

Proposed Policies & Procedures

Use of Electronic Communications with respect to any MGC Financial information

1. Use of Electronic Communications to request budgeted monies from the MGC Treasurer or any Satellite Account Treasurer will only be accepted with clear explanation from a Chair, Officer or Director, or a Satellite Treasurer and the proper documentation, including a copy of invoice or receipt, and reimbursement form when appropriate. Before disbursing any funds from any account under the MGC EIN, the MGC Treasurer or Satellite Account Treasurer will review the documentation and contact the individual who has sent the request. Only after verification of the documentation as well as the individual sending the request will the disbursement check be written or credit card utilized for payment.
2. The use of email or email attachment to communicate confidential MGC financial information of any kind (MGC bank account numbers, MGC credit card numbers etc) is strictly prohibited.

Requests For Additional Funds Not in Approved Budget

1. Any requests for money not currently budgeted must be submitted in writing, along with supporting documentation, to the Finance Committee Chair for review by Finance Committee. Requests for amounts over \$100 may be forwarded to Executive Committee and/or Board of Directors for approval.

Rationale: MGC Treasurer has already received at least two fictitious emails "from MGC President" requesting funds or to click on scam website—neither of which were accepted. Emails including bank account numbers and credit card account numbers have been sent from MGC Board members to MGC Treasurer. We must be very careful with information in emails. MGC President Carol Brodbeck received the following email from NGC President Nancy Hargroves, and requested a review of current MGC policies regarding the use of Electronic Communications to communicate financial requests and information:

"Dear State Presidents,

I am writing to you instead of Gay Austin, Liaison to State Presidents, because of the serious nature of this topic. I know state finances are separate from NGC finances; but I feel it is NGC's duty to inform member states of issues that are for your protection.

Within the last year, the Treasurers of two state garden clubs have responded to email scams and sent money without consulting any other members in the state. In each case, the email sent to the Treasurer says it is from the State President, and she needs money. Both cases have involved amounts in the \$10,000 range.

Please take these two steps in order to make sure this does not happen in your state:

1. Contact your Treasurer as soon as possible to tell him/her about the email scams going around and ask that no checks be written based upon an email request.
2. **If your state does not have a policy for the authorization/approval system of writing checks for amounts that are not in the budget, please set a policy. You could use a similar model that banks and investment firms use for requests - they do not accept email requests. It is your state's choice for the protocol that you choose to put in place for your Treasurer to write a check for an amount that is not in the budget - a request form, number of signatures/people for approval, direct phone calls, etc.**

Unfortunately email phishing scams are not rare and are probably not going away. Vigilance by all members is key to combatting it. Always know that if you receive an email that says it is from me, and you have doubts about it; look for my digital signature with the PLANT AMERICA logo or contact me by phone or email to verify that it is from me."

Nancy Hargroves
NGC President
inbleum@me.com
(804) 363-0771 (C)

