

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD BOARD MEETING

February 19 – 20, 2019
Washington DC

MINUTES

Welcome and Roll Call and Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m. Eastern time by Chairperson, Jim Rockis.

Board Members in Attendance: Paul Battaglia, Roger Beyer, Bob Schaefer, Mark Schmidlin, Rex Korson, Beth Walterscheidt, Jim Corliss, Gary Westlake, Della Deal, James Rockis. Roger Beyer via teleconference.

Unavailable: Chris Maciborski and Mark Steelhammer

USDA Representative in Attendance: Patty Petrella and Heather Pichelman

Staff in Attendance: Marsha Gray, Cynthia Alexander and Jenny Tomaszewski

Guest(s) in Attendance: Will Rockis, Gary Thomas, Blake Rafeld

Chairman, Jim Rockis, provided an opening prayer and welcomed all incoming board members.

Additional Agenda Items: No new items were added to the agenda.

Agenda:

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the agenda as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Meeting Minutes:

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the January 9, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Board Orientation and Signing of Conflict of Interest, Lobbying Prohibition Statements:

USDA representatives, Patty Petrella and Heather Pichelman, welcomed Gary Westlake, Make Schmidlin and Bob Schaefer with a letter and certificate from the Secretary of Agriculture.

Ms. Petrella presented a board orientation and reviewed documents provided in board binders. Board members signed Conflict of Interest and Lobbying Prohibition statements.

Ms. Petrella answered historical questions from new board members.

Committee Reports:

A. Governance – Policy Book – Updated Policy Book for Approval:

Beth Walterscheidt reviewed the recommended changes in the Policy Book.

Ms. Walterscheidt requested that staff add an approval date to each policy covered in the policy book.

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the Christmas Tree Promotion Board's Revised Policy Book with the exception of page 29 "Board Member Election Procedure" in the handbook. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Beth Walterscheidt will present a revised "Board Member Election Procedure" document to the next meeting for board consideration.

Call with Attorney

Executive Session - It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to enter Executive Session. **MOTION APPROVED.** Guests were excused from the room.

Resumption of Board Meeting – It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** emerge from Executive Session. **MOTION APPROVED.** Guest re-entered the meeting.

B. Promotion: Rex Korson introduced Concept Farms and Fleishman Hillard.

Presentation from Concept Farms: Griffin Stenger and Chuck Contompasis provided a slideshow and an overview of the 2018 campaign season.

Presentation from Fleishman Hillard: John Armato and Liz Conant provided a slideshow on the public relations for the 2018 season.

2019 Campaign Plan:

General discussion and recommendations of board members for the future of the campaign and public relations efforts. Marsha Gray announced that she and the Promotion Committee chair will be meeting with the two agencies to develop ideas for the 2019 campaign, most likely in early May.

C. Research:

Della Deal reported on the current research projects. See attached packet for research details.

Cyndi Alexander recommended that the RFP's be announced in April and noted that there were more grant proposals than available funding this past year. Ms. Alexander asked the board to pass on concerns in the field to the research committee.

Board discussed possibility of increasing research budget. There was general agreement to consider research funding increases as problems arise.

D. Finance:

a. Audit Presentation – Fiscal Year 2017/2018:

Jeff Delyser of Propp, Christensen, Caniglia LLC joined via speakerphone. Mr. Delyser reviewed the draft audit with the board page-by-page and answered all questions.

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the audit as presented by auditor for fiscal year 2017/2018. **MOTION APPROVED.**

b. Financial Report:

November 2018, December 2018 and January 2019 financial reports were provided to the board.

Session dismissed on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 4:30 p.m. Eastern time.

Session reconvened on Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. Eastern time.

E. Industry Relations:

Gary Westlake reported that Marsha Gray and other board members (Jim Rockis, Rex Korson, Jim Corliss and Gary Westlake) have been in attendance at many State Association meetings. States include California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana/Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Nova Scotia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Pacific Northwest, Tennessee, Vermont/New Hampshire, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

E-newsletter is typically sent twice each month with updates on industry items with a 35% open rate of approximately 2,400 email addresses.

Board discussed communication options other than email, and directed staff to create and send two postcard mailings; one with a focus on research and one with a focus on promotion to be sent to the industry.

Management Staff Updates:

A. Collection Update:

- Suggestion for future "Sales Forms" to include an optional donation line (for those under 500 trees)
- As of February 19, 2019, CTPB has received a total of \$800,832.01 in 2018 assessments.
- CTPB has received \$81,563.05 in back assessments (2017) as of that same date.
- CTPB just received U.S. Customs reports on Thursday, February 14, 2019. Staff is currently contacting Importers of Record.

Board discussed collection of assessments on imported trees. Patty Patrella said that the CTPB can request that U.S. Customs collect assessments at the border. There may be a small fee that is required from the CTPB.

B. Voice of the Industry Report

Board reviewed the report from NCTA on the Voice of the Industry. Report attached.

USDA Update:

- A. **Referendum:** Patty Petrella reported that everything is still on track for the upcoming referendum.
- The voting period is currently scheduled for April 15 through May 10, 2019.
 - CTPB staff will submit an address list of those who have paid the 2018 assessment. USDA is requesting the list by March 20.
 - Canadian Growers will receive their ballot via Fed-Ex with a Fed-Ex return envelope.

B. Management Review:

Ms. Petrella shared that Management Reviews are conducted every three years by the USDA. CTPB's first Management Review was completed in 2018. The purpose is to determine if there are issues with record keeping, finance and management. There were only two findings, both which have been rectified by the CTPB.

Board Officer Elections:

Chairman, Jim Rockis thanked the CTPB Board for allowing him to serve as chairman. Rockis presented the slate of nominees prepared by Chris Maciborski:

Chair – Rex Korson

Vice-Chair – Beth Walterscheidt

Treasurer – Roger Beyer
Secretary – Bob Schaefer

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to close nominations. **MOTION APPROVED.**

A paper ballot election was taken, and slate of nominees was **APPROVED** as presented.

Comments from new chairman:

Rex Korson recognized Jim Rockis for his outstanding work during his tenure of CTPB Chairman. Korson also asked the board members to speak with their local growers to gather feedback as to what they would like to see the board accomplish.

Rex Korson appointed Jim Rockis to chair a Special Committee to address the recommendation from the Long Range Planning task force to explore the feasibility of collecting more accurate and more comprehensive industry data.

Announcements/Other Business:

Marsha Gray mentioned that the Lamb Board asked for a recommendation for our two agencies, Concept Farm and Fleishman Hillard, after seeing the campaign summary video.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, March 14th at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time via conference call.

Adjourn:

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to adjourn. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Schaefer
Secretary