

# PULASKI COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS BYLAWS (Revised 2026)

## ARTICLE I

### NAME

The name of this organization will be Pulaski County Master Gardeners, hereafter referred to as PCMG.

## ARTICLE II

### PURPOSE

The PCMG program trains and maintains horticulture volunteers for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. The goals of this program shall be to increase the availability of horticultural information for their members and the community at large and to improve the quality of life for the residents of Pulaski County through horticulture volunteer activities.

*[Objective/Purpose consolidated from three detailed sections into a single mission-focused paragraph.]*

## ARTICLE III

### MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1.** Membership in Pulaski County Master Gardeners shall be by successful completion of Master Gardener training and completion of required working and education hours, and payment of dues. PCMG is open to all interested persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

**Section 2.** A member in good standing must:

*[Removed specific dates (Dec 31/May 1) to allow for state and local board flexibility.]*

- A. Complete and report the required number of working and education hours by date specified by the state.
- B. Make annual payment of membership dues by date specified by PCMG Board.

**Section 3.** The Executive Board or County Extension Agent may make an exception in unusual circumstances.

**Section 4.** Persons who have successfully completed Master Gardener training in another Arkansas County, and were members in good standing in that county, may become members of PCMG at the discretion of the County Agent and approval of the PCMG Board.

*[Added explicit requirement for board approval for members transferring from other counties/states.]*

**Section 5.** Persons who have successfully completed Master Gardener training in another state may become PCMG members at the discretion of the County Agent and approval of the PCMG Board.

ARTICLE IV  
**EXECUTIVE BOARD AND ELECTION**

**Section 1. Designations**

*[Significant structural change: Removed Assistant Treasurer; elevated Record Keeping Chair to a Board position.]*

- A. The officers of PCMG shall be: President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Record Keeping Committee Chair, Immediate Past President, and four Board Members-at-Large.
- B. The Executive Board shall consist of all officers plus the County Extension Agent, who provides leadership to the Master Gardener program and serves as advisor to the Executive Board.
- C. The Executive Board will act as the governing body of PCMG and transact the necessary business of PCMG.

**Section 2. Qualifications and Eligibility**

A nominee shall be a member in good standing of PCMG.

**Section 3. Nominations and Election**

- A. The election of President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Record Keeping Committee Chair, and Members-at-Large shall be held in November and newly elected officers shall begin their term at the January meeting.
- B. The nominating committee will consist of the President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, and chaired by the Past President.
- C. The nominating committee must have the consent of the persons that they place on the slate of candidates for their report to the membership. The nominating committee will normally nominate the following advancing positions unless a person declines to be nominated for the follow-on position: 1st Vice President is nominated to President; 2nd Vice President is nominated to 1st Vice President and President to Past-President.
- D. PCMG general membership may submit additional suggestions for Executive Board positions by the published due date, provided that consent has been secured from the nominee.
- E. No candidate shall be nominated for more than one office at the same time.
- F. Elections may be held in person or online with Board discretion.
- G. Nepotism:

*[New comprehensive Nepotism policy added to align with Division of Agriculture standards.]*

**Purpose:** The Division of Agriculture recognizes that potential conflicts of interest may exist when members of the same family are serving on the Master Gardeners Volunteer Executive Committee at the same time.

**Scope:** This provision applies not only to volunteers on regular appointments to the Master Gardener Executive Committee, but also to volunteer in temporary interim positions following a vacancy on the Executive Board.

**Definition:** For purposes of this policy, “family member” shall mean a Volunteer’s spouse, Children of the volunteer or his or her spouse, brothers, sister, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, first cousins, parents, grandchildren or grandparents, whether by blood or marriage of the volunteer or his or her spouse.

**Policy:** To avoid conflicts of interest which may result from such volunteering, family members from the same county shall not hold an executive committee position at the same time.

**Section 4. Term of Office**

*[Increased service duration for financial and record-keeping officers to ensure continuity.]*

- A. Officers may serve for a term of one year or until their successors are selected. Treasurer, Secretary, and Record Keeping Committee Chair typically serve 4 years, and At-Large Board Members typically serve 2 years.
- B. In general, in order to maintain continuity, the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President shall be considered President-elect. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President shall be considered 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President-elect. The President shall be considered Past-President-elect.
- C. Newly elected officers shall take office at the January meeting.
- D. Vacancies among officers shall be filled by appointment by the President with the approval of the Executive Board for the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Section 5. Duties of Officers**

- A. The President shall:
  - 1. Preside at all meetings at which he or she is present.
  - 2. Exercise general supervision over affairs and activities of PCMG.
  - 3. Appoint Ad Hoc committees and their chairs as required.
- B. The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President shall:
  - 1. Serve as the Projects Chair of PCMG, overseeing the functions of the PCMG projects.
  - 2. Perform the duties of the President whenever the President may be unable to perform the duties of their office.
- C. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President shall: Oversee the functions of the Standing Committees.
- D. The Secretary shall: Maintain written records of all PCMG General & Executive Board meetings.
- E. The Treasurer shall set up such accounts as necessary to fulfill the business of the organization as per article IX section 5, and shall:
  - 1. Collect PCMG Dues and other funds as necessitated by PCMG activity.
  - 2. Present a Treasurer's report at every regular monthly board meeting, including disbursements and receipts since the last meeting and current cash balance. (This report is to be maintained as a part of the permanent records of the Secretary's records.)
  - 3. Prepare an annual budget for approval by the Executive Board.
- F. The Record Keeping Committee Chair
  - 1. Maintains MG data in the ARMGS County website and the hours reporting website.
  - 2. Generates reports requested by the State, County Extension, and the Executive Board.
- G. Immediate Past President shall:
  - 1. Serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee
  - 2. Serve as Parliamentarian.
  - 3. Chair the Project Evaluation & Support Team (PEST)
  - 4. Serve as Acting President upon absence of President & 1st VP
- H. Board Members-at-Large shall: Serve in positions as appointed by the President.

ARTICLE V  
**COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS**

**Section 1.** Designations

- A. County Sanctioned Projects are community betterment projects that are approved by the Pulaski County Extension Agent and the Executive Board, ex: Old State House, NLR Old Mill, Wildwood.
- B. Standing Committees are committees necessary for benefit of PCMG members, ex: Continuing Education, Magnolia Chronicle, and Recordkeeping.
- C. Ad Hoc Committees are short-term committees that meet an immediate and short-term goal of PCMG; ex: Nominating, By-Laws.

**Section 2.** Creation of Committees and Sanctioned Projects

*[Shifted authority from the President to the Executive Board for the creation of new projects and committees.]*

- A. Executive Board may approve creation of committees and projects.

ARTICLE VI  
MEETINGS

**Section 1.** All meetings of PCMG shall be conducted following Roberts Rules of Order, except the treasurer's report need not be given at every general membership meeting.

**Section 2.** Designations

*[Changed from mandatory "shall" to discretionary "may" to allow board flexibility in scheduling.]*

- A. General PCMG Membership Meetings shall be determined by the Executive Board but generally, may be held monthly from January through June and September through November. Members present shall constitute a quorum.
- B. Executive Board meetings shall meet at the time and place designated by the President and shall transact the necessary business of PCMG. Six (6) board members present shall constitute a quorum.
- C. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the President, or at the written request of a majority of the officers.

ARTICLE VII  
**COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT**

**Section 1.** Recognizing the relationship between PCMG and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, the County Extension Agent is advisor to the president and consultant to the Executive Board. The agent shall have the final authority over PCMG. However, to facilitate everyday management, the organizational directives set forth in these bylaws will provide a functioning set of guidelines.

ARTICLE VIII  
FINANCES

*[Eliminated the Budget Committee; Treasurer is now directly responsible for budget preparation.]*

**Section 1.** A proposed budget of anticipated revenues and expenditures as prepared by the Treasurer shall be submitted and approved to the Executive Board in January.

**Section 2.** In consideration of the PCMG budget, the Executive Board will recommend the dues which shall be levied on the members. Such dues shall be approved at a regular meeting of the general membership.

**Section 3.** The Executive Board may authorize fund-raising activities for PCMG when the purpose is in agreement with the objectives of PCMG.

**Section 4.** The PCMG shall comply with the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service *Financial Guidelines for Affiliated Groups*.

ARTICLE IX  
AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of PCMG by a vote of 2/3 of the ballots cast, provided that changes are agreeable to the County Extension Agent, and that written notice of the proposed changes was sent to the membership either 30 days in advance of the vote or announced at the previous general meeting. Electronic notification shall constitute "written notice". Voting may occur electronically.

*[Updated notice cycle and explicitly authorized electronic voting.]*

Revisions approved by the membership in xxxx 2026.

## Summary of Significant Changes and Rationale

- **Consolidated Purpose:** Article II transitions from three detailed sections to a concise "Purpose" statement focused on training volunteers and community horticulture. This was done to make it less legalistic and approachable.
- **Operational Flexibility:** Section deadlines for reporting hours and paying dues have been changed from specific calendar dates (Dec 31 and May 1) to "dates specified by the state/board," allowing for annual adjustments without requiring bylaw amendments. This puts in writing what happens on occasion.
- **Structural Officer Realignment:** The Assistant Treasurer position has been removed. In its place, the **Record Keeping Committee Chair** is now a designated board. The Assistant Treasurer's job was greatly reduced when UAEX took over control of all deposits and disbursements.
- **Board-Led Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee composition shifted from the Past President plus three appointed members to a group consisting of the current President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, and the Past President as chair. Needed to put in writing how things work.
- **Nepotism Policy:** A comprehensive new section defines "family member" and prohibits relatives from serving on the Executive Board simultaneously to avoid potential conflicts of interest. This is required by the Extension Service. This was required by UAEX.
- **Changed Officer Terms:** To support organizational continuity, the typical term for the Treasurer, Secretary, and Record Keeping Chair has been increased to four years. This recognizes that these positions can offer continuity and can be hard to fill.
- **Financial Oversight:** Responsibility for preparing the annual budget has moved from a separate Budget Committee directly to the Treasurer. In recent years there has not been a Budget Committee, and the budget has been handled by the Treasurer.
- **Digital Modernization:** The amendments section now explicitly authorizes electronic voting and clarifies that electronic notifications satisfy the 30-day written notice requirement. Given the drop in attendance at the monthly meetings and time constraints, this seems more democratic than the current process.

## Detailed Changes

### Terminology and Heading Updates

- **Board Nomenclature:** The "Board of Directors" has been renamed the **Executive Board** throughout the document for consistency with state-level terminology.
- **Article II Heading:** The section previously titled "Objective" is now "Purpose".
- **Dues Description:** "Association dues" has been updated to **membership dues**.
- **Gender-Neutral Language:** References to the President's duties have shifted from "his or her" to the gender-neutral **their**.

### Minor Procedural & Wording Shifts

- **Meeting Frequency:** The language regarding general membership meetings changed from "shall be held monthly" to **maybe held monthly**, providing more flexibility for the board to adjust the schedule as needed.
- **Updated Committee Examples:** The list of sanctioned projects and committees was updated to reflect current activities:
  - **Wildwood** was added as a project example.
  - **Continuing Education** and **Magnolia Chronicle** replaced "Travel" and "Social" and Record Keeping was added as examples of Standing Committees.
  - **AR Arts Center** was removed from the list of specific project examples.
- **Quorum Definition:** While the quorum remains at six board members, the definition of the board itself was clarified to explicitly include the **County Extension Agent** as an advisor and part of the Executive Board.
- **Officer Advancing Language:** The 2026 version explicitly codifies the "President to Past-President" advancement in the nominating committee section, which was implied but not explicitly listed in the 2015 advancement sequence.
- **Secretary Duties:** A minor clarification was added to the Secretary's role to include maintaining records for both **General and Executive Board** meetings specifically.

### Changes in Officer Responsibilities:

#### President: Centralized to Collaborative

The 2026 version moves away from the President having sole authority over specific administrative committees:

- **Committee Appointments:** In 2015, the President was explicitly tasked with appointing the Audit, Budget, Nominating, and Standing Committee chairs. The 2026 version removes this specific list from the President's duties, stating only that they "may appoint" Ad Hoc committees and chairs.
- **Broadened Role:** A new catch-all phrase was added: "Perform duties as specified in By-Laws".

### **Treasurer: From Advisor to Author**

#### **The Treasurer's role has been modernized and expanded:**

- **Budget Ownership:** In 2015, the Treasurer's role was to "advise the budget committee in preparation of the annual budget". In 2026, the Treasurer is now directly responsible for "preparing an annual budget for approval by the Executive Board" – this has been the practice for many years.
- **Payment Modernization:** The 2015 requirement to pay all money "by check only" has been removed, providing flexibility for modern digital payment methods. PCMG no longer has its own bank account, all payments are made at extension office.
- **Audit Integration:** Specific language about working with an Audit Committee and preparing for an annual audit was removed from the Treasurer's itemized list, as there are no longer any financial activities of volunteers to audit.

### **Immediate Past President: Expanded Governance**

#### **The role of the Immediate Past President has been significantly bolstered with new active leadership duties:**

- **Acting President:** They are now designated to serve as Acting President if both the President and 1st VP are absent.
- **PEST Leadership:** They are now explicitly tasked to chair the Project Evaluation & Support Team (PEST).
- **Consistency:** They retain their roles as Chair of the Nominating Committee and Parliamentarian.

### **Secretary: Focused Record Keeping**

#### **The Secretary's duties were narrowed to prioritize core documentation:**

- **Scope of Minutes:** The new draft specifies minutes for both "General & Executive Board meetings," whereas the old version simply said "all PCMG meetings".
- **Task Removal:** Specific requirements to "conduct the correspondence of PCMG" and "provide minutes and other information to the Extension Office" were removed from the Secretary's individual duty list.

### **Board Members-at-Large: Simplified Role**

- **Representation Language:** The 2015 version explicitly stated they "Represent the membership of PCMG at all Board Meetings". This phrase was removed in 2026, simplifying their duty to "Serve in positions as appointed by the President".

### **Record Keeping Chair: New Officer Mandate**

**As this is a newly elevated officer position, its duties are now codified in the bylaws:**

- **Data Management:** Maintaining MG data on the ARMGS County website and the hours reporting website.
- **Reporting:** Generating reports as requested by the State, County Extension, and the Executive Board.

### **Meeting and Amendment Changes**

**The comparison of the Meetings and Amendments articles reveals a clear shift toward operational flexibility and the formal adoption of digital governance.**

**The updates to the Meetings article primarily focus on the frequency and scheduling of general sessions:**

- **Meeting Mandate:** The 2015 version stated that general meetings "shall be held monthly" during specified months. The 2026 version changes this to "may be held monthly," granting the Executive Board the authority to adjust the schedule without technically violating the bylaws.
- **"Annual Meeting" Designation:** The 2015 bylaws explicitly designated the November meeting as the "annual meeting for election of officers" within the Meetings section. This specific label was removed from the 2026 Meetings article, though November remains the election month in the Board section.
- **Quorum Stability:** The quorum requirements remain unchanged; a quorum for general meetings consists of the members present, while the Executive Board requires six members.

**The Amendments section has been updated to accommodate modern communication and shorter notice cycles:**

- **Expanded Notice Options:** Previously, written notice of proposed changes was required exactly 30 days before the meeting. The 2026 draft adds an alternative: either 30 days in advance of the vote or announced at the previous general meeting.
- **Electronic Voting:** While both versions recognize electronic notification as "written notice," the 2026 draft adds an explicit provision stating that "Voting may occur electronically".
- **Agent Approval:** Both versions maintain the requirement that any changes must be agreeable to the County Extension Agent.