

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD TELECONFERENCE BOARD MEETING

June 13, 2019

MINUTES

Welcome: The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. Eastern time by Chairperson, Rex Korson.

Board Members in Attendance: Paul Battaglia, Roger Beyer, Mark Schmidlin, Mark Steelhammer, Rex Korson, Jim Corliss, Gary Westlake, James Rockis, Beth Walterscheidt, Bob Schaefer, Della Deal and Chris Maciborski

USDA Representative in Attendance: Vickie Carpenter

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

Guest(s) in Attendance: No guest.

Agenda:

Chairman, Rex Korson requested to move USDA Referendum update to the top of the agenda. Marsha Gray also requested to add the U.S. Customs Collection under Management Staff Updates. It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the agenda as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Meeting Minutes:

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the April 11, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

USDA Approval: Vickie Carpenter, a USDA representative reported,

- The referendum passed with 55% of the vote.
- The Board is requesting a report from USDA with the breakdown of the votes either by state or by region.
- The next CTPB referendum will be in seven years.

New Business:

A. Board Nomination Update: Marsha Gray reported that the office has received nominees for the three board positions that will open at the end of the year. The nominated candidates per region are:

Eastern: Chuck Berry, GA; Justin Diel, TN; Travis Drexler, NY; Charles Fowler, NC; Fans Kok, VA; Laura Wolfe, VA.

Central: Derek Ahl, WI; Justin Bartlett, MI; Jane Neubauer, OH.

Western: Bill Brawley, OR; Terry Muilenburg, OR.

- Region specific ballots (Eastern, Central, Western) will be mailed within the next week.
- Nomination ballots are mailed to those who have paid the 2018 assessment.
- Voters will be given a 30-day window to submit their ballot back to the CTPB.

B. Review of Management Team: Beth Walterscheidt thanked those who sent in their evaluations.

- Looking at the overall picture, they are very pleased with Gray Management.
- Budgeting assessment collection (#6 on the report) had some good comments for growth. Many of the comments came in before further discussion on compliance.

C. Management Contract Renewal:

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to approve the renewal of the independent contractor agreement with Gray Management.

- A board member commented that last year when they hired Gray Management it may have been on an interim basis and questioned if the board would be required to complete an RFP process to have a permanent contract.
- Vickie Carpenter, USDA representative will review order, bylaws, policies and minutes to determine if an RFP process is required.

It was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** to rescind the motion to approve the management contract until it is determined if the board must go through an RFP process. **MOTION APPROVED.**

D. Appointment of Compliance Committee: Rex Korson presented the new special compliance committee. Mr. Korson has appointed the following 6 board members to serve:

- Chairman, Chris Maciborski
- Central Region: Beth Walterscheidt
- Western Region: Bob Shaefer and Roger Byer
- Eastern Region: Gary Westlake and Della Deal

Committee Reports:

A. Finance: Roger Beyer reported,

a. May 2019 Financial Statement

- Strong position. Collections exceed budget by 7 1/2 percent, and we are below our projections on spending.
- Beyer asked Marsha Gray to elaborate on \$21,000 in assessment payments in May. Ms. Gray reported that these were primarily Canadian payers. There continues to be a delay in receiving some Canadian payments based on the U.S. Customs report being delayed, dealing with bad addresses on the customs report and delays in Canadian/US mail.

B. Promotion: Paul Battaglia reported,

- Paul Battaglia, Marsha Gray, Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm had an in-person meeting in California.
- Monday, June 17th another conference call will be hear presentations from each agency on their recommendation for the 2019 campaign. More details to come on the next conference call.
- Ms. Gray had a meeting with Dan Stuppiello, the head buyer of live goods for Home Depot earlier in the week. Home Depot was interested in learning more about the CTPB and how we can possibly work together, and Stuppiello suggested a second meeting with other Home Depot personnel.

C. Research: Della Deal reported, they are working to normalize and standardize the research component of the promotion board – creating a schedule that matches our fiscal year. Request for proposals went out on May 20th and need to be back by July 12th. Research Committee will present these the first of August.

a. RFP Updates – Cyndi Alexander reported that 70 people received the RFP. These people may have been currently funded, have been funded in the past and have expressed an interest. The RFP is listed on the CTPB website.

- Ms. Alexander shared that she has investigated the Multi State Specialty Crop Block Grant and felt that it may be a good fit for the Elongated Hemlock Scale work. \$250,000 - \$1,000,000 that can be requested.

- D. Industry Relations:** Gary Westlake reported more of philosophical report, now that we have the referendum, he requested for our deeds and actions to show the industry the worthiness of this industry. Showing them the value of this industry. Mr. Westlake challenged Paul Battaglia, to include this in the promotional work to keep what the CTPB does at the forefront of the growers focus.
- Mr. Westlake reported that the website repairs are still underway. Marsha Gray also reported that there is a new web design - within the next few weeks should have the final product for the board to review.
 - Mr. Westlake requested Vickie Carpenter, a USDA representative, if we could get an official donation form to provide to the growers who don't qualify, but they wish to support the industry.
- E. Governance:** Beth Walterscheidt reported that all policies are all set.

Management Staff Updates:

- A. Collections Update:** Marsha Gray reported that we are still getting some straggler payments.
- Ms. Gray and Jenny Tomaszewski had a meeting with the database developer. One item they touched on was the collection of the payment process - creating an online system for them to update their information and pay their assessments. Very early stages, nothing that will happen right away.
- B. Customs Report of Imported Trees:** Marsha Gray reported that USDA will be meeting with U.S. Customs to discuss how to collect CTPB assessments for imported trees at the border.
- C.** NFPA meeting is scheduled for June 17-20th in Sacramento, TX. Ellis Schmidt and Richard Moore will be representing CTPB at the conference. This will be Ellis Schmidt's last year. Ms. Gray reported that NCTA is looking for individual(s) that may be interested in filling his spot.

Announcements: No additional announcements.

Next Meeting: Rex Korson scheduled the next teleconference board meeting for Thursday, July 11th at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time.

Update on the August in-person board meeting in Pennsylvania. Room reservations have been made at the Holiday Inn Express in Dickson City. Currently, reservations have been made for all board members for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday – these dates can be adjusted per your flight schedule. For those flying in, the closest airport is Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport.

Adjourn:

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Schaefer
Secretary