

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD MEETING

April 28, 2020

11:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time

Via Video Conference

Welcome and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m. Eastern time by Chairman, Beth Walterscheidt.

Board Members in Attendance: Paul Battaglia, Roger Beyer, Beth Walterscheidt, Bob Schaefer, Mark Schmidlin, Charles Fowler, Derek Ahl, William Brawley, Jim Corliss, Gary Westlake and Della Deal.

Board Members Not in Attendance: Chris Maciborski

USDA Representative in Attendance: Sue Coleman

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

Guest(s) in Attendance: None

Agenda:

Beth Walterscheidt added Gray Management contract review and Board member nominees under the Announcements section.

Meeting Minutes:

It was **MOVED** by Gary Westlake and **SECONDED** by Charles Fowler to approve the March 24, 2020 Board Meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

It was **MOVED** by Della Deal and **SECONDED** by Paul Battaglia to approve the April 14, 2020 Board Meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

It was **MOVED** by Mark Schmidlin and **SECONDED** by Roger Beyer to approve the April 2, 2020 Executive Committee minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

It was **MOVED** by Bob Schaefer and **SECONDED** by Gary Westlake to approve the Agenda as corrected. **MOTION APPROVED**

Committee Reports

Finance – Mark Schmidlin reported:

- Mr. Schmidlin provided a brief overview of the March 2020 financial statements.
- \$1,734,264 in assessments have been collected as of April 27, 2020.

Compliance Committee – Marsha Gray reported on behalf of Chris Maciborski

- Ms. Gray reviewed the Assessment Collection Report with the Board. As of April 27, 2020, a collection amount of \$1,658,978.00 has been received.
- Ms. Gray reported that the grower audits were on hold due to COVID-19. The auditor, Jim Lantz, will begin reaching out to reschedule appointments with the last seven audits candidates.
- Ms. Gray provided an update on the second round of non-responder mailing. The second letter will go out on Wednesday, May 6th. Heather Pichelman, Director, of Promotion and Economics Division with USDA, has allowed us to Cc her on the outgoing letter.
- Beth Walterscheidt reported that a letter was sent to USDA Administrator, Bruce Summers, as requested by the board. Staff will send a copy of that letter to all board members.

Promotion Committee – Paul Battaglia reported:

- Zoom worksession was held with the Promotion Committee and both agencies, Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm, to review the components that they were responsible for during the 2019 season. A Promotion Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 29th, the committee members will have a chance provide feedback on campaign components from 2019 and offer recommendations for 2020.
- In May, Battaglia, Bill Brawley and the two agencies will meet via video conference to begin the planning for 2020 campaign. This is in lieu of the usual in-person work session.

Research – Della Deal and Cyndi Knudson reported:

- Cyndi Knudson shared that they are moving forward with some research projects, while other projects are on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. Restrictions vary by university and state.
- Mid-Point reports are being emailed to the board as they are received.
- The budget has been approved by USDA. The Research Committee is moving forward with the RFP process and is waiting for USDA to approve the submitted RFP documents. The committee would like to release it May 1st. That would allow researchers about six weeks to put together their projects. The committee will then review and hopefully be able to present those recommendations to the Board at our in-person board meeting in July.
- Everything is going as planned for the industry data/seedling survey project. On schedule for release in July.

Industry Relations – Gary Westlake reported:

- There have been no state and regional meetings. Many summer meetings are being cancelled or postponed.
- Research video project is on pause, waiting for Cyndi Knudson to format the research portal as was discussed at the last board meeting. Did not want to create the video without the portal up and running. Ms. Knudson shared that the portal is developing, and they are receiving grower input.
- Looked at a single password protected page versus a multi-password protection option. Multi-password option is a little more secure and similar in cost. This information will be submitted to the industry Relations committee for them to discuss.
- Gary Westlake suggested that the online research portal and the online assessment portal use the same username and password for both. Marsha Gray shared that would be something that would need to be discussed with the bank and the web site host.
- Paul Battaglia suggested that the Promotion Committee could work with the Industry Relations Committee and work on cross-promotion.
- Board discussion on COVID-19 and how it may or may not affect this year's sales.
- Marsha Gray suggested that the Board schedule an informal discussion among industry leaders on how to prepare for possible issues with the sales season.

Governance Committee – Bob Schaefer reported:

- Mr. Schaefer thanked the Governance Committee for their help and hard work in putting together the recommended bylaws.
- Most items changed were just small housekeeping items.
- Paul Battaglia mentioned in Article VII regarding the staff and their duties. Mr. Battaglia shared the original intention of the Board was not to hire employees, but to hire a contractor.
- Sue Coleman shared that it is written so the board could go either direction, either hire a contractor or an employee and not have to change the bylaws.
- Board discussion was held on Article VII regarding the staff and their duties. No change was made to the verbiage.

It was **MOVED** by Paul Battaglia and **SECONDED** by Roger Beyer to approve the revised bylaws as they were presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Management Staff Update - Marsha Gray Reported:

- The independent evaluation has been approved with Timothy Richards at ASU. Mr. Richards has begun working through the raw data from NCTA/Neilson. Expecting that results will be shared at the July in-person meeting.
- NFPA Conference has been cancelled for July 2020. The deposit was already paid for the booth; they will keep our deposit for 2021.

USDA Update – Sue Coleman reported:

- Ms. Coleman provided the board with a tour of www.regulation.gov website and how to view the current Notice and request for comments on the request for extension and revision of a currently approved information collection for CTPB forms. The comment period ends May 15, 2020.

Other Business/Announcements

- Beth Walterscheidt reported that in June they will be conducting the Gray Management review. Ms. Walterscheidt will be sending the board a copy of Gray Management's contract to review along with a matrix for you to complete. Please submit it back to Ms. Walterscheidt before the next Board meeting in May.
- Ms. Walterscheidt shared that Board Nominees need to be completed by the June 1st. There are 2 openings in the West, 1 in the Central, 1 Importer and 2 Eastern. Nomination forms are available on the website.

Next Meeting

The next video conference Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26th at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time.

The next face-to-face Board meeting is scheduled for July 22-23, 2020 in Indianapolis, IN.

Adjourn

It was **MOVED** by Paul Battaglia and **SECONDED** by Bob Schaefer to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Beth Walterscheidt adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m. Eastern time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Schaefer