



Present:

Rebecca Johnson, President
Gary O'Neil, President-Elect
Jesse Neumann, Cert. Liaison
A.J. Thibodeaux, Treasurer
Haywood Morgan, Director

Garrett Ryerson, Director
Kirsten Schneider, Director
Kenney Shook, Director
Rachel McGregor, Director
Penny Whisenant, Director
Jaime Thibodeaux, Director

Priscilla Files, Director
Courtney Blevins, COR Liaison
Guest: Mac Martin, TFS
Gene Gehring, ISAT Exec. Dir.
John Giedraitis, ISAT EED
Megan Wood, Program Mgr.

Absent:

Amy Heath, Director
Heather McKnight, Editor

Mark Bird, Past President
Ronny Nelson, Vice President

I. Call to order

- a. President Johnson called to order the ISAT Board of Directors at 10:15 AM on July 20, 2023. A quorum was declared present.

II. Approval of minutes

- a. **A motion was made by O'Neil to accept the March 2023 Board meeting minutes. A. Thibodeaux seconded and the motion passed.**

III. Executive Director Report

- a. Gehring presented the ISAT-Texas Arborist Management (TAM) contract overview to highlight the mission, main components that guide the work: (1) Board of Director support, (2) legal/policy support, (3) event management, (4) financial management, (5) organizational operations, and (6) chapter liaison.

IV. Committee Reports

a. Educational Events Committee

- i. In Nelson's absence, Gehring reviewed the 2023 Schedule of Events. He noted all spring 2023 events occurred with success. There is a TRAQ workshop tentatively scheduled for fall 2023 if demand warrants. Gehring noted that the 2024 master's workshop topic will be appraisal (based on member demand) and the Education Committee is exploring hosting an East Texas workshop.

b. Texas Tree Conference

- i. O'Neil noted that the conference registration has been open for approximately one month and has 118 people currently registered and 39 vendors for the trade show. The committee meets monthly and the educational track speakers and topics are mostly set.

c. Texas Tree Climbing Championship

- i. Schneider reported that the event was a success (see report details). She noted highlights as there being no issues with the code of conduct revisions, 62 volunteers plus more at gear check which made the event run smoothly, the pre-meetings were very helpful for everyone involved, debrief meeting TBD. She noted the committee will work on seeking a new Quartermaster to assist with set up and trailer responsibilities. There was discussion on "Rescue Randy's" warranty as he was damaged during the competition, Giedraitis will look into it. Expenses were reported as higher than expected due to new equipment being purchased but income was also higher than expected; net gain ~\$2K reported.

d. Member Services

- i. **Newsletter.** McKnight submitted her report and Johnson reported, noting the need for anyone submitting pieces to be aware of the deadlines for timely publication.
- ii. **Digital and Social Media.** McGregor reported there are regular postings to 1,596 Facebook, 745 Twitter and 347 Instagram and 35 LinkedIn followers. There was discussion to add new social media channels that the committee will review.
- iii. **Membership.** Files submitted a report that noted that there are a record 1,430 ISAT members. A survey of non-members was sent to ~470 certified arborists who are not members of ISAT to understand their demographics and reasons for not joining.

- iv. **Outreach.** Bird was absent and did not submit a report.
- v. **Credentialing.** Neumann reported that there are several exams scheduled for 2023 and that there are now 1,428 Certified Arborists, 70 BCMA, 401 TRAQ and 391 TOWQ. He reported on the ISA rebranding of CTWCS to Certified Tree Climber, the roll out timeline, and that the components have been asked to hold at least one CTC exam per year and incorporate climbing CEU opportunities into more events and workshops to support the credential. He also reported on digital badges and how to access them through Accredible. Giedraitis reported on the Credential Holder Strategic Plan meeting that was held in Grapevine on July 10-11. The report included the agenda of work as well as the strategies for recruitment and retainment of credential holders. Giedraitis reported the next steps will be to overlay these strategies with the Credential Holder Cycle of Service and see what ISAT can incorporate. Neumann and A. Thibodeaux were in attendance at the meeting and commented on the usefulness of it to ISAT.

e. Research and Students & Scholarships

- i. **Research/TREE Fund Liaison.** No report was submitted by Heath but Johnson noted that the TREE Fund committee plans to hold the TREE Fund fundraiser at the Tree Conference Exhibitors Reception. She also reported that ISAT is sponsoring Herminio Griego as a Tour des Trees rider this year.
- ii. **Students and Scholarships.** Nelson did not submit a report but Gehring noted an email had been sent out to Texas colleges and universities to bring students to the Tree Conference.

f. Legislation

- i. No report was submitted by Mars.

g. Executive

- i. **Governance.** Johnson noted that the Executive Committee meets monthly. She reported that a contract had been signed with Gehring to serve as the Interim Executive Director and that a committee is reviewing the association management contract for an RFP process, which currently does not have a timeline.
- ii. **Nominations and Elections.** Johnson reported that there are four directors up for election this year and that there are currently six nominations submitted. There was discussion regarding the intended concept to have three directors roll off each year and the process to handle when the rotation is off schedule. The topic was tabled.
- iii. **Awards.** Martin (TFS) reported that there are currently eight nominations in only two of the four categories. It was decided to extend the nomination period to August 11.
- iv. **Treasurer.** Thibodeaux reported on the year-to-date financial statements. He noted that the Chapter remains on sound financial footing with \$302,985.66 in cash and treasury securities. He noted that net income YTD of \$30,347 with the biggest income and expense of the Tree Conference approaching.

h. Liaison

- i. **Council of Representatives.** Blevins reported that COR has an open seat that nominations were voted on. He also reported that ISA requested each component to provide contacts at universities and colleges for programs related to tree care and plant health. Blevins stated he will provide this list to ISAT also for communications. Blevins also noted he will be in attendance at the ISA Conference in Albuquerque in August.

i. Ad-hoc Committees

- i. **Bilingual Committee.** Heath did not submit a report but Johnson reported the committee had met and next steps were being established.
- ii. **Scholarship Committee.** Shook reported that the committee had met and was working on a policy for the scholarship and intends to have a policy and budget request at the December retreat.

V. New Business

a. TFS Update

- i. Martin reported he is the new to his role in the Urban and Community Urban Forestry Program with TFS, Mickey Merritt was formerly in his role but has retired. He also reported that Al Davis was moved from interim to Agency Director. Martin noted that Texas Arbor Day is the first Friday in November and TFS will focus on ~50 schools to present topics and activities around "why trees matter". He requested ISAT engage through sharing digital resources with members. ISAT suggested he provide formal details for the fall newsletter publication. Martin also provided an update on the Urban Wood Flow Grant focusing on Austin and Houston and requested that ISAT serve as a conduit for disseminating information and registering

participants for a TFS-funded scholarship for the 2024 Tree Conference. Martin reported there are currently several grants scheduled to open on December 15th. He noted that TFS-funded scholarships for the 2023 Tree Conference will be due August 11 with recipients notified approximately one week later.

- b. Bylaws change.** Johnson reported that ISAT needs to update the bylaws to reflect official office address change from Giedraitis to Gehring. **A. Thibodeaux made a motion to accept the change, Shook seconded and the motion passed.**
- c. Creating a policy for ISAT to serve as a hub for local events.** Johnson reported that a policy needs to be created for TAM to be able to serve as a registration hub for local events and not have to request EC or Board permission each time. Discussion on which committee this should come from resulted in Bird with the Outreach committee being responsible for creating a policy to be presented at the December meeting.
- d. Tree planting initiative.** McGregor suggested an ISAT-sponsored tree planting concept that would allow local groups to access funding from ISAT. The goals would be to increase membership, recognition of credentialing, and outreach efforts for ISAT. Discussion ended with McGregor forming an ad-hoc committee to create a policy/program and budget to bring to the December meeting.

VI. Old Business

- a. Review of the 2023 Work Plan:** Johnson reviewed the 2023 ISAT Work Plan and noted good progress is being made.
- b.** Giedraitis reported that this would be his last official Board meeting and thanked the Board for their support over the years. He noted that there is no legal requirement or best practice that requires the Board to have an open search for a new director. Giedraitis also noted that when he retires this fall, Gehring will need to hire new staff and that Gehring's interim director status until April of 2024 will make that difficult. Giedraitis gave his opinion that Gehring has been training for three-years, is dedicated, and competent and recommended that the Board should consider approving Gehring as the ISAT Executive Director.

VII. Meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM

Next meeting September 22, 2023 at the Texas Tree Conference in Waco.
Minutes submitted by Wood