Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.
Board Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2026
Roger Williams Park Casino

President Kathleen Damiani called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM.

Carol Horta Recording Secretary did the Roll Call.
Clubs Present: _____13_____ **Affiliates Present: _____0_____**

President's Report:

- **Kathleen** asked for any corrections for the **minutes of June 4th meeting**. There were none; the minutes were accepted.
- She announced that **Blakely Szosz** lost her mother this summer. Blakely expressed her appreciation for the support she has received from RIFGC members.
- She thanked **Hattie Ide Chaffee Garden Club** for **Hospitality** and the center piece.
- She thanked **Cindy Wood Garden Club** for their invitation to their 50th anniversary meeting, and also **Plum Beach Garden Club** for their invitation to their luncheon.
- She announced that **Sheryl Hansen** is accepting one-page descriptions of **Environmental projects** that clubs have done or are doing for the June 2027 meeting.

Reports From Officers

- **Vice President Eileen Dennis** announced that she will soon be sending information about **Youth Contests/Awards** (Woodsy Owl, Smoky the Bear, Sculpture and Poetry contests through NGC).
- **Treasurer Sally Dennis** reported the federation's **financials**. See attached.
- There were no other Officer reports.

President's Agenda - Kathleen made the following announcements:

- The **membership meetings will have a new format;** that is, we will include a program in addition to the business meeting.
- **Edgewood Garden Club and Western Cranston plant sales will be postponed** due to the forecasted nor'easter to Oct 3rd
- An email will go out on Sunday morning if the **polo charity event** is cancelled due to the weather.
- **Bristol Garden Club** is holding a **Garden Party** Oct 4th Celebrating America's 250th anniversary. Please see RIFGC email blast for details.
- Please send her **pictures** of red, white and blue gardens and also for **posters** depicting Rhode Island (historical events and traditions, including the longest running Fourth of July parade, the burning of the Gaspee, etc.) for the **NEGC convention** and photography show October 13-14.
- All are welcome to the **NEGC board meeting** via Zoom on Oct 9th
- Two garden clubs presented their **community project reports** (see attached):
  - **Plum Beach (**presented by **Sue Jones** and **Andrea Sarrasin**)
  - **Western Cranston** (presented by **Cheryl Celeste**)
- The **holiday party** will be a catered event at Roger Williams Casino to keep costs down. More information next month.
- Next month's membership meeting is October 22 and **Deana Thomas** from the **RI Mycological Society** she will come to discuss fungi/ mushrooms and lead an optional walk in the park.
- We will have a **round table on awards after this meeting.** Kathleen has a cheat sheet on awards dates for those interested. She reminded all that **Yearbook Award submissions are due at the end of October.**
- RIFGC has obtained a **tax exempt certificate** for RIFGC functions.

Program:

Carol Horta presented the new **RIFGC draft website** and asked for feedback and ideas. Thank you for the many good ideas and comments!

New Business

- **Eileen Dennis** reminded clubs to let the Corresponding Secretary know of **leadership changes** at the clubs so that communications reach all clubs.
- **Kathleen** announced that it will be Rhode Island's turn to take over as **Director of NEGC. Sheryl Hansen** has stepped up to take this role. **Diana Campbell** asked for a vote, and **Deb Clickner** seconded the motion. The group voted to forward Sheryl Hansen to this role.
- **Kathleen** announced that the **NGC School Portal** is free to all and encouraged members to look at all the options available there.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Horta
Recording Secretary

Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.			***Operating Account***		
Treasurer's Report					
June 1 - August 31, 2026					
Beginning balance, June 1, 2026					**$ 59,902.91**
Cash Receipts					
	Member Club Dues		$ 737.00		
	Design Study Class		$ 180.00		
	Interest		$ 102.09		
	LMG Donation		$ 85.00		
	TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS			$ 1,104.09	
Disbursements					
	Administrative Expense	Website Hosting / Squarespace	$ 374.17		
		Insurance	$ 1,727.00		
		NEGC Dues	$ 125.00		
		Route 6 Storage	$ 3,240.00		
	Committee Expense	Awards	$ 375.00		
		Annual Luncheon Deposit	$ 300.00		
		Flower Show	$ 832.13		
		Life Member Group	$ 360.00		
	Member Club Enrichment	Education Day	$ 267.49		
	Officers' Expenses	President Attend NEGC	$ 771.95		
	Transfer to Investment		$ 10,000.00		
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS			$ 18,372.74	
Ending balance, August 31, 2026					**$ 42,634.26**

Plum Beach Garden Club (PBGC)

The space was originally planted as a “Never Forget Garden” to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and was a place where visitors to Updike Park (in Wickford Village, NK) would frequently stop, think and remember. When the garden was moved to the VFW location in Wickford, PBGC wanted to maintain the spot to provide a calm oasis for residents and visitors to pause and reflect. The journey began last year when an opportunity for this Community Project Award through RIFGC was announced. Thus, the idea of Meditation Garden was born.

This tranquil space was mindfully designed by a collaborative team representing the past, present, and future of our club: The President Sue Jones, the next in line President Pat Morgan, and the immediate past President Andrea Sarrasin.

This spring, the garden truly came to life with a focus on education and environmental conservation. Guided by one of our members, we partnered with local youth from Wickford Middle School, where they would earn community service hours while learning about gardening. Stephanie led us and the volunteer students from WMS, by adding crucial pollinator plants to the landscape. Finally, a garden of meditation requires a focal point-a visual reminder to 'Pause". We are profoundly grateful one of our members is a gifted sculptor: Elizabeth Lind. Elizabeth designed, created , and generously donated a limestone piece for the space called "Pause". There is a depression on the top of the sculpture with a carved frog inside, which symbolizes transformation and change.

On June 13th, 2026 we hosted a Meditation Garden Dedication, for the community with a beautiful ceremony, unveiling of "Pause" along with a guided meditation by an Energy Healer. We continued the celebration by visiting local gardens in the village then celebrating with a tea party at the home of Sue Jones. Such a wonderful Community Day!! A perfect way to kick off our 100th Anniversary by creating a lasting legacy - a dedicated place of peace, reflection, and tranquility for the community and its visitors.

Presented by:
Sue Jones - President & Andrea Sarrasin - Ex-Officio

Western Cranston GC

While our club was on a journey to find someplace to continue our Therapy for Seniors Project we came across the Hope Alzheimer's Center, Brayton Ave. Cranston. The director Ellen was very open to having us come in and make arrangements 4 times a year with the clients there. While we were there we spotted a very large (25'X5') raised bed with only annuals (New Guinea impatiens) in it. We thought this could be a great project for our club to revamp this bed and put some plantings that would have all year interest instead of just summer. It would also give us the opportunity to work with the clients of the center. The bed is located right outside a large window that is the common room where the clients congregate and eat and socialize. It is very visible from the inside of the building. The director was thrilled we were interested in doing something like this, so we began to plan. Since we thought it may cost about $300.00 we applied for the RIFGC Community Project Award, which we gratefully received.

Before planting in early June Pat Yearwood and I purchased and added several bags of compost to the existing soil in the raised bed.

We chose our plant material taking into account the amount of shade the area gets which is quite a lot.

We purchased 3 shrubs, an Early Evolution Hydrangea which only gets 2'X2' making it a perfect choice for limited space and 2 miniature boxwood trees. We also planted perennials, 2 cone flowers, 3 hostas and 2 coral bells. These were planted on June 9th by Pat Yearwood and me.

Our plan was to plant the shrubs and perennials in the center of the bed. This was so that the clients helping to plant annuals would have the outside perimeter of the bed to plant in and would be able to easily reach into the bed to dig and plant.

We purchased New Guinea Impatiens and different varieties of Coleus to give the space color all summer. June 16th was the day we planted the annuals. There were 4 members of the club on hand to help and 8 clients from the Alzheimer's Center who participated in the planting. The clients had a great time digging holes and putting fertilizer and water in the holes and planting the flowers.

Club members who helped were Paula Munko, Nancy Zompa, Jeanne Smith, Pat Yearwood and I.

We asked for $300.00 and spent 310.00 on the project!!

Western Cranston Garden Club thanks the Federation for giving us the opportunity to be able to start and complete this project.