

**GCBA Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 21, 2022**

**Call the Meeting to Order**

Denzil called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

**Board Members Present**

Denzil St. Clair, Phil Bartosh, Brenda Theurer, Shannon Warder, Laura Brown, Sarah Marie, Joe Petrek,

**Board Members Absent**

Mike Stark

**Guests Present**

Sheila St. Clair, Jan Petrek, Mike Alonso, Sarah Alonso, Tom Kennish (2022 Fair Chairman)

**Quorum Established?** Yes.

**Treasurer's Report**

The 50/50 raffle Sep: \$100, \$50 split to the winner Audrey Gargas, donated back to GCBA

All checks as of Sep 1 have been cashed. Beginning August balance of savings was \$10,061.69, ending \$10,061.87. Beginning balance for Aug checking \$3,063.48, ending \$1,428.22.

Sheila gave folder of all up to date receipts/invoices to Brenda for the Bee Yard Beautification project and new Bee Barn signage. She also gave update on money still owed for the Bee Yard to the prison: to Wayne Shook for delivery of signs and beehives (mileage and time).

**Motion: Joe to accept Treasurer's report**

**Second: Sarah**

**Abstain: Brenda**

**All others in favor, motion passed**

**Motion: Phil to accept July Secretary Minutes**

**Second: Joe**

**Abstain: Shannon**

**All others in favor, motion passed**

**Secretary's Report**

Number of people in attendance at the Sep 14, 2022 Regular Membership Meeting: 63.

Shannon reported she sent appropriate correspondence to Hooks' Nursury, Queen Right Colonies, CCF Board, Connie Skolnicki, GCBA fair booth volunteers, and sign-up list names from fair week.

Denzil opened up discussion on fair week and membership meeting held at fair. Board members thought the extraction demos were a big hit. Crowd really engaged and learned a lot. Connie Skolnicki's presentation on apitherapy was well received as well. Board should look to have a way to sign-up interested fairgoers on a laptop.

**Old Business**

Upcoming Regular membership Meetings:

Oct – Wayne Shook from Belmont Prison and Sheila St. Clair looking into Nina Bagley to present on the history of beekeeping

Nov – TBD, Board nominations

Dec -Holiday Party-Sarah Marie volunteered to be party chair

Jan-Discussion on wax rendering. Sarah will bring cappings to use for the demo. Discuss the rendering process and what the clean beeswax can be used for.

Side discussion: Board also thinks fair entries should be discussed much sooner in the year. Possibly start to have a separate table set up at the monthly meetings with examples and information about what can be entered into the fair. Some board members think this topic is not discussed early enough in the season and membership is just not aware of the opportunities to enter the fair contests.

Feb-Beginner Class

March-TBD

Board discussed Oct 1 "So You Think You Want to Be a Beekeeper?" class. Brenda made registration forms. Phil will purchase lunch supplies for 25 people. Shannon will continue to give updates on RSVPs.

Phil will conduct the final quarterly presentation at the Rocky River nature Center on October 11.

### **New Business**

Shannon raised the issue of GCBA not invoicing newsletter advertisers. Board decided the newsletter editor will coordinate with the Secretary who will then submit request to Treasurer to cut invoice. Currently, Shannon needs to coordinate with Michelle to total up invoice amount for Queen Right Colonies for previous newsletter ads.

Denzil asked if GCBA should advertise for businesses on the FaceBook page. Board, members could not agree, decided to table the discussion.

Shannon received request from Erika Kunath from Griffin Cider house and Gin Bar in Lakewood, Ohio. They are participating in "Bees Knees" week to raise money for habitat establishment in VT. Erika also want to help local beekeepers. Board decided to let Erika know about the Bee Yard Beautification project and see if Griffin House wants to donate to it. GCBA would provide a permanent sign thanking Griffin House in the Bee Yard.

Shannon received request from Steven Neff to do a presentation about bees and pollination at Parma elementary for 4<sup>th</sup> grade STEM. Shannon did the presentation last year and has a PowerPoint. Sarah and Joe volunteered to do this year.

Board discussed the opportunity to return to Rocky River Nature Center for Regular membership meetings in 2023. Val Fetzer contacted Shannon and said they could accommodate GCBA for \$150 per meeting (630-9pm), and the 4 meetings in February for the beginner class would be at no charge. GCBA would resume advertising in the Emerald Necklace. Discussion was heated and tense. Pros and cons were many (attached notes at end of these minutes). Brenda shared registration numbers from past 3 years (64 in 2020, 28 in 2021, 33 in 2022). Some Board members think the decline in registration is due to losing advertisement in the Emerald Necklace.

**Motion: Sarah to table the conversation until the October board meeting**

**Second: Brenda**

**Discussion: Shannon disagreed, saying opinions would not change and the Nature Center needs a decision soon. Denzil did not think opinions would change.**

**Sarah rescinded the motion.**

**Motion: Phil to bring the issue to the membership and have them vote**

**Second: Laura**

**Discussion: Shannon disagreed, stating most of the active members have never been to the nature center so they could not give an informed opinion. Joe stated he had never been to the nature center for a regular meeting either.**

**Phil rescinded the motion**

At 8:11pm Denzil left the meeting. Past President, Phil Bartosh, took over the meeting.

**Motion: Sarah to return to the Rocky River Nature Center for Regular Monthly Membership Meetings, with pre-covid status (use of kitchen, use of audio/visual equipment, ads in Emerald Necklace)**

**Second: Brenda**

**All in favor, motion passed**

**Motion: Shannon to table the rest of the agenda**

**Second: Sarah**

**All in favor, motion passed**

**Motion: Joe to adjourn meeting at 830pm**

**Second: Laura**

**All in favor, motion passed**

Comments for Consideration re: RR Nature Center

**DENZIL:**

Over the past, soon to be 14 years we have not paid the Metro Parks at any time. We did buy them a new 30 cup coffee pot to the best of my memory, and there may have been another gift along the way but we haven't paid any fees etc. that I am aware of. Each year we would sign a contract and on it there was a value of the opportunity, Phil Bartosh signed the last one before Covid shut down....it was thousands of dollars that they waived...Phil chime in.

They always wanted good head counts for documentation.

Though a lovely place , a bear in the winter and not much parking. It is a busy place for park enthusiasts, walkers, bikers, and Nature lovers.

We have come along way .When we had nowhere to go in the early part of Covid the CCF was there for us and has been ever since.

Generosity, parking, a Barn with our name on it. A garden and bee yard for us to enjoy for whatever our need.

A great fair, meetings, picnic, party, field days, classes, an extraction room, great accommodations, plenty of parking and a Fair board director that supports us fully. Our August meeting at the fairgrounds with no expense to us. When the Metroparks tossed us out, the CCF welcomed us in, and there is no guarantee that they wouldn't do it again.

We are fully vested in continuing with the Cuyahoga County Fairground ,its friendship and kindness.

To us this is home now and the Support of CCF it's board and President are greatly appreciated.

1)The metro-parks offer's inadequate to very inadequate parking many times through-out the year to our membership. I have, had to park on the roadside with others, hoping not to be towed during a regular meeting.

2)There has been at least one occasion of theft in the parking lot.

3)Not, at (all) accommodating to the elderly and handicapped. The distance form parking to building is not at (all) accommodating especially in the winter or rain, which is 50% of the time.

4)We have no control over when we meet, or building accessibility, start times, stop times.

5)There is no guarantee we will not be thrown out on our ear again, with monkey pox or covid yet again, next year!

6)Cost, it is not that we cannot pay it, but that it is unnecessary, nor is there a guarantee that future cost will not be out of reach, or exceed our ability to pay.

7)A built in expenditure of this nature could/would seriously hamper further GCBA projects.

8)On more than one occasion we have been bumped out of the auditorium for another venue, deemed more important than GCBA.

9)Where is (our) sense of loyalty, what has CCF not done for us, we offered them money and they refused. Free building, free Field Day for years, free access to the bee yard, free table at fair, free entree to fair during fair for a regular meeting, whose name is now on the building? Where do we sign names up for membership for free? Where do we have a pre-fair picnic for free? If (I) were Dennis, and got wind of our ingratitude and unthank fullness you would start paying immediately for all the above.

10) World Bee Day, (at present) is planned to take place at CCF 2023 and GCBA will have a prominent place in that unless we are too stupid to screw it up.

11) I donated a colony of bees to the metro-parks for demonstration purposes for this organization, at this location, and on one occasion was threatened with arrest if (we) opened the colony. This is how little control we have over the meeting place; this is what ingratitude looks like. This same colony was put on display for all metro-parks visitors to see and use as a demo by their employees.

So, what are we trading all of the above for, a beautiful building, yes, it is nice, and your tax dollars paid for it and maintains it. The metro-parks has an operating budget of more than 200 million per year in taxes and grants and in turn charges everyone for everything, per internet.

### **PHIL**

The last contract they waived the fee's saving us \$12,000 which included our classes, the place is nice but 150 a month is a bit much for the club to absorb, plus we will need a place for our board meetings.

The walk to the nature center is rough on our older members, or anyone with mobility issues, winter makes it even rougher,

The Fair board has been a blessing for our club, I agree on its our new home.

Should we bring it up to the membership at the September meeting? or have the board vote on it and present to the membership next month. Financially we really can't afford the Nature Center and continue with the growth of the club. I believe if we present the financials to the membership they will agree

We really need to discuss and go over the pro's and con's

### **MIKE**

Would they really only charge for the 2 hours, we always say doors open at 630 and we arrive to set up even earlier. So, we are there almost 3 hours. Either way \$150 each month is way too much. If we're paying for 11 months, with them giving us Feb for free, then it would take 83 \$20 memberships to pay for the venue, that's a lot of dues we could put towards other things. I think we stay at the fairgrounds.

I agree this should be discussed further

## **BRENDA**

I think it would be a big mistake to leave the Nature Center.

Yes, there is a cost involved, but the mention of our Meetings and Classes in the Emerald Necklace is being sent to thousands of homes in the Greater Cleveland area/Cuyahoga County and Hinckley.

\$1500.00 for the year (no August and February Meeting is part of the Class Schedule) does not seem unreasonable especially for Christmas where the hall is already set up and we don't have to worry about dodging Christmas Light traffic and Guy wires.

The Nature Center is a wonderful venue that already has a projector, microphones, good acoustics and screen at our disposal. Hall is already set up for us and the only time it is Closed is when the entire MetroParks closes for inclement weather (and this has only happened once - maybe twice- to my recollection).

Also, except for 2018-19, we normally had our Board Meetings at the Fairgrounds at no charge.

## **SHANNON**

As far as I remember, GCBA has been holding board meetings at the fairgrounds and that has never been contingent on where the membership meetings were held.

In my experience I did not have parking issues at RR. By the time our meetings start, especially in the fall-spring when it gets dark early, GCBA members were pretty much the only people at the nature center. The path from the parking lot(s) was always plowed. Parking at the fairgrounds is fine, but not perfect either: lots of potholes and fire lanes, not to mention the difficulty during our holiday party.

I don't think handicap/impaired members are really an issue since beekeeping is such a physical hobby our members tend to be very able people. But, the nature center is zero-level entry...there are no stairs entering the building or to the auditorium (there is a ramp).

One issue we do have at the fairgrounds is the acoustics and lighting. I see members straining to hear and the rows of fluorescent lighting are hard to get just right for viewing the projection. I agree with Brenda-the audio and visual equipment setup at the nature center is excellent.

The nature center has a kitchen with sink and fridge that we were always welcomed to use...along with a large Bunn coffee maker. It's an easy setup for snacks.

Being able to advertise in the Emerald Necklace again would be a game changer for our new beekeeper enrollment. We used to average 100 new members each February...that's \$5000, VS the approximate 40 members the past 3 years.

As far as GCBA's relationship with the fair...I think 2 things can be true at once: we are thankful for the fair board allowing us to hold membership meetings there, but the nature center is a better

fit for our membership. I don't see how GCBA holding meetings at the fair is beneficial to the fairgrounds and how it would hurt the fair for GCBA to move back to RR. The improvements to the Bee Barn signage and Bee Yard were long overdue, and I don't think were tied in anyway to GCBA holding membership meetings at the fair. GCBA has always had a booth at the fairgrounds during fair week (for at least 10 years prior to covid) and this was never conditional on GCBA holding membership meetings at the fairgrounds.

As far as GCBA's relationship with RR...I feel they have really tried to maintain a relationship with us while their hands were tied by covid restrictions. They closed down like the rest of the globe and therefore had no choice but to suspend our use of the auditorium. They extended an olive branch by having us do the quarterly presentations for free with advertisement in Emerald Necklace. The \$75/hr fee and no charge for our beginner classes VS the \$800/night that other groups would pay is an indicator of how much the nature center wants to work with us. I agree with Brenda, I don't remember our meetings ever being cancelled unless it was for extreme snow. As far as I remember, RR has always honored their contact with us and use of the auditorium has always been reliable, no surprises, and with consistent setup and configuration of the chairs with no rearranging required.

As far as I can tell from some quick google searching, no other beekeeping associations hold their regular membership meetings at their respective fairgrounds. There is no precedent or requirement to do so.

Cost would be \$1350 for the year (only would meet at RR 9 months, July picnic has been held at fairgrounds, August meeting during fair week at fairgrounds, and RR not charging for the 4 classes in February). With the very real possibility of getting our numbers back up to 100 through the advertising in the Emerald Necklace we would collect \$5000 for the beginning beekeeper classes.

### **SARAH**

I think the Nature Center is something we should further investigate and marinate our response on. I don't think jumping and refusing immediately is the best answer. I am incredibly happy with the fairgrounds myself, but the nature center does offer quite a bit of perks. If we manage the relationship properly, we could have an open opportunity for the future! I make a motion to hold off on our reply to them until after the board meeting. I would like to further discuss what our options/possibilities/future could be and the relationship between GCBA & RR Nature Center.

### **JOE**

It would be \$1,800. for the year, plus we will still have our board meeting at the Fair grounds so I say no to RR Nature Center and yes to CCF. I was never at RR for a meeting so all I know is the CCF for meetings.

