

# ALABAMA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

## Electronic Candidate Forum Questionnaire

**Thank you for your interest in serving the Alabama Beekeepers Association.** Your willingness to volunteer your time and expertise is appreciated. This questionnaire will be used to publish a candidate campaign platform in a special edition of the Stinger before election. Think of this as a Candidate Forum where you can tell membership why they should elect you to your nominated position. A headshot photo and bio is requested to be attached with a character limit, **about 1,700 characters (including spaces is a good estimate for half a single-spaced page in standard formatting)** to better explain your position.

Please return this document by email to Angela Parham at [angiparham@yahoo.com](mailto:angiparham@yahoo.com) No Later Than September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to be included in the publication.

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION

**Name:** Bill Elliott

**Address:** 2211 Colice Rd SE

**City:** Huntsville **State:** AL **ZIP:** 35801

**Phone:** (256) 679-8085

**Email:** [bill@welliott.net](mailto:bill@welliott.net)

**County:** Madison

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## BEEKEEPING EXPERIENCE

How many years have you been keeping bees?

☐ Less than 2 years

☐ 2–5 years

☒ 6–10 years

☐ 11–20 years

☐ More than 20 years

**Current number of colonies:** Approximately 80

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## TYPE OF OPERATION:

☐ Hobby

☒ Sideliner

☐ Commercial

☒ Queen/Bee Producer

☐ Pollination Services

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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## DO YOU BELONG TO A LOCAL BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION?

☒ Yes

☐ No

**If yes, which one(s)?** Madison County Beekeepers Association (MCBA).

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## ALABAMA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT

Have you previously served the Alabama Beekeepers Association as an officer?

☐ Yes

☒ No

**If yes, please describe.** N/A

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## HAVE YOU SERVED IN A LOCAL CLUB?

☐ President

- ☒ Vice President
- ☒ Secretary
- ☐ Treasurer
- ☐ Director
- ☐ Committee Chair
- ☒ Other

Please describe.

I have served two terms as Vice President and one term as Secretary of the Madison County Beekeepers Association and continue to support the organization as an instructor, mentor, volunteer, webmaster, and IT resource. As with ABA, I rebuilt and rehosted MCBA's website, secured the domain under club control, and helped establish and maintain its organizational email, Google Drive, and MailChimp tools.

My local work has included planning and supporting beginning-beekeeping classes; registration and communications; teaching; developing and managing mentoring programs; modernizing membership systems; and supporting educational apiaries and outreach activities.

**I initiated and developed several long-term MCBA education and outreach projects**, then brought other volunteers into the work and handed the projects off for continued operation. These include establishing the MCBA Teaching Apiary at the Alabama A&M Agribition Center; building a relationship with the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) Bee Club that supports young beekeepers and provides MCBA with a centralized apiary for teaching and Open Hive events; and establishing and maintaining the observation hive at the Huntsville Botanical Garden Butterfly House for the past five years. I also helped reinvigorate the Garden apiary and create a gift-shop revenue stream from honey produced there, strengthening MCBA's service relationship with the Garden and supporting our use of its facilities for club meetings.

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## LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

List any professional, civic, nonprofit, agricultural, educational, military, or volunteer leadership experience.

### **ABA service and volunteer leadership:**

I currently serve as ABA Region North Director, webmaster and information technology (IT) support, and as a member and instructor with the Alabama Master Beekeeper Program (AMBP). I took responsibility for ABA's web management, **completely rebuilt and rehosted the website, secured the Association's domain under ABA control**, and established and maintain the ABA's Google Workspace, including organizational email accounts, Google Drive, and Groups.

My AMBP work has included instruction, practical examinations, support for the review and revision of written examination questions at all levels for accuracy, readability, and alignment with testing objectives, program planning and review, support of the annual testing weekend, analysis of registration and attendance, and participation in the 2026 after-action review to identify improvements in registration, candidate communications, program administration, and future planning.

I have also supported Fall Conference registration and operations, membership and registration systems, online registration and payment, communications, historical-record research, governance-related projects, and other Board initiatives.

Much of my ABA work has involved **identifying practical organizational problems and helping develop systems, processes, or plans to address them**—from membership and registration systems to club-president communications, conference planning, AMBP operations, and preservation of institutional knowledge.

### **Professional leadership:**

I retired from PeopleTec in 2018 as a Senior Vice President after a 32-year career primarily involving systems engineering, program management, planning, analysis, and organizational leadership in support of missile-defense and other complex technical programs.

At PeopleTec I was responsible for over 100 employees in Huntsville and Colorado Springs. The organization I led also won what was then the **largest contract** in PeopleTec's history and managed the **company's largest revenue line**. Earlier in my career I led multidisciplinary teams of more than 50 people and managed programs involving budgets, schedules, technical performance, personnel, customers, and multiple organizations.

Those experiences taught me that successful organizations require more than good ideas. They need clear objectives, capable people, defined responsibility, good communication, **measurable results, and consistent follow-through.**

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## WHY DO YOU WANT TO SERVE?

Why are you interested in serving on the ABA Board?

My primary reason for running for President is to help the Alabama Beekeepers Association **better fulfill its mission of serving Alabama beekeepers.**

Beekeeping has also given me the opportunity to meet and work with people who share the same fascination with honey bees that first drew me into beekeeping. I believe one of **ABA's greatest strengths should be its ability to connect those people and local clubs across the state** so that we can learn from one another, share experience, teach others, and strengthen beekeeping in Alabama.

**I believe ABA has many good people and good ideas.** Where we can improve is in consistently **turning those ideas into completed work.** I would like the new Board to come together quickly, agree on a manageable set of priorities, establish functioning committees, assign responsibility, improve **transparency and accountability**, and regularly review our progress.

My view of **leadership is fundamentally one of service and example. The President should lead:** listen carefully, help the Board establish direction, delegate responsibility, solve problems, remove obstacles, and be willing to do the work alongside others. I do not believe the President can or should do everything, but I do believe leadership requires **taking responsibility, following through, and setting the standard by example.** If the Board, committees, club presidents, and volunteers are equipped to succeed together and ABA is doing a better job of serving Alabama beekeepers, then the President is doing the job well.

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## EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

Please check any areas where you have experience.

- ☒ Strategic Planning
- ☒ Nonprofit Governance
- ☒ Financial Management
- ☒ Budgeting
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☒ Public Relations
- ☒ Marketing
- ☒ Event Planning
- ☒ Education
- ☒ Membership Development
- ☒ Social Media
- ☒ Website Management
- ☒ Volunteer Coordination
- ☒ Conflict Resolution
- ☒ Human Resources
- ☐ Legal/Compliance
- ☒ Information Technology
- ☒ Public Speaking
- ☒ Teaching/Training
- ☒ Other: Systems engineering, program management, organizational development, process improvement, data analysis, and technology implementation.

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## VISION FOR THE ALABAMA BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

What do you believe are the three biggest opportunities facing the Alabama Beekeepers Association over the next five years?

### 1. Build a stronger statewide beekeeping community.

ABA has an opportunity to **reconnect with local associations** and **become a more effective statewide network** for Alabama beekeepers.

That means maintaining **strong relationships with club presidents**, involving them meaningfully in their ex officio Board role, **improving two-way communication**, helping clubs share successful programs and resources, and better understanding what individual beekeepers value from membership.

This is an issue I have already worked on. I had raised the need for better club-president engagement previously. When Brian de Assis pressed the issue again this year, I reviewed the governing documents, confirmed the presidents' ex officio Board role, and researched and updated club-president contact information, updated the club information on the ABA website, established a reliable way to communicate with presidents, invited them to Board meetings, and advocated for their meaningful inclusion. Their ex officio role is not ceremonial; it provides an important **two-way connection between local associations and the statewide organization**. The recent club-president Zoom meetings and their interest in continuing those discussions demonstrate that there is real demand for stronger statewide connections. ABA should encourage and support that energy.

**ABA membership declined from 982 members in 2021 to 562 in 2025**, a decline of approximately 43 percent. **Renewals declined even more sharply, from 728 to 357** over the same period. That tells me our challenge is not simply recruiting new members; we also need to understand why existing members are not renewing and what value they expect from ABA. This creates an important opportunity to reconnect ABA with local clubs and individual beekeepers, listen more effectively, and build a statewide organization that members see value in belonging to throughout the year.

### 2. Expand education, services, and advocacy for Alabama beekeepers throughout the year.

Recent discussions with local club presidents have highlighted requests for better access to speakers, educational programs, shared resources, and stronger connections with the statewide Association. The Fall Conference is important, but ABA should provide **meaningful value to beekeepers throughout the year**.

We have opportunities to strengthen the Alabama Master Beekeeper Program and **expand its role as an educational resource for ABA and local clubs**. That could include developing and sharing science-based presentations, maintaining a statewide speaker resource, helping clubs obtain speakers and programs, providing educational materials that clubs can use locally, and expanding youth beekeeping opportunities.

We should also work more closely with Auburn University, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES), the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI), and other beekeeping organizations to support education, research, honey bee health, and practical assistance to beekeepers.

When ABA participates in meetings with partner organizations, our representatives should **report relevant opportunities, commitments, and follow-up actions back to the Board** so those relationships produce sustained results.

As the statewide association, ABA can also help identify and address issues that individual beekeepers or local clubs may not be able to address effectively on their own. Examples include pesticide and herbicide losses, regulatory concerns, and other statewide issues affecting honey bees and beekeepers. We should learn how other states have addressed these problems, work with appropriate agencies and researchers, and **advocate for practical solutions** when appropriate.

ABA can also explore ways to **directly support local clubs**, including possible small grants or other assistance for worthwhile educational and community projects.

Another tangible opportunity is a Beekeeping and Honey Bee **specialty license plate**, which could increase public awareness of honey bees and beekeeping while generating additional revenue that ABA could use to support its mission.

ABA also has significant financial resources already on hand (**more than \$50,000 in the bank**). After establishing an appropriate reserve, I believe we should thoughtfully determine how available funds—and new revenue opportunities—can be invested in programs that directly benefit Alabama beekeepers.

### **3. Build a transparent, accountable organization capable of sustaining those efforts.**

Recent Board work has highlighted gaps in committee visibility, organizational records, financial reporting, historical documentation, and continuity from one group of volunteers to the next. **Good programs require an organization that can support them over time.**

Over the past two years, I have repeatedly gone back to ABA's Constitution and Bylaws as practical questions have arisen about how the Association is supposed to operate, and I have raised issues when our practices did not appear to match them. That review has helped identify several **execution issues**: local club presidents were not consistently being included despite their ex officio Board status; there has been uncertainty about which standing committees are active, who serves on them, and what they are responsible for; and the governing documents refer to a separate Standing Rules document that, despite subsequent efforts to locate it, has not been found.

The same review has also highlighted the need to **confirm ABA's current nonprofit, corporate, and federal tax status** and to preserve the supporting records and filing responsibilities for future Boards.

An important first step is to strengthen the Board itself. I would begin with an **early Board orientation and working session** to review the ABA mission and governing documents, clarify roles, and establish a shared understanding of how the Board should operate. That means we should build effective working relationships, improve communication and transparency within the Board, clarify our respective roles, and **reestablish governance consistent with our Constitution and Bylaws**, including the proper roles of officers, directors, standing committees, and ex officio Board members. Our governing documents should provide the framework within which the Association operates, while appropriate policies, Standing Rules, and operating procedures provide the detail needed to carry out the work.

**These are not bureaucratic concerns.** When roles, responsibilities, procedures, and organizational records are unclear, communication suffers, work can be missed, accountability becomes difficult, and each group of volunteers is forced to rediscover things the Association should already know.

ABA also has an opportunity to strengthen transparency and accountability, establish functioning committees, improve financial reporting and auditing, preserve institutional knowledge, maintain important organizational records, monitor membership and other key measures, and put activities such as the Fall Conference on repeatable planning cycles.

A simple recurring set of measures, such as membership and renewals, financial position, conference performance, committee progress, club participation, and major open actions, would help the Board know where attention is needed. **What gets measured gets done.**

We should also **establish better ways to hear directly from the membership**, including periodic surveys or other structured opportunities for feedback.

We cannot and should not try to accomplish everything at once. The new Board should identify a **manageable set of immediate priorities**, establish responsibility and realistic milestones, and then build on that foundation over the course of the term.

**The objective is practical:** make sure good ideas survive changes in leadership, responsibilities are understood, progress is visible, members know how the Association is performing, and worthwhile initiatives become sustained programs.

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## **WHAT CHALLENGES SHOULD THE ABA ADDRESS?**

One major challenge is **declining membership, particularly member retention**. We need to understand why people join, why they renew or do not renew, and what value they expect from a statewide organization.

A second challenge is **organizational continuity and follow-through**. Too much knowledge and too many responsibilities have historically depended on individual volunteers. Board decisions and worthwhile ideas need clear ownership, timelines, records, and follow-up so that progress does not disappear when leadership changes.

A third challenge is **financial and operational stewardship**. ABA should have routine budgeting and financial reporting, a functioning annual audit process, a clearly defined reserve policy, and a deliberate plan for using its resources to advance the mission.

The Fall Conference illustrates many of these challenges. It should operate on a **repeatable annual planning, budgeting, execution, and after-action cycle** rather than requiring major processes to be recreated each year.

Underlying all of these issues are **transparency and accountability**. Board members and members should reasonably understand what the Association is doing, how its resources are being used, who is responsible for important actions, and whether those actions were completed.

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## TEAMWORK

Describe a time when you worked with a group that had differing opinions. What role did you play?

One recent example is the work Vince Wallace and I have done developing the Fall Conference Leadership and Operations Manual. We brought different experience and perspectives to the project. Vince brought extensive experience from ABA leadership and conference operations, while I tended to approach the work from a systems and process perspective—how responsibilities, timelines, decisions, handoffs, and lessons learned could be documented so that future Boards would not have to recreate the conference process each year.

My role was to listen, ask questions, organize and draft the material, research issues when necessary, and work through areas where we saw things differently. We spent many hours reviewing and revising the document rather than assuming either person's first approach was necessarily the best one. The objective was not for either of us to win a disagreement; it was to produce something practical that reflected experience and could actually help future Boards.

That experience reflects how I try to work when people have differing opinions: **listen and seek to understand first**, identify the objective we share, establish the facts and areas of agreement, explain my own perspective clearly, and **work toward a practical solution**. Not every disagreement ends in complete consensus, but people should know they were heard and their concerns were considered fairly. Once a decision is made, I believe the group should **move forward together** and focus on making it successful.

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## DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE

Please indicate your areas of interest.

- ☒ Honey Production
  - ☒ Queen Rearing
  - ☐ Pollination
  - ☒ Bee Health
  - ☒ Small Hive Beetle
  - ☒ Varroa Management
  - ☒ Education
  - ☒ Youth Programs
  - ☒ Master Beekeeper Program
  - ☒ Research
  - ☒ Public Outreach
  - ☐ Honey Judging
  - ☐ Bee Removal
  - ☒ Legislative Issues
  - ☒ Coordination with other bee associations
  - ☒ Other: Mentoring, practical beekeeper education, technology applications in beekeeping, data collection, and improving communication among beekeepers and local associations.
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## ATTACH BIO BELOW HERE

Bill Elliott is a beekeeper, educator, and current Region North Director of the Alabama Beekeepers Association. He also serves as ABA webmaster and technology support and is a member and instructor with the Alabama Master Beekeeper Program.

At the local level, Bill has served two terms as Vice President and one term as Secretary of the Madison County Beekeepers Association. His volunteer work includes beekeeper education, mentoring, beginning-beekeeping classes,

teaching apiaries, communications, websites, and outreach projects with local organizations and educational institutions.

Bill retired in 2018 as a Senior Vice President of PeopleTec following a 32-year career in systems engineering, program management, planning, analysis, and organizational leadership. At PeopleTec he led approximately 100 employees in Huntsville and Colorado Springs and previously managed large multidisciplinary teams supporting complex technical programs.

Bill currently manages 80 colonies and remains active in honey production, queen and nuc production, beekeeper education, mentoring, and honey bee health.

He is running for ABA President because he believes the Association can better serve Alabama beekeepers throughout the year by strengthening connections among members and local clubs, improving transparency and accountability, putting its people and financial resources to work for its mission, and creating organizational processes that turn good ideas into sustained results. **His approach is simple: listen, set priorities, assign responsibility, measure progress, and follow through. His campaign reflects that approach: Serving Beekeepers. Connecting Clubs. Getting Things Done.**