**GACAA Board Meeting Minutes**

Rock Eagle 4-H Center, Eatonton, GA

January 11, 2022

**Board Present** – Gary Hawkins (Past President), Justin Shealey (President), Brenda Jackson (President Elect), Brooklyne Wassel (Secretary), Ty Torrance (Treasurer), Savannah Tanner (SE), Campbell Vaughn (NE), Melissa Murphy (NW), Hailey Partain (NW), Kim Post (SW), Scout Carter (SE), Ted McAvoy (SS)

Guests: Ashley Best (Membership Chair), Mike Martin (County Operations)

Absent: Lucy Ray (Vice President), Laurel Dunn (SS), James Morgan (SW), Shanna Reynolds (NE)

**Proceedings:**

Meeting called to order at 7:03 pm by Justin Shealey.

Gary Hawkins gave the invocation.

Approve Meeting Minutes

*Savannah Tanner made the motion to accept the minutes. Campbell Vaughn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Office Updates:**

**Secretary Report by Brooklyne Wassel** – Presented and reviewed the minutes from the November 16 board meeting and November 17 general business session meeting. The Georgia Association of County Agricultural Agents Policy Handbook was distributed in a paper copy to all present at the request of Justin Shealey. I have all access to previous minutes and the Facebook group for GACAA but do not have access to the blog as of right now.

**Treasurer Report by Ty Torrance** – The report was provided to all present in hard copy. A summary page and balance sheet was provided. The 3 CDs and 4-H endowment are all the same from November. The check had not cleared until now for the Tifton Conference Center, so that is the drop in the balance as it was substantial. Everything will not match up perfectly, but please look over the budget. One change under awards- the Poultry Award money will now run under GACAA. Expenses on the second page- poster contest was listed as higher than oral contest. This was changed to both be $500 each for poster contests and oral contests. Gary asked about floral arrangements budget for memorials. Ty responded $50 is the current budget per arrangement as a verbal agreement. Justin recently spent around $48 for a memorial arrangement. Savannah suggested considering a live plant as a memorial instead of an arrangement for a more cost efficient memorial. Memorial arrangements were sent for members or immediate family of members. Gary proposed increasing the memorial floral budget to $500 to account for an increase in costs.

*Brenda Jackson made a motion to accept the treasurer’s report. Savannah Tanner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

*Motion to approve the increase in floral arrangement budget did not pass due to a lack of motion and second.*

**President Report by Justin Shealey** – Reading the comments from GACAA meeting, everyone was pleased with the food and it was an even split about bringing back the tours. You are encouraged to read the policy handbook and find your job description. Please be making announcements and keep your district up to date at updates. Junior directors are required to go to Jekyll in December and Senior directors are required to go to ACCG in April (28-30). This was not well communicated this year and should be more transparent this coming year when nominating new directors.

**President Elect Report by Brenda Jackson** – It is going to be hard to beat the food at the next AM/PIC. There were several comments in the evaluation about the quality of items in the silent auction and the amount of time these auctions took. Can we come up with a standard narrative about these items and the auctions? The items come from the agents, so with newer agents it will be important to pass this along. Ty added that the bar also closed before the end of the auction added to the lack of appeal for the auction. Savannah noted the large time gap did not help either. The 2022 AM/PIC will be held November 14-16, 2022 in Dalton. This will be an easier ride for Southern agents due to being off of an interstate. Monday will be an activities and pre-conference tours with a Monday night social. A farm in Whitfield has agreed to host the social. The Monday night meal will be catered. Conference will start Tuesday at noon. We will adjourn at lunch on Wednesday. Ideas for activities and tours are currently: fishing, golf (asked for input- Ty offered to help), shooting (looking into a potential Shotgun team that would be willing to host as a fundraiser), carpet capital of the world- synthetic turf tour, fescue conversion workshop with Roger Gates, Rawlins Ranch beef cattle and beef tour, natural resources tour with Carters Dam and Carters Lake.

**Past President Report by Gary Hawkins** – Currently looking through the handbook and looking to make some suggestions. Request the directors once a month to write in the blog about what their district is doing, nothing more than a hundred words. Be sure to put AM/PIC on the blog in October.

**District Reports:**

**Northwest District Report by Melissa Murphy and Hailey Partain** – New hires: Rob Trawick started January 1 in Cobb County and Sergio starts February 1st in Cobb. Two retires: Sheldon Hammond and Ellen Bauske. Frank Hancock will retire in February. Clinton McRae, New NW DED, will start March 1.

**Northeast District Report by Campbell Vaughn** – New hires: Pickens County. Caitlin Jackson left for industry.

**Southwest District Report by Kim Post** – Morgan Grizzle in Houston County started and ANR Educator Morgan Cripe in Stewart County started.

**Southeast District Report by Savannah Tanner** – Hires: Mary Claire Halbrook in Glynn and McIntosh Counties

**State Staff Report by Ted McAvoy** – Only a few in October so no new hires to report. Gary Burtle is set to retire.

**GOTCAA Report** – None present at the meeting.

**Updates:**

**Membership Update by Ashley Best** – Membership deadline is February 10, 2022. GACAA is currently sitting with 114 members. There are currently some duplicates on this list. Still working on getting all of the login information so this information can be sent on to NACAA. Also working on a graphic to send out to all of the board that can be sent on to new hires about GACAA to encourage them to join. Specialist, educators, and agents are eligible. Justin requested the list be sent to directors by district so they can use the list to recruit members. Ty explained the membership list updates need to be made according to who has paid membership fees. Campbell asked if a free first year membership was still offered. Ty responded that turnover was so high that the free first year was no longer financially feasible. This is also able to be paid from the county budgets now, so it will not burden the agent personally. Savannah suggested the strain on membership is less financial and more a lack of communication. Mike Martin explained this is still explained in Foundations. Melissa asked for this to be suggested as a topic for mentors. Brooklyne explained that GACAA was not out in front of agents the same way as other organizations at winter conference. Savannah asked about a welcome basket or incentive. Melissa asked about GACAA ribbons at other conferences. Hailey explained her experience with choosing a conference. Justin noted differences in the association 15 years ago; maybe we should have more outreach. Ty explained this should fall on the directors to make personal connections and reach out to new hires. Ashley suggested a cup or something small to give to new agents.

**Website Update by Brenda Jackson** – The copies, minutes, committee chairs, and directors were just updated on the website. Board members were asked to check over the new site and look for correct minutes as well as committees. The website is housed on Center for Urban Ag, so there are some times when things are slow and out of our control. Ty reported that people are not getting a receipt if paying with a card on the website. This is posing a problem for members. Brenda responded that the website is currently set to give a receipt. This issue is set to be resolved on the website’s side.

**New Business**:

**Approve Budget –** Ty received an email about sponsoring the mobile ag classroom through Farm Bureau for $1,000 and up. This appears to be an annual sponsorship. Sponsors are listed: on the website, in the magazine, and on the inside of the trailer. Savannah brought up concerns about the quality of the logo and offered to clean up the logo to keep it as clear as possible digitizing it. Justin asked if GACAA wanted to become a sponsor? This is not a decision that needs to be made tonight. Ty stated we have an AGL line item for $1,000 that has not been used. This might not have to be added to the budget. Brooklyne asked if there would be any wiggle room in the sponsorship such as bringing the trailer to AM/PIC? Campbell asked for clarification on if this was going to Farm Bureau or another entity? Hailey asked to clarify where the trailer was in November. Brooklyne suggested it be at one major GACAA event a year, Winter Conference or AM/PIC. Hailey suggested having the trainings for all agents if still required to have the trailer. Justin will follow up with the trailer and further details.

**ACCG –** Justin Shealey described the event and those expected to represent GACAA, the Executive Board and Senior Directors, during the conference in Savannah, GA from April 28 – 30, 2022. Mike Martin stated there is $2,000 allocated for travel for this event. Setup will occur around 2:00 pm on the 28th. Food is donated to serve at ACCG. Brian has a list. Directors and board members are asked to coordinate collecting that food in their district to bring. Brooklyne brought up previous meeting minutes that raised questions about the event and keep those questions in mind when going this year. The discussion will come back around after ACCG 2022. Gary asked for Brenda to give Stephanie Butcher an idea of how these events are run with the farmhouse trailer. The trailer goes to the district of the president. There was a motion to house the trailer permanently somewhere between where it is typically used, Jekyll and Savannah. The Botanical Gardens was suggested by both mike Martin and Gary Hawkins. Gary noted the main question is insurance. Gary will check with Tim to see if they found a good spot for the trailer. Justin will check with Farm Bureau to see if GACAA can get a policy to cover the trailer. Mike Martin explained this is a PR event and chance to be visible for commissioners and county managers. He will do shirts again. Extension is very visible at this event. Ty explained the disagreement is the bill we pay to be there. Extension is represented by GACAA is footing the bill. The cost of attending is not fully covered, and the ones we are feeding are not always those we are intending on serving. We have not received $7000 from previous ACCG events. Every CEC is no longer an ag agent, so this might be something to consider. Brenda explained the reverse that ag agents who are not CECs might not have the connection with commissioners to be able to recognize them at the event. Mike Martin explained people look forward to the farmhouse. Justin asked for ACCG and farmhouse be tabled until after the 2022 event in April.

Hailey asked for clarifications in the by-laws to include these events. Brooklyne explained where they can be found in the current version of the policy handbook. Justin explained that this was an off-year and needs to be a point of emphasis for this year’s incoming directors when nominating junior directors.

**JCEP –** Due to several personal medical reasons, several executive board members are not able to attend JCEP in Kansas City and serve as voting delegates. Justin Shealey addressed the board and asked if anyone was planning to attend JCEP. Kim Post was planning to attend the conference and agreed to represent GACAA as a voting delegate while at the conference. Gary explained to sign in for GACAA. Kim will be reimbursed her registration fee for JCEP.

**Set 2022 Board Meetings** – Justin Shealey explained the number of board meetings, those who are expected to attend and set dates with board members present. March 16th JCEP at Rock Eagle 4-H Center from 10 am – noon in the Gas building. Members are requested to stay for lunch. Executive board can leave except for President and President Elect which are required to stay for meetings after. Hailey asked for clarification on who is required to attend as described in the policy handbook. Gary asked for all suggested handbook changes be emailed to him. June 15th from 9 am - 10 am via Zoom. August 15th from 9 am – 10 am via Zoom. September 28th from 9 am – 10 am via Zoom. All Zoom sessions will be held in Brooklyne Wassel’s Zoom room. November 15th at AM/PIC from 9 am -11 am.

*Motion to adjourn made by Savannah Tanner and seconded by Kim Post. Motion passed unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

***Respectfully submitted by Brooklyne Wassel, GACAA Secretary***