

WASHINGTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

September 2, 2025 Held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Members present: 82

The meeting was called to order by President Alfi Anderson at 6:28 P.M. A recitation by members of the WCMG mission statement opened the meeting.

Vice President Pam Butler introduced the guest speaker, Randy Butler, whose topic was "Shelters for Wildlife." Randy has spent 40 years in the hardware and lumber business and is also known as Mr.-Fix-It. He has served as a Justice of the Peace, was Mayor of Waldron for 4 years, and is a WCMG and Master Composter. His skill as a woodworker was evident as he presented an array of shelters he built and brought for demonstration of the specific habitats preferred by birds, bees, and bats. The house for Kestrels or Screech Owls was very large and required a special support. The bat structure was able to accommodate 200 small bats. Bluebird houses require a specific entry hole the size of 1 and 3/8 inches in diameter to keep other larger birds out of the house. The bluebird house box can be placed at a height of 5 to 10 feet above ground level. Randy said that all bird box/house openings should face the morning sun. Boxes for native bees and Mason bees were also shown. A lively question and answer session followed the enjoyable presentation.

Business Meeting

The August meeting minutes were approved unanimously. The minutes will be sent to Archivist, Kimberly Hosey, by Carole Ball, Secretary.

The July Treasurer's Report was approved unanimously. The report will be sent to the Archivist by Julie Murray, Treasurer.

The following WCMG items were voted on by the membership:

1. A motion was made by Kitty Sanders to move the annual WCMG budget meeting from September to November. Darielle James seconded the motion. The motion carried and the next annual budget meeting will be held in November 2026.
2. A motion was made by Karen Hanna-Towne to continue holding monthly business meetings on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 P.M. The January meeting will be held on Zoom. The motion was seconded by Donna McDaniel and carried unanimously.
3. A motion was made by Darielle James to increase the WCMG annual dues from \$20 to \$30. Martha Haguewood seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
4. 2026 WCMG budget proposal: Kathryn Birkhead raised the question whether it would be possible to resume having monthly meetings at the Washington County Extension Office. A discussion followed. In general, about 92 WCMG members attend the monthly business meetings. As the organization continued to grow, the concerns were about having enough space to hold meetings for that number of attendees and new trainees and to comply with county/city safety guidelines. It was believed that membership attendance was at capacity for the Washington County Extension Office. For now, the meetings will continue to be held at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church with the exceptions of the March Project Fair, the June picnic, and the December end-of-year potluck which are held at other locations. The rental for the current meeting place is on a month-by-month basis. The possibility of finding another meeting place or a return to the Washington County Extension Office may still be considered with the caveat that

a lot of time and effort went into finding a meeting place that met the needs of the WCMG organization.

Kelly Chaney made a motion to accept the 2026 WCMG Budget Proposal. Rick Oliver seconded the motion and the motion passed.

5. Liz Hale and Karen Hanna-Towne, members of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of nominees as follows:

President	Pam Butler
Vice President	Rick Oliver
Secretary	Carole Ball
Treasurer	Julie Murray
Assistant to the Treasurer	Margo Clark
Assistant Treasurer in Training	Caleb Israel

Jim Sposato made a motion to accept the slate of nominees as presented. Judy Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The incoming officers signed a Washington County Master Gardener Officer Acknowledgement and Agreement form to accept the responsibilities of their positions.

Jan Lefler, Chair of the Awards Committee, presented information on the process of nominating a WCMG for an award. The online WCMG Member Portal has a section under Member Resources and Award Forms with a current list of guidelines and specific criteria (updated in August 2025) required for the nomination process. There is also a list of previous award winners from past years under the Award Descriptions and Prior Winners headings. The deadline for submissions is prior to October 15, 2025. Jan and her committee members submit the nominations to the State of Arkansas in January. Award winners are announced at the February 2026 WCMG business meeting. Liz Hale, Awards Committee Assistant Chair, will have media release forms available, if needed, for photos.

Garden Thyme photo winners were announced. The photo contest theme for October is Cut Flowers/Arrangements from My Garden. The deadline for submissions is September 15, 2025.

Patsy Louk, Chair of the New MG Training and Mentoring Committee, made an appeal for more members to become mentors. She said it is a great way to get to know someone, to be able to introduce new trainees to other group members, answer questions, and to guide them through the processes of choosing projects to work on and reporting hours. The online training class beginning in October has 4 people on the roster. The 2026 in-person training class has 28 applicants. All new trainees will need mentors after they have completed the training coursework. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, an email for a Mentor Training Class, to be scheduled in October or November, will be sent via Constant Contact once a specific date and time has been determined.

Nicholas Sammer, Chair of the Community Outreach Committee, reported on upcoming projects he has in the works to educate and provide examples of what WCMG programs add to the community. Upcoming events are as follows:

1. Participating in native plant sales and setting up an WCMG information table.
2. Working with Elementary School Teachers to provide educational tools on nature and gardening.
3. September 20, 2025 Participate in the Cane Hill Harvest Fest.
4. September 25, 2025 Participate in the Beaver Watershed Project.

As of 2027, Fayetteville Public High Schools will require seniors to have completed 75 hours of community service volunteer hours before they graduate. Nicholas is working with the school system to determine whether high school students would be able to coordinate working with WCMG projects as volunteer opportunities.

In the News

Afli congratulated Marty Powers on his retirement from the Fire Department and announced that he had also stepped down as Chair of the Shiloh Museum Sanctioned Project last month. When asked if he would continue to be a WCMG, Marty said yes. Yay for WCMG!

The Annual Ice Cream Social at Headquarters House in August was a success under the leadership of WCMG Kristi Campbell and WCMG Trainee Rhonda Lovell.

Tayla Tate Boerner was recognized for her written publications in the Farm Bureau Official Arkansas Federation Publication – Front Porch.

Announcements

The Sanctioned Project Garden Passport Booklet is now in the development phase. The Passports should be ready to hand out by the December meeting.

A thank you was given to the BGO Sanctioned Project crew for setting up the meeting room tonight.

Headquarters House Sanctioned Project crew will be setting up the meeting room in October.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Ball, Secretary