

**EVCG Board Meeting Notes – December 13, 2023**

**Time:** 5:15 to 6:15

**Place:** The Pines Meeting Room and ZOOM

**Attendees:** Ren Gobris, Leslie Alexander, Deb Bruce, Jim Bruce, Jessica Beychok-Boyer

**ZOOM:** Clara Logue

**Absent:** None

**Special Guests:** None

**Meeting Purpose:** This meeting was the regularly scheduled December 2023 board meeting. In preparation for the meeting, Ren sent out an agenda as well as the following documents for board approval.

- Draft 2023 Annual Report
- EVCG Financial Reporting Summary
- September Statement of Activities
- September Statement of Cashflows
- October Statement of Activities
- October Statement of Cashflows
- November Statement of Activities
- November Statement of Cashflows
- Preliminary Approval of December Statement of Activities (for annual reporting purposes only)
- Preliminary Approval December Statement of Cashflows (for annual reporting purposes only)

**Annual Report** – The 2023 Annual Report was unanimously approved as submitted by Ren. It was subsequently sent for distribution to donors, gardeners, Town Trustees

**EVCG Financial Reporting Review and Summary**

The Purpose of this review was to compare current EVCG financial reporting methods and practices with those recommended for Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs). The review was performed by Doyle Baker. The issues that led to the review, and the EVCG financial reporting changes made post-review, were developed by Ren Gobris. A total of 10 changes were made to the manner that EVCG will create their reports going forward.

Perhaps the most obvious changes is to conform to standard NPO terminology. What was previously referred to as our Treasurer Report is now being called a “Statement of Cashflows.” And what was previously referred to as our Budget report, is now being called our “Statement of Activities”. See the report entitled “EVCG Reporting Summary” which will shortly be posted on Drive for greater detail of report analysis..

**September through December Statements of Cashflows and Activities**

After some discussion the above-listed financial reports were approved as presented. Deb made the motion, Jessica seconded.

**Financial Reporting System Discussion:**

1. The average cost per plot (using total common expenses) is currently \$72.36. Yet we currently offer plots at only \$60.
2. And although you won't find this in the reports, the cost of a new VTS high plot is \$381.18 (\$7,363 grant/20 plots). We are currently holding a surplus (we've spent less than budgeted) which will reduce the actual cost per plot. We won't know the actual final cost until the project is more complete. But one thing is certain, VTS raised beds are significantly more expensive to build and maintain.
3. The result of all of this seems to indicate that, all things being equal, the board would be advised to raise 2024 plot fees. This obviously needs to be the subject of further discussion.
4. It was discovered that "green waste" was listed twice in the newly updated Statement of Activities report. (There were no recorded fees associated with the duplicate entry.) The double entry will be corrected to prevent future confusion with issuance of new reports ASAP.
5. A few items were discussed for inclusion in the 2024 Budget. These were to enable the "marketplace" function on our website to allow for online donations as well as the purchase of Adobe Pro to improve communications, report writing, and business efficiency.
6. It was agreed that the board should immediately begin to prepare a preliminary report for discussion with VTS about the potential of having received more funding than we may spend in completing the 20 raised beds.

**Initial discussion of 2024 Budget and Plot Pricing Schemes.**

A review of all the expenses associated with the garden was conducted so that board members could better understand what expenses made up the 2023 budget and what impact any new request will have on the cost of plot maintenance and therefore on 2024 plot fees. The following items that directly impact the budget were discussed:

- Plot Fee Structure (Our primary source of revenue)
- Sponsors (Another source of revenue & important to grant writing proposals)
- Fund-raising opportunities (more revenue results in more improvement possibilities)
- Garden Maintenance & Improvements (directly impacts costs but necessary for long term stability and growth)
- New Business Tools (Adobe Pro, Website Marketplace, etc. Good to have but increase cost.)

The board agreed that it needs to establish the 2024 budget ASAP to determine 2024 plot fees. Each board member was asked to think about changes they'd like to see in the 2024 budget using the 2023 budget as a base. Further discussions will occur at the January board meeting.

**Itemization of 2024 Charitable Funding & Grant Opportunities.** These include:

- Give Grant (\$1,200 grant request completed and filed on Dec 7<sup>th</sup>)

- The Village Thrift Store (Next round due in March)
- Giving Guests (Just received a \$249.31 check. Already signed up for next round.)
- The Duck Race: We’re entered. Deb is the contact person; Jessica will be there on Race Day. Others may also be needed. We need to sell \$625 adoptions.
- Colorado Gives Day - Due next December. Would require activation of marketplace plug-in on the website.
- El Pomar - Deb reported. It’s part of the Bohemian Foundation. The assistant dean of grants spoke to the meeting Deb was at – very interested in Estes Park. Grant due in early January. Deb is discussing partnering with EVICS for a shade structure.
- Community Foundation of Northern Colorado: Dave Boon mentioned them as a good source.
- Special request to EVCG gardeners. Always a possibility.
- There are surely other possibilities. These were the few that the board knows about and that were discussed at the meeting.

**Committee Discussions:**

The Approach of using committees going forward was discussed. The idea is to get more people involved in garden operations WITHOUT having to become full board members, which can be a hard sell. Many people may have a particular expertise and interest but just not the time or interest to become board members. We're hoping to recruit those people.

We discussed plans for the formation of a “Finance Committee” that would be made up of gardeners who have an interest in garden finances and expertise in NPO accounting principles. This committee will be responsible for the preparation of financial reports and for advising the board.

Jim & Ren both volunteered to sit on the finance committee. We hope to attract other gardeners should the committee be formally approved at the January board meeting. Reports would be issued prior to meetings. Board members could ask that any issue be brought forward. But generally, things will be brought to the attention of the Board only if there’s an issue raised by the committee and not as a routine matter.

We also discussed the formation of a Gifts & Grants Committee. This committees’ primary function would be to raise funds for future use.

It was agreed that the board would search Google Drive and the Corporate Book to locate past committee functions and descriptions and to be prepared to discuss them, and hopefully to officially approve, at least the finance committee, at the January meeting.

**Decisions and Actions completed over the last month (between Nov 15 and Dec 13) included:**

Item Number	Responsible Person	Action	Status
1	Ren & Jim	A report was written to compare current EVCG financial reporting methods and practices with those recommended for Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs).	Done

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2	Ren & Jim	A new Excel Workbook was developed to record future financial activity and to generate monthly Statements of Activities and Statement of Cashflow Reports.	Done
3	Ren & Board	The 2023 Annual Report was written, approved for publication, and distributed.	Done
4		9 September 2023 Statement of Cashflows report prepared and approved	Done
5		9 September 2023 Statement of Activities report prepared and approved	Done
6		10 October 2023 Statement of Cashflows report prepared and approved	Done
7		10 October 2023 Statement of Cashflows report prepared and approved	Done
8		11 November 2023 Statemen of Cashflows report prepared and approved.	Done
9		11 November 2023 Statement of Activities report prepared and approved.	Done
10		Preliminary 12 December 2023 Statement of Cashflows report prepared and approved for purposes of timely publication of the annual report. Any minor changes that may occur prior to year-end will be prepared for final approval at the January board meeting.	Done
11		Preliminary 12 December 2023 Statement of Cashflows report prepared and approved for purposes of timely publication of the annual report. Any minor changes that may occur prior to year-end will be prepared for final approval at the January board meeting.	Done
	Deb & Ren	Met to discuss ways of creating a winning board culture.	Done
12	Deb	Due to the overwhelming positive remarks received from Deb's email about Governance Leadership, the board unanimously agreed to begin using the concept of <b>Consent Agendas</b> to help cut through standard reports.	Done
13	Deb	Deb nearly single handedly filed an application for a grant with Give Next for \$1,200.	
14	Leslie	We entered the 2024 Duck Race. Deb is the contact person; Jessica will be there on Race Day. Others may also be needed. We need to sell \$625 adoptions.	Done
15	Deb	We received a \$249.31 check from Giving Guest and signed up for the next round.	
16	Leslie & Ren	Met with Dave Boon to discuss a scenario whereby EVCG would coordinate the construction of tall garden plots in affordable housing projects (expanding our influence beyond our fence), where funding would come from outside sources, and the labor provided by homeowners themselves. A follow-up board presentation meeting is being prepared by the Boons in	Done

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		association with Scott Moulton, Executive Director Estes Park Housing Authority for January.	
17	Ren & Jessica	Ren sent out a first draft strategy for issuing tall plots. He and Jessica will try to meet to discuss further before sharing it with other board members.	Done
18	Leslie	In preparation for issuing a satisfaction survey soon, Leslie sent out a copy of our existing annual survey for board members to review and potentially change prior to distribution.	Done
19	Leslie	Prepared a Thank You note and sent cards to Garden volunteers who participated in our last work week. The amount of work they did was amazing and truly deserving of our thanks!	Done

**Upcoming Priorities For the month of December (Between Dec 13 and Jan 10) Include the Following:**

Item	Responsible Person	Action	Due Date	Status
1	All	Finalize the and approve the preliminary December financial reports to close out the year 2023.	Jan 10th	
2	Leslie/Ren	Meet with the Boons and/or Scott Moulton to finalize the board presentation on piloting a raised plot garden in affordable housing units.	Jan 10 <sup>th</sup>	
3	All	Review satisfaction survey that was recently sent out by Leslie. Suggest changes as deemed appropriate by emailing back to Leslie. Please strive to have these sent back and tabulated by Jan 10th to be available for discussion at the next board meeting. If you have nothing to add, please reply as such, so we know you have weighed in.	Jan 10 <sup>th</sup>	
4	Deb	Prepare a grant application for El Pomar for the construction of a shade shelter perhaps to work in conjunction with EVICS.	ASAP	
5	All	Search Google Drive and the Corporate Book to locate past committee functions and descriptions and to be prepared to discuss them at the January meeting.	ASAP	
6	All	Review the job description for Garden Manager.	ASAP	
7	All	Formally approve/disregard the "Finance Committee"	ASAP	

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8	All	Formally approve/disregard the “Gifts and Grants” committee	ASAP	
9	All	Work to begin preparing the 2024 annual budget by using 2023 as a base. Please send all comments and ideas to Ren and copy all.	ASAP	
10	Ren	Prepare a preliminary report for the usage of what may be leftover or surplus VTS funding	ASAP	
11	Ren & Jessica	Finalize the first draft strategy for issuing VTS tall plots. The following have been identified as having at least some relevance to the development of a strategy: Age; physical disabilities; sponsors; past volunteerism; and cost structure.	ASAP	
12	All	Finalize the 2024 Fee Structure.	ASAP	
13	All	Submit individual Conflict of Interest statements to Leslie.	ASAP	
14	All	Develop a draft questionnaire or census to determine how age impacts volunteerism AND more specifically how to use age as a determining factor when awarding the new VTS tall plots.		
15	All	Review our Sponsor Policies and make any changes as may be appropriate in conjunction with creating the 2024 annual budget.	ASAP	

**Longer Term Goals**

These goals were not discussed at the board meeting but are included in these notes simply as a reminder to keep our eyes on the long-term objectives. Please add to this list as ideas, no matter how seemingly insignificant the idea may be. There are no bad ideas because often even bad ideas turn good after further discussion. Only some of these goals have been assigned as was previously agreed.

Item	Responsible Person	Action	Due Date	Status
1	All	Investigate the need to develop non-traditional approaches to funding such as crowd funding, drawings, and direct pleas to gardeners themselves.		
2	All	Prepare a short biography of each board member and arrange that a photo be		

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		taken for future communication purposes.		
3	All	Develop a Spring 2024 Orientation Program		
4	Clara/Jim	Establish closer relationships to local hardware companies to obtain discounts on much needed garden tools.		
5	Clara	Develop a list of tools needed at the garden		
6	All	Determine how to best manage Kim's departure as it relates to Publicity, Events, Partnerships, and Volunteerism.		
7	All	Form a committee to update Bylaws		
8	Clara	Do some research into the life cycle, management, and control of voles AND to prepare an initial plan of action to better control them in the community garden		
9	All	Write a letter to the gardeners describing the recent changes in the board and perhaps what the new board's priorities may be.		

**Board Meetings**

A short discussion of how often to meet occurred. The goal will be to meet less frequently in the future. But, for the time being, with things in flux, it was decided to continue to meet monthly. Deb has reserved a room at the library for next year's meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.