

Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Inc.
General Membership Meeting
January 6, 2026

President Margo Carroll called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. at the Country Store

Opening Remarks: Margo advised this meeting includes discussion of the budget and there would be no guest speaker. Leadership introductions were made.

Officers' Reports

Secretary's Report: Sharon McKinney reported. Minutes of the previous general meeting were distributed via email and are posted on the website (www.ccmga.org). Connie Farley moved to accept the December 2025 minutes as submitted by email. Deni Martin seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Lisa Briggs reported. Through October 31, 2025, beginning balance was 33,657.28. Total income was \$785. Total expenses were \$482.61. The ending bank balance was \$33,959.67. Vicki moved to receive the treasurer's report. Carla seconded. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote. Lisa reminded everyone dues of \$15 are due by 5/1/26. The fee remains the same this year, but an increase may be considered in the future.

President-Elect Report: Kristi DuBois introduced herself.

Vice President's Report: Carla Lund introduced herself.

Directors' Reports: Tracy Schrimsher introduced himself, saying his role is to help with lots of things. Vicki May says she welcomes emails and/or calls for anything.

Committee Reports

Birdseed Wreaths and Bird Buddy Bark: Vicki May reported. Wreaths were started in 2020 with a joint project agreement with UT Gardens, Crossville aka Plateau Discovery Garden ('PDG'), whereby half the profit would be available for MG projects at the PDG. Wreaths cost about \$2 in materials to make, and sell for \$15. Jennifer (UTG) takes the orders, buys the supplies, makes the butter for the logs, etc. and MGs provide the labor to make these products.

PDG Planning Committee: Carla Lund reported with a PowerPoint presentation.

- Three immediate priorities: water (irrigation), signage, and accessibility. There are many other items/issues to be worked on, but it was decided to concentrate on these for now.
 - Watering is taken care of: Carla purchased two 50' lightweight hoses with quick-connects. They can be used separately (many water spigots identified) or hooked up together (to reach areas such as the Flagpole that have a longer distance to a spigot). Spigots will be marked in some way, and hose reels are likely going to be placed so they won't have to be brought to the shed and so as not to have the hoses lying on the ground when not in use (Bear Lesko is looking into that). Drip irrigation is not a current issue now; it was determined the old underground system is not operational,

and pond water is used for the back areas of the PDG to water areas such as trial plots.

- Road signage is being investigated by several members of the PDG Advisory Committee at the state, county, town, and PDG (UT) level.
 - Signs in both directions on I40 are needed. TDOOT would charge \$1100 initially and \$300 annually for both. All would need to have UT branding and a company is already working up a sign design for us
 - Sign is needed on Rt. 70N off I40 to point visitors in the right direction; this would be a Cumberland County or City of Crossville request
 - Signs are needed on either end of the PDG property to advise of entrance ahead
- Accessibility is being investigated. It looks like we may be able to pave only a part of the desired pathway at a time; it is quite expensive. It's possible that a grant could be obtained to assist with this; it's being investigated.
 - ADA compliance is for pathways to be at least 36" wide; we would like it to be 48".
 - Smart Yard advice/compliance is being sought- Sharon has not heard back after attempting to contact them. The concern is to find a paving material that is ADA and Smart Yard compliant.

Publicity: Kristi Dubois reported. TNVacation.com will have our FLAG festival advertised on their website. Suggestions and assistance are needed for the Crossville Chronicle insert. Theme this year is 'Unsung Heroes'. Articles are needed regarding MGs involved in various projects, please submit by 3/1/26. Interview notes and photographs can be given if members prefer not to do the actual write-up - Kristi is looking for assistance with this.

Teas in the Gardens: Susan Partch reported. For 2026, we have two teas scheduled: 6/13/26 will have a 'Strawberries and Butterflies' theme, and one later in the year will have a 'Maple' theme. Tickets will be available for purchase online 3/15/26

New Business:

Budget Discussion Notes:

- The column heading of 'Gross' will be changed to 'Net'
- '2025 Flower Garden Festival' (FLAG) planned net sales is decreased due to public general economic worries, as well as some of the expenses are not annual (such as cash boxes)
- 'CCMG Promotional Materials' may need to be increased due to the need to join the Chamber of Commerce and therefore new updated pamphlets are required.
- The 'Decorations' line represents money spent on PDG events
- 'Board Contingency' was explained to be the board members can spend money in urgent instances without approval from the board
- 'Hospitality' was denied an increase in budget- receipts turned in (2025) do not justify it
- 'Eventeny' was explained so that members could understand the importance of this platform for planning, managing, organizing, and ticketing events. We used it in 2025 for some events and are looking forward to learning how we can more effectively use it- Margo is planning on having an informational meeting regarding Eventeny in the future

- Deni suggested an increase to the ‘Classes in the Garden’ budget be increased to \$800 (from \$500) as she is lining up high quality speakers and brochures. Elaine Peters motioned to approve this increase; Vicki seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote
- Julia Wood asked if the ‘Intern PDG - UT budget should be increased; Margo said no
- Alan Baker explained that we must keep in mind that we are a non-profit organization and must gear our spending toward our goal of education.

A motion was made by Carla to accept the budget as presented except for the heading correction and increase to ‘Classes in the Garden’ amount and seconded by Susan Stoneberg. Motion passed unanimously on voice vote.

Gregg Upchurch reported.

- Vanessa from the office is no longer working here and a replacement may not start until about March. We may get requests to help in the office until a replacement starts
- 2025 volunteer and CEU must be entered by all members ASAP (temg.tennessee.edu). There is a new user-friendly database to enter them
- As of this meeting date, 16 MG interns registered and paid for the 2026 session. There is a 1/27 deadline to apply
 - Current MGs are welcome to attend the sessions as assistants 9a-12p every Thursday 1/27 until 4/21, with a capstone celebration 4/28/26
 - Julie and Bear Lesko will attend each session as hosts, assisting the interns with acquisition and management of information
 - The curriculum is mostly the same as 2025 (very minor changes)
- Laura Riestler was recognized for all the work she has done with the daylily plot. There is a new weed specialist for UT who may be able to assist us with its upkeep. This area is considered unsustainable at this time, and ideas are being introduced as to what the future of this area will look like (it needs to relate to education)

Deni says we need to have a protégé for Fred regarding the tomato classes as in succession planning so we can continue onward in the future. Promotional materials need to be developed.

Vicky bought a supply of red poppy seeds from Everwilde Farms for us to grow and to perhaps have a display in places as a further commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Please let her know if you are interested in planting red poppies this year.

Announcements: Kevin Howard built a bench and swing and donated it to the PDG.

Members were encouraged to help themselves to seeds at the front counter.

President Carroll adjourned the meeting at 2:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon McKinney, Corporate Secretary