

Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener's Association
Executive Board of Directors Special Meeting
VCE Office, Winchester
April 29, 2013

Attendees: President Cy Haley, Vice President Helen Lake, Secretary Suzanne Boag, Past President Bob Carlton, Volunteer Coordinator Susan Garrett, and VCE Agent Mark Sutphin.

President Cy Haley convened a Special Executive Board Meeting to discuss the roles of VCE, VC, and the NSVMGA Board in light of recent VCE and VC emails and issues involving VMS, NSVMGA Membership, and VCE direction to our Association's membership. The meeting was brought to order at 5:30 p.m. She explained that the Board had met last Wednesday to discuss these issues and unanimously had agreed that a meeting with VC Susan Garrett and VCE Agent Mark Sutphin was necessary to clear up these issues and move forward. Cy listed the following items for discussion:

- **Emails:** Mark's response to a non-VCE email sent out by Cy included what sounded like direction to not send out non-VCE or NSVMGA emails with reference to the decision having been made by Susan and Mark not to do so.
- **Contacts and Parity:** The Board was concerned about the link between parity and contacts, and what direction VCE's focus on those issues would take NSVMGA.
- **MG title:** Mark's email to NSVMGA Editor directing him to print in the NSVMGA Newsletter an opinion piece on how NSVMGA MGs should refer to themselves. The Board felt this should have been run by the Board rather than being sent directly to the editor.
- **VMS:** The Volunteer Management System has the feel of an employer's time clock and we are not employees, we are volunteers. Even the title suggests "management" system rather than "reporting" system. The Board is worried that we'll lose veteran MGs due to the bureaucratic direction being set by VMS.
- **VMS:** NSVMGA password posted on VMS without Board consent.

Mark responded to the issues raised as follows:

- He explained that a phone call would have been a better idea than an email, and that he was not intending to give direction as to what could or could not be sent out to the membership in an email.
- The group discussed contacts and parity, and the effect those issues have on NSVMGA. Mark explained that VCE uses contacts to not only justify funding, but to demonstrate that we are not discriminating. He recommended that MGs continue to use observation to record contact categories. Parity is an issue for MG recruitment as well, and the group discussed issues with a volunteer organization and language barriers.
- Mark said that while he should have run the MG title article by the Board rather than sending it directly to the NSVMGA Editor, he was only repeating VCE guidelines.
- Mark explained that VMS was not meant to replace our NSVMGA website, and that MGs were being asked to report hours and contacts on VMS so that VCE can easily track the information for organizational purposes.
- The group discussed the NSVMGA password and its purpose. NSVMGA historically has waited to provide the password to Trainees until they have completed the class and concluded this should be added to the Guidelines. The group also agreed that there is no purpose at this late date in removing access to the website by Trainees. The other looming issue is that anyone with access to VMS, by virtue of that access has full access

to all member information. The group discussed withholding VMS access to Trainees in future classes. Mark stated that VMS cannot restrict access once granted.

Susan added that she was new to her VC position and had used her judgment on these issues; Cy asked that she run decisions by the Board. She said that she had received a very positive response about VMS from the Trainees as well as some MGs. She did say the Trainees were not happy with the influx of emails, and the group discussed various ways to deal with this to include posting announcements on a NSVMGA website bulletin board and limiting Trainee access to NSVMGA emails.

Helen, having been a Class Coordinator explained that her class was kept focused on learning the class material, and that when she was Class Coordinator she had intended that Trainees receive the password to the website as a graduation present rather than during the classroom portion of training.

The group agreed that communication between all is imperative, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Boag
Secretary, NSVMGA