Northern Shenandoah Valley Master Gardener Association
Warren County Government Center
November 16, 2025, 2:00 PM

Call to order and opening remarks

President Rochelle Dornatt called the meeting to order at 2:25 PM. She acknowledged the hard work and patience of members during the year. She believes we will emerge stronger because of what we've been through.

Announcements

After raffle prizes were given out, Rochelle delivered news on the 2026 class, Symposium, the new agent hiring progress, major projects planned, and appreciation for outgoing officers.

The Class of 2026 will not start in Jan.-Feb. Whether it will be held later in the year is up to VCE to decide. First interviews for the new agent have been held; second round will be in December, and the new agent will begin work between January and March 2026. Rochelle was taken out of Symposium planning, so Joanne will look for a third co-lead. GardenFest and Seed Exchange planning are well underway. Rochelle thanked outgoing Vice president Julie Edmonds and fill-in secretary Will Daniels. Julie then praised Rochelle for her leadership and tireless work for the Association.

Approval of October Business Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve was made by Julie, seconded by Debbie Ellison. The minutes were approved unanimously, with no abstentions.

Approval of Treasurer's minutes

Jerry Jellets noted the drop in our checking account this year to $18,000 for $24,000 at the beginning. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jennifer Adams and seconded by Karen Kelly. The budget was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.

Volunteer Coordinator

Before Elaine's report, Rochelle expressed her deepest appreciation for Elaine's work for the Association in multiple roles. When she presented Elaine with a gift, all the members gave Elaine a standing ovation. To say Elaine will be missed is an understatement. However, the good news is that Elaine will still be working alongside us.

Re-enrollment is entering its final stages. See Elaine if any questions. Especially important to get this done by deadline, since there's no grace period. Elaine thanked Ann Levi for her help.

Rochelle wanted to ask anyone re-enrolling to remain a Master Gardener to also renew membership in the Association. We are the structure that enables any programs to run in the five counties. VCE provides no money for these worthwhile projects to exist. In 2025, we've

successfully negotiated with VCE on having Symposium once again, and on our contribution to VCE expenses. This contribution is *not* supporting VCE salaries, only what we consume in copier use, paper, etc. We also worked out an agreement with VCE to allow our use of 10% of proceeds from fund-raising events to use on high school scholarships.

Remarks on 2025 spending and approval of 2026 budget

Jerry brought to members' attention the trend in our available operating fund, which is downward. We've had lower balances three years in a row, and he feels that obviously such a trend will threaten projects being able to continue sooner or later. We have a reserve fund, too (43,000), but we need to be careful with it. Misa Mulroney disagreed on this conservative view of spending, asking what our money is for if not to spend on projects that we know benefit the public and our own members. She said that if money for a project runs low, we can raise more or even not have the project any longer, but at least the money had been used for a good purpose, instead of sitting in our account.

Jerry wanted to discourage what he's seen as a view of the Association "flush with money." We're not. Rochelle summarized by saying we're not flush with cash, but we are in good financial shape. Jerry had something to say about the Treasurer's position: it should begin on Jan. 1, the new fiscal year, instead of the previous fall, so that a new treasurer doesn't have to clean up the previous treasurer's books.

Nancy Reed moved to approve the budget, with Barbara Bosserman seconding. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

New business

There was no old business. Rich Sankovich brought up a need to establish an audit committee, something we specified in our MOU. The MOU is not approved, but we can be ready with a committee when it is. Dave Gufstason and Brian Guilfoy volunteered to work with Rich.

Badges for new EMGs, hours awards, length of service awards

Joanne presided over the giving of badges and awards. Janet Guftafson, Dave Guftafson, and Myrna Foster-Kuehn received their badges from Joanne. Nearly 30 members received certificates and pins for hours milestones. Twelve achieved 200 hours, 11 reached 500 hours. Mary Jane Korrigan, Rochelle Dornatt, and Lucy Carlson joined the 1,000 club; Belinda Palmer, Jerry Jellets, and Karen Kelly racked up 2,000; and Elaine Specht topped the chart with 4,000 hours.

A 30-year Association pin was awarded to everyone who wanted one. Many more pins were handed out to individuals who had been members of the Association for 5, 10, 15, and 20 years.

EMG stats

Elaine presented stats on EMGs and the projects they've been associated with.
--145 active EMGs --13 Emeritus EMGs --5 Advanced EMGs
--3 have passed away in last year (Jerry Jones, Frank Baxter, and Steve Resan)

--of 25 2025 trainees, 11 are now full EMGs
--we have by estimate 40 projects ---4 signature events ---Seed Lending Libraries in all five counties
--we had tables at 15 events where we introduced ourselves to new people
---we are present at 2 farmers markets ---–Ask a Master Gardener, in person or virtual in all counties
--Page County weekly clinics at Massanutten Country Corners -–youth programs and children's gardens
--Nature surprises at Bowman and Clarke Co. libraries ---–NW Works outreach
---Edinburg Bio-filtration Garden "graduated," turned over to the town to maintain
---demonstration gardens at Chet Hobert, Belle Grove, Russ Watkins, New Market Rain Garden

Elaine had beautiful handmade gifts on a table that she offered to the volunteers.

Election of 2026 officers

There were two candidates for vice president for whom a separate vote was needed. The other officer candidates were Rochelle Dornatt for president, Jerry Jellets for treasurer, and Mary Jane Korrigan for secretary. There were no nominations from the floor.

The members present and on Zoom chose between Teresa Vaught and Chris Jorgensen for vice president. Chris had 41 votes, Teresa 20, one abstention.

The entire slate was then voted on by show of hands. The vote for the slate of candidates was unanimous with no abstentions.

More celebrating the volunteers

Joanne recognized all of the volunteers and asked for applause for them. Then she called up the County Coordinators and presented each with a gift. She mentioned challenges faced this year and hoped that we would see new understanding and kindness in the future.

Rochelle presented Will and Julie with a gift for their service on the Board. Delynda presented Julie with a plaque for a bench that the Association had given her. The bench will be placed in the Luray Community Garden on Dec. 3. All are invited for the occasion.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Will Daniels

Reports for month of November 2025. See also PDFs attached to email.

Board and Membership Meeting Reports from Elaine Specht
November 2025
Volunteer Coordinator

Could there be time on the November Business meeting agenda for the Volunteer Coordinator for EMG volunteer appreciation?
Annual reenrollment for 2026 is underway.

- All steps are due by December 31, 2025. If you are not reenrolled at that time, your EMG status will be changed to Inactive and you will not be able to record hours or sign up for projects. (Allowances will be made for special circumstances.)
- Members who are not renewing should let their County Coordinator know so no one's time is wasted following up with reminders.
- Elaine will be available in the VCE Classroom at the Shenandoah Government Building, 600 N. Main St, Woodstock, on December 5, 9-12. If you need assistance with the renewal steps or watching the training video(s), please stop by during those times. We can have you fully renewed before you leave.

Thank you to all the EMGs who have been so kind and appreciative during my time as Volunteer Coordinator (and before that when I was on the Board!). It has been a privilege to serve you. (from Elaine Specht)
Website
Reminder: Jay Tamangan will be taking on the Webmaster role, transitioning by the end of 2025.
Better Impact/Google Drive
County Coordinators and Project Leads: If you wish to have admin access to Better Impact to make project shift updates and additions, contact Elaine Specht. She will provide a link to a video that you need to watch that shows how to make those updates. After watching the video, she can provide you with the URL to access the admin side of Better Impact. The video also provides some info about using the Shared Google drive, if you would like to watch that as well.

Shenandoah County Coordinator Report

Board Meeting

Cindy Stauff

November 2025

Re-enrollment is still in progress for several EMGs. For many, it is just a matter of finding that right time to sit down and watch a webinar, or finish logging hours.

Project leads are working on .

Carol Rhodes is looking for a co-lead for the Seven Bends State Park Children's Garden. If interested, please call or email me or Carol. Even if you don't want to be a co-lead and just want to help out, give us a call.

Thanks to everyone for all the wonderful work you have done this year. I hope you enjoy the holidays, and I look forward to getting back together for seed exchange!

Frederick County Report Business Association Meeting
Carole Belkin, Frederick County Coordinator
November 12, 2025

Volunteer Opportunities for Re-enrollment Hours

If you still need additional hours to complete your reenrollment, there are several projects in Frederick County that remain open for volunteers. These opportunities provide a chance to fulfill your required hours while contributing to meaningful community initiatives.

Bowman Library Nature's Surprise:

In December, participants will have the opportunity to conclude the year with various engaging activities centered around dry flowers, winter gardens, and hands-on potpourri making for holiday gifts. These workshops are part of the Bowman Nature Surprises series, which is offered through the library and open to all children, including those from diverse backgrounds. The program continues to foster an inclusive environment where creativity and learning go together with seasonal themes.

Looking ahead, the 2026 calendar for Bowman Nature Surprises is already set. It features a variety of fun, engaging topics and activities designed to inspire and educate participants throughout the coming year. Sign up on Better Impact or contact EMG leads Laura Best and Tricia Boyd.

Frederick County AAMG:

A few hours spent at the Frederick Ask a Master Gardener desk is quite an educational experience. Opportunities are available to volunteer every Wednesday until December 24th. At this venue, Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) volunteers provide research-based solutions for area residents on a variety of topics and questions for the home gardener including gardening basics, challenges, diagnostics, plant/tree/insect identification, cultivation, maintenance and

control, best practices, fertilization, lawns, habitats, native and invasive plants, beneficial and invasive insects, navigating the Pest Management Guide, and online reference searches, etc. Contact Sharon McLellan or sign up on BI.

End-of-Year Horticultural Education Summary

The Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) successfully concluded a productive year by providing horticultural education across several key projects within Frederick County. As the year draws to a close, it is important to note that all these projects are scheduled to resume in 2026, ensuring the continuation of valuable educational opportunities and community involvement in the coming year.

Belle Grove: Lead: Linda B; Co-Lead Julia B

Bright Futures: Lead Donny C.

Fremont Street Nursery and Preschool: Lead Carole B; Co-Leads – Pam L and Pam B

4-H Junior Master Garden Homeschool Program: Lead Carole B. & 4H Agent Tammy E.

Northwest Works: Lead Susan Groom; Co Lead

Russell Watkins Pollinator Garden: Lead Linda Cunningham

Winchester Farmers Market: Lead: To be announced

2025 Information Booths& Community Events: Frederick County has been active in the following areas.

Celebracion

Community Kindness Family Fair

Growing a Reader

Tree Fest

Winchester Pride

Garden Fest: A message from Carolyn Sinclair

Warren County Report

Board / Association Business Meeting

Susan Matyuf

November 2025

Reports of programs:

1) **Samuels Nature Explorers:** (leads Dianne Lacy & Emma Bricker)

The last class of the 2025 season, *Let's Make a Scarecrow!* was the most well-attended yet. There were 28 participants, in addition to parents and EMG volunteers. Many thanks to Dianne Lacy's leadership and preparation. We look forward to another year of providing educational programs for the children of Warren County.

2) **Samuels Library Indoor Plant Demonstration and Education:** (Joey Waters, lead) This month, EMG Joey and EMG Liz had a class on indoor plant care with a group of 15 homeschool children. It was well attended and enjoyed by all. We are excited to have Lisa Heim join Joey as co-lead on this important project.

3) **Warren Heritage Demo Garden: (**Katherine Rindt, lead) EMGs wrapped up the year, closing up the gardens at the Warren Heritage Demonstration Garden. We are looking forward to another year at the Demo Gardens with continued educational programming for the community. We welcome Karen Leonard as co-lead of this project.

4) **Ask a Master Gardener Information Project:** (leads: Susan Matyuf & Christine Dagorn). EMGs Susan and Christine are working to answer email or phone inquiries to the helpline. They are also meeting to develop new protocols for the 2026 year.

As County Coordinator, EMG Susan participated in 2 VCE leadership training opportunities including the VCE Leadership Meeting on October 13, 2025, and NSV EMG training on October 30, 2025. Susan presented and demonstrated how to fill out the new project forms.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Matyuf, Warren County Coordinator

NSVMGA November 2025 Board Meeting

Report – JF Adams

VMGA – Sarah Kohrs attended the October 11 meeting in my place; here is her (wonderful) report:

The VMGA meeting just ended and I wanted to provide a quick overview for you. I'm forwarding the email Stacey sent me with the meeting agenda, so you have that too. I assume you will receive minutes following this meeting, so my goal isn't to recap that, but tidbits that stood out to me that could be useful for you and NSVMGA to know.

CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME

- The Host Unit (Suffolk) shared a statement that really stood out: they are "continuously adapting to the needs of our community" and mentioned several initiatives they were doing, including community gardens, in which produce grown goes to local food banks for redistribution to community in need, as well as garden therapy projects that amount to mobile raised beds EMGs take to nursing homes and every first grade classroom in their area - this enables them to bring the garden to community members that might not have a way to get EMG maintained community gardens otherwise

VCE REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

- all educational trainings have been put onto Youtube and are listed according to topic for ease of finding online resources
- there will no longer be canvas support for training classes; the rep pushed something called Destiny 1 for training setup (there wasn't a lot on this, so hopefully this is something you've heard before)
- EMG college will be in Richmond, June 26-28, 2026 with a zoom option. Trainings will be separate from the college. Meals will be included in cost for attending in person, which means the price to attend will be higher too. Sponsorship brochures are being circulated if our association wants to be a sponsor.

UNIT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Various units around the state offered highlights on what they are doing (beyond typical programs that most everyone does). The following stood out to me - they were offered by different units (it was hard to hear where some of them were from - so I'm just listing these as ideas NSVMGA might consider trying):

- invite FFAs to fundraise at an event or plant sale (esp. if local chapters are trying to raise funds to go to state competitions)
- donate veggies to food pantries (mentioned earlier too)
- hold a fall fest at a demonstration garden and offer plant sales, giveaways, help desk, tool sharpening, etc. (thought: Shenandoah County has an annual Autumnfest; however, it includes ticketing requirements and alcohol - but maybe there is another countywide or area wide fall festival EMGs could set up at? or perhaps a fall event at Seven Bends State Park?)
- hold a workshop for removing invasives / partner with local city or county governments to invite maintenance crews to learn best practices
- include growing information with seeds when handing them out
- someone had a workshop/lecture on drone use in horticulture - this sounded interesting
- another unit offers community grants that are distributed to cover community projects (they have an application that even young children can apply to for their impactful gardening projects that benefit the community)

PRESIDENT'S DISCUSSION QUESTION: *How does your unit set up info tables?*

Much of this were things we already do: current brochures, give-away plants or seeds, newsletters, banner, info or business cards, first aid kit, training class info and sign-up, soil testing kits, QR codes that link to digital downloads; others were new to me ideas:

- spinning wheel to ask questions based on topics (have info read and then ask questions; giving a free item if visitors answer them correctly)
- trowels (which seems expensive - but perhaps a gardening bag give-away)

- completed rainbarrel drawing and/or space to attend a rainbarrel workshop
- bucket of doom (a mosquito repellant) was mentioned; the VCE rep reminded EMGs that they cannot give away pesticides or sell them; EMGs can offer info on proper use of them, though

CLOSING REMARKS

- the next two meetings are via zoom - Dec 13 and Feb 14. VMGA is looking for virtual hosts, which means you get 10 minutes to talk about what your association is doing. If NSVMGA is interested in this - email the vice president, Jeanne Lamczyk
- adjournment 11:20 a.m. followed by a presentation on Living Shoreline Collaborative project given by The James River Association Lower James Restoration coordinator, Ryan Walsh. It sounded like a great initiative and made me wonder if something similar might not be possible in our area - helping with erosion control based on storm damage from compromised streambeds due to vegetation loss and the impact of livestock

I hope this is helpful! It was interesting to learn about what other associations are doing. Happy to answer any questions if you have them.

Cultivating Community Committee:

Watch for a new movie night coming soon! We are partnering with Educational Adventures to hopefully screen the movie *The Gardener.*

Facebook:

This is the 3rd quarter report of reach for Facebook:

Total number of posts: 62
Total reach: 27,036

Contributors:

Jenn – 14, 661 (23 posts)
Elaine - 4864 (14 posts)
Joan - 1637 (4 posts)
Rich - 450 (1 post)
Laura - 294 (1 post)
Delynda - 475 (1 post)
Katherine - 535 (1 post)
Linda- 937 (2 posts)
TC - 430 (1 post)
VCE – 2753 (12 posts)

Some popular posts included a post about leaves and floods by Doug Tallamy (reach - 1847), a kudzu post (2418), a post on Mountain Mint (2332), and a three part series I wrote about why planting native is important (359, 1915, 1691).

MANY thanks to everyone who contributes for FB! I am always grateful for material from our unit. I encourage project leads and EVERYONE to consider writing for FB – it doesn't have to be long, and I can guide you. Please reach out to me! As you can see, we reach a lot of people online!