024

**Present:** Scott Aker, Randy Byers, Shaina Case, Keren Meister-Emerich, Sharron Kelsey, \*\*Tom Lacock, Khale Lenhart, Jaime Liberty, Mark Rinne, Tracy Wilson, Kerri Young

**Absent:** \*Matt Ashby, \*Derek Baker, Janelle, Rose, Jason Sanchez

\*Members gave proxy votes.

\*\*Member arrived after quorum was established.

### **Call to order:**

Khale Lenhart called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm in the Gathering Room at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens. Eleven (11) voting members were present, and a quorum was established.

### **Approval of minutes from April 9, 2024, meeting:**

Khale asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 9, 2024 meeting. Keren moved to approve the minutes from the April 9 board meeting. Randy seconded. Khale asked for discussion. No discussion was raised. Khale called for a vote to approve the April 9, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Adoption of Recommended Fiscal Year 2025 Budget:**

Khale introduced the annual budget vote. He turned discussion over to Jill and Kerri. Kerri noted that the Finance Committee reviewed the budget carefully, and it is recommended by the committee for adoption. She explained that we use the previous year's budget and make adjustments according to year end numbers for this current year budget. This budget is very similar to last year. Jill briefly walked the board through a handful of minor changes.

Sharron asked about NARGS. Jill responded that the CBG will host the annual national meeting of the North American Rock Garden Society in June of 2025. We will have a budget for expenses associated with this meeting provided by the national organization. We don't know what the budget will be yet. The line item is a placeholder for now.

Randy mentioned that Matt is concerned that the staff training and travel is significantly decreased. Jill responded that prior year budgets were established for two staff members (Shane and Jill), but we just have one staff member now. Further, she noted that there are more opportunities for virtual trainings, which are much less expensive to attend.

Mark noted that the city has chipped in extra money for staff training of city employees, including CBG staff.

Scott noted that he appreciates the annual grant and that it's generous. It makes certain purchases much simpler.

Khale called for a motion to adopt the recommended Fiscal Year 2025 Budget. Tom moved. Keren seconded. Khale asked for discussion. No further discussion was raised. Motion carried unanimously, and the presented Fiscal Year 2025 Budget was adopted.

### **Chair's Report/Executive Committee Report –Chair Khale Lenhart**

Khale reported that the ongoing Blackbaud contract dispute has come to an end. The paperwork is not done, but we ended up settling for much less than was asked and less than we budgeted for.

Randy noted that we need to beware of these situations in the future.

### **Director's Report – Scott Aker, CBG Manager**

*(Please see the printed report in the meeting packet.)*

Scott reported that we are winding down on improvements to the conservatory. We got two quotes for the installation of supplemental lighting. Both were higher than we expected. We don't have the required \$18,000 for this project right now. We will wait until the end of the calendar year when we receive a \$25,000 pledge for the conservatory and use those funds to install the lighting.

AK Fabrication is working on frames for the Celebration Garden now. We will need to find a way to pay for cut flowers in the seasonal display frames. Jill noted that we will likely have some funding left over from the overall 2023 Annual Appeal. Those funds may cover a year's worth of cut flowers.

Scott and Jill are looking for a donor interested in the naming rights of a Wardian Case to house carnivorous plants in the conservatory. The naming right is \$7,500. We expect the carnivorous plant display to be very popular.

This year's annual appeal will take care of some maintenance needs in the children's village. We hope to renovate the greenhouse in the near future. It will be costly, and we need to move from concept to design to do it right. Additionally, the water feature needs to be retrofitted with a vault for easier maintenance. That will also need some design work before it can be done. The greenhouse and water feature will not be part of this year's annual appeal.

Many of the citrus plants have died, but we have replaced them with foundation grant money. We will be putting them directly out on the patio once they are potted.

There is talk of expanding the community garden program to plots around town. Scott suggested that the EAT Garden will be a nice showcase of what can be done and may help to expand the program in the future. Jason and Scott will be meeting with a private citizen who is willing to donate some land west of town for additional plots.

The bulb show was tarnished by a photographer who had a subject lay down in one of the tulip beds, crushing about a quarter of the plants in that bed. We have spoken to the photographer, and she was remorseful. We used the opportunity to remind people via social media to be careful when walking through and enjoying the collections inside and out.

Leaks from the conservatory to the gift shop seem to be fixed.

All of the summer interns are here. We have a great group, and we have a better plan to give them meaningful educational opportunities.

The master plan will be delivered Tuesday, May 28. We'll discuss next steps when we have it in hand. Sixth penny asks are due by fall, and we hope to include some or all of the projects outlined in the master plan. Most will need design work and quotes.

Enrichment programming is going well and will slow down for summer as we move attention toward planting and daily work on the grounds.

Scott reported that he will receive some immunotherapy for his melanoma. He is confident that he will tolerate it well.

Tom reported that AARP does a Community Challenge Grant that is due in January. Raised beds in a food desert would be a competitive proposal. He will get the information to Jill.

Scott said we will apply for a \$350,000 grant through the city next spring for the community garden expansion.

Mark asked if space in Romero Park would be appropriate for community plots. Scott agreed that Romero Park would be a great place for additional plots. Randy suggested that the detention ponds around the city might be good for plots. Tom noted that there are some raised beds at the VA that aren't used. Jaime noted that the Salvation Army has raised beds, too. Scott said his intention is to encourage slow growth in expanding the program. Tracy said there are other nonprofits that are trying to be creative about how to grow food for food insecure community members. Maybe we could find establish partnerships or a coalition to fund more urban gardening.

Finally, Scott noted that our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is coming up. Opening new plots for community gardening would really celebrate a full circle evolution of the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens since it began as a community garden east of town in 1977.

#### **Foundation Executive Director's Report – Jill Lovato**

*(Please also refer to the written report in the meeting packet.)*

##### *Membership*

Jill reported that membership continues to increase slightly this month. We hope to gain a handful of new members at the High Plains Arboretum Plant Sale on June 1.

##### *Major Fundraising Activities*

This year's annual appeal will be for the Paul Smith Children's Village. We have a public goal of \$75,000 with several naming rights opportunities from benches for \$5,000 to replacing the lath house for \$20,000. We will also replace hardscape in the Secret Garden, add a sitting curb around the sandbox and new toys, add engagement elements to the grassy area, rebuild the backyard hoop house, and install a stationary bridge over the water feature similar to the Blue Bridge behind the production house. Boy Scouts are rebuilding the pull bridge this summer as an Eagle Scout project. The mailer will hit mailboxes after Memorial Day.

WyoGives is July 10, and all proceeds will go toward the annual appeal. We would like to have a match sponsor or sponsors for \$500 to \$5,000. If you know of individuals or businesses that might be interested, please let me know.

We are also seeking a \$7,500 naming right donor for a Wardian Case for the conservatory building. This will house carnivorous plants. Please send Jill ideas for potential donors.

#### *Other Activities*

Jill is working on a social media campaign to raise awareness about membership by spotlighting long-time and well-known members. We have posted three so far. Please send yours to Jill. She needs a photo and why you enjoy CBG membership. We hope to post one each week through the summer.

The arboretum plant sale is June 1. We already have a few volunteers to help with the sale that day. Thank you, Keren, Derek, and Randy, for being available and willing. We also need a handful of volunteers on Wednesday, May 29 from about 10:30 to noon to help tag plants. Please use the sign-up sheet going around to volunteer. These volunteers can buy plants that day as incentive to help.

#### *Miniature Golf Tournament*

We will be hosting our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Miniature Golf Tournament on Sunday, August 25. We'll meet at the gardens for player check-in, raffle ticket sales, and refreshments at 1:00. Shotgun start at 2:30 at the Putt Hutt. We will return to the gardens to crown the winners and draw for the raffles. Please provide raffle items. We need 8-10 high quality items or baskets. Things that do well are booze baskets, experiences like gift cards to local restaurants or the movie theater, handmade art like quilts and pottery, and locally made products. We are also seeking a presenting sponsor for \$2,000 and hole sponsors for \$250. Hole sponsors receive one complementary entry, and the presenting sponsor receives two complementary entries. We will have an adults division for \$100 per twosome team and a kids division for \$50 per twosome team. Entries are limited to 36 teams. We sold out last year and expect to this year, too. Jill hopes to have the registration link on the website by June 1. We are having trouble getting the website platform to accept the registration snippet and have sought some technology assistance.

#### **Volunteer Liaison Report –Sharron Kelsey, Volunteer Liaison**

Sharron noted that there are ten comments from the volunteer comment box. Likes include: the staff and fellow volunteers, meeting visitors, the grounds and facilities and the enhancements always being made. Needs and wants include: new chairs at the greeter's desk and gift shop, return of the Fairy Garden.

Trudy has been helpful in moving the box around so that all volunteers can easily access it.

#### **Finance Committee – Kerri Young**

*(please refer to the April financial and committee report in your board meeting packet)*

Kerri noted the treasurer's report in the meeting packet, pointing out that total operating revenue was at \$86,883 at the end of April, comprised mostly of unrestricted gifts. Membership revenues were right around \$20,000. Expenditures are tracking within projected expenses.

Project revenue was \$96,665 at the end of April, and project expenditures were \$137,932 with net outflow of both prior year and current year funds of just over \$41,000.

Our investment income is just over \$83,000 gain. Dividends and interest income is \$47,000.

We'll talk with Pete Kline from RBC next month about how to fund the grant next year.

Khale noted that we often raise money in one fiscal year and spend it in the next fiscal year.

Kerri noted that we'll have major outflow of raised funds when we begin building the EAT Garden. Most of those funds will come from the Projects Account at RBC.

#### **Membership & Development Committee – Tracy Wilson**

Tracy reported that the committee has confirmed a date and a presenting sponsor for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Miniature Golf Tournament. We are now seeking 12 additional hole sponsors. She noted that she hopes board members will participate by playing in the tournament or sponsoring a hole. This is money easily raised through a simple and fun event.

Jill added that we need raffle items for the tournament. Please feel free to contribute one. Booze baskets, handcrafted pottery and quilts, local experiences, and locally made products do really well.

#### **Community and Government Relations Committee – no report**

This committee is not active and does not currently have any members.

#### **Building & Grounds – Randy Byers and Scott Aker**

Scott noted that the master plan will be delivered by Tuesday, May 28. We will have a few minor elements pertaining to the children's village in the plan. We will also need design for the larger children's village projects. Those will not be in this master plan.

#### **Arboretum Committee – Scott Aker, Derek Baker, and Randy Byers**

Randy noted that the enabling legislation to establish the arboretum as a state historic site did not pass introduction, but the budget line item made it through. State Parks is exploring potential for use of that money even though they do not have enabling legislation yet. They do have authority to spend it, but they are hesitant to spend it until enabling legislation passes. At the last University of Wyoming College of Engineering board, the historic buildings on the arboretum were brought up as possible candidates for 3D scanning by engineering students. That is in the works, and Randy will report as more discussion occurs.

The Alliance for Historic Wyoming tour of the arboretum last weekend went well with 115 people in attendance.

The summer intern at the arboretum has started. Sarah Delgado was an arboretum volunteer last summer. She spoke at one of the TRW interim committee meetings last fall and did a great job.

Mark noted that Council has received several emails from citizens asking that funding for a city arboretum employee be put back in the city budget. Governing Body is hopeful that it will become a state historic site and that an MOU can be crafted to include this city contribution after enabling legislation passes the state legislature.

### **City Council Update – Dr. Mark Rinne**

Dr. Rinne reported that Governing Body is spending time on the budget. The Mayor has introduced a budget of \$71.6M, which is up 8% from last year. This includes more employees in compliance to aid with homeless campsites and two new police officers on targeted missions. Payroll amounts to 73% of the total budget.

The master Plan for 15<sup>th</sup> Street has been sent back out for improvements. An area west of King Soopers has been annexed and will be another auto center. Council also annexed High Plains Road to connect South Greeley Highway to the interstate. That will open up a significant area for development, including a data center. An ordinance has been change to permit three-story houses in town. The city has signed a contract to reevaluate sanitation routes. There will be lots of road construction this summer. And finally, sales tax revenue for March was down slightly by 3%, due in part to a reduction in oil and gas field production.

### **Community Recreation & Events Report –Jason Sanchez, CRE Director – unable to attend, no report**

#### **New Business**

None raised.

#### **Adjourn**

Khale reminded the board of our next meeting on August 13.

Khale asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tracy moved to adjourn. Kerri seconded. No opposition was raised. Khale adjourned the meeting at 6:38.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 13, at 5:30 pm**

#### **2024 Meeting Schedule**

August 13

October 8 (New Member and Officer Slate)

December 10