

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD

Board Meeting

February 18, 2021

Via Video Conference

Welcome and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m. Eastern time by Chairman, Roger Beyer.

Board Members in Attendance: Mark Schmidlin, Derek Ahl, Gary Westlake, Charles Fowler, Bill Brawley, Roger Beyer, Jane Neubauer, Renee Campbell, Chuck Berry, Bob Schaefer, and Mike Cocco

Board Members not in Attendance: Larry Downey

USDA Representative(s) in Attendance: Sue Coleman and George Webster

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

Guest(s) in Attendance: No Guests

Agenda:

Roger Beyer requested to move “Announcements” before the Executive Session and the addition of “For The Good of the Order” after Announcements. It was **MOVED** by Charles Fowler and **SECONDED** by Bill Brawley to approve the Agenda as corrected. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Meeting Minutes:

It was **MOVED** by Chuck Berry and **SECONDED** by Bill Brawley to approve January 28, 2021, Board meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

It was **MOVED** by Bill Brawley and **SECONDED** by Charles Fowler to approve the February 3, 2021, Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Committee Reports

Finance – Bob Schaefer reported

- A brief overview of the January 2021 financial statements was provided. Schaefer shared that bank fees include the cost of managing and maintaining the lockbox.

It was **MOVED** by Bill Brawley and **SECONDED** by Derek Ahl to approve the January 2021 Financials as provided. **Motion Approved.**

Research – Cyndi Knudson reported for Mark Schmidlin

- Research Topic Survey - The second annual survey has been sent to all State Associations for inclusion in their newsletters, the CTPB e-newsletter, posted on the Research tab on the CTPB Industry website, and shared through several Facebook groups. This survey is an opportunity for growers to guide the focus of research, funded by the CTPB, by sharing specific Christmas tree production issues they face.
- Research Portal – reports are being prepped, and design is underway.
- Seedling Survey – the survey is pretty much completed, still missing a few larger suppliers. The Committee is collaborating with USDA NASS to best report the data to represent the actual numbers.
- Census of Horticulture will be implemented in 2022 – the census questions are currently being modified and updated. Knudson will be asking Board members for any suggestions or modifications regarding the wording of the Christmas Tree portion of the Census.
- The research grant RFP process will be coming up again in May. Knudson reminded board members that several of our researchers will be retiring in the next couple of years. We all need to be alert to university personnel on the state level who work with Christmas tree production to help fill gaps where researchers are retiring.
- The CTPB funded a project with Chal Landgren at Oregon State University, which included a collection of the Turkish Fir seed in the Republic of Georgia. 2020 was an excellent seed production year, and

seed yield exceeded needs of currently funded research projects. Researchers are using a portion of harvested seed to implement a CoFirGE 2 trial with plots in additional states along with the original. We are also investigating other states to plant small plots of Turkish Fir to determine if they may be an option for Christmas trees in regions with limited species.

- Discussion on the seedling survey and if the information is proprietary, and how the report will be laid out.
- Knudson shared the second seedling survey will be released in July.

Industry Relations – Gary Westlake reported

- Industry Relations Committee members have been finalized.
- The Committee is planning a meeting for the second week of March.

Governance – Charles Fowler reported

- The next meeting of the Governance Committee will be on February 25th.

Promotion – Bill Brawley reported

- Promotion Committee members have been identified. They are looking for an additional candidate from the Central Region.
- The Committee is planning a meeting within the next several weeks.

Compliance Committee – Derek Ahl reported

- Several of the Committee members will be speaking with potential collection or compliance contractors to determine costs.
- Grower Audits - Ahl shared they have a \$30,000 budget for the 2021 fiscal year audits. Marsha Gray briefed the new Board members on how the audit process works. In 2020, 11 growers were audited, with the average cost of an audit under \$3,000.

It was **MOVED** by Derek Ahl and **SECONDED** by Gary Westlake to direct Marsha Gray to select twelve growers to be audited by Jim Lantz in the CTPB 2020-2021 fiscal year. **MOTION APPROVED.**

- The Compliance Committee is targeting to have the grower audits completed by the end of July.
- The Governance Committee has been reviewing the wording of the Order and will plan to provide some recommendations to the Governance Committee to clear some confusion among growers as to who is responsible for paying assessments.
- Sue Coleman reported that USDA is communicating with a grower that refused an audit in the 2020 fiscal year.
- Roger Beyer reminded Committee Chair members that there is a 14-day public notice for an official meeting.

Management Staff Update – Marsha Gray reported

- Assessment Collection – A brief overview of the assessment collection report was provided. As of February 17th, a total of \$1,062,730.98 has been received.
- Website hosting update and provider recommendation – Gray is recommending a new web hosting company, Firewall, an agency that Concept Farm secured for the campaign website. The recommendation is to host both CTPB websites on the same server with the same company. The www.christmastreepromotionboard.org site would be upgraded to include the research library and, hopefully, the assessment reporting and payment system.

New Business

- Previous to the meeting, Committee Chair's identified members to participate on their committees. An email with all committees and committee members was provided to the Board via email. (attached to minutes) Roger Beyer appointed the committee members as listed.

It was **MOVED** by Renee Campbell and **SECONDED** by Charles Fowler to approve committee member

appointments made by Roger Bery and provided via email on February 18th. **MOTION APPROVED.**

USDA – Sue Coleman Reported

- They are waiting on confirmation from the Senate for Thomas Vilsack's appointment.
- They are waiting on a nomination for the Undersecretary of Marketing and Regulatory Programs.
- Coleman has submitted to the FOIA office all of her November approvals that the requestor has requested.
- Discussion as to when the U.S. Customs plans to collect assessment for the CTPB at the Border and what information is included in the Canadian report. USDA continues to work with U.S. Customs to look for opportunities for that process to take place.
- Later this spring, the Board plans to request a Zoom meeting with members at USDA.

Announcements – No new items to report.

For the Good of the Order - No new items to report.

Executive Session - The Board entered into an Executive Session at 12:10 p.m to discuss the performance evaluation of a contractor. Staff was excused from the meeting, and Marsha Gray was asked to remain in the meeting.

Resumption of Board Meeting – The Board emerged from Executive Session at 1:15 p.m. Roger Beyer reported out of the Executive Session that he has appointed a committee led by Bob Schaefer and including Derek Ahl, Chuck Berry, Mark Schmidlin, and Marsha Gray to facilitate a discussion with the NCTA Executive Committee regarding the Voice of the Industry project. It was **MOVED** by Charles Fowler and **SECONDED** by Renee Campbell to approve the appointment of the special committee. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Meeting Schedule

- The next Board Meeting will be held on March 18, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time.
- Roger Beyer asked if board members would be willing to meet in person in late April or early May. Marsha Gray will send an electronic poll to get feedback from board members.

Adjourn:

It was **MOVED** by Derek Ahl and **SECONDED** by Chuck Berry to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Roger Beyer adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m. Eastern time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Westlake
Secretary

2021 CTPB Committee Members

Compliance Committee Members:

- Derek Ahl, WI - Chair
- Roger Beyer, OR
- Renee Campbell, NC - Vice-Chair
- Larry Downey, QC, Canada
- Bob Schaefer, OR

Promotion Committee Members:

- Ashley Ahl, WI
- Mark Arkills, OR
- Chuck Berry, GA
- Bill Brawley, OR - Chair
- Beau Coan
- Mike Cocco, CA
- Travis Drexler, NY
- Carrie McClain, NC
- Jane Neubauer, OH - Vice-Chair

Finance Committee Members:

- Derek Ahl, WI
- Roger Beyer, OR
- Bob Schaefer, OR - Chair
- Gary Westlake, PA

Research Committee Members:

- Derek Ahl, WI
- Della Deal, NC
- Larry Downey, QC, Canada - Vice-Chair
- Jim Heater, OR
- Bob Jones, TX
- Josh Peterson, MI
- Mark Schmidlin, OR - Chair
- Matt Sexton, NC/VA
- Kirk Stroda, OR
- Gary Westlake, PA
- Brad Wishon, NC/VA

Governance Committee Members:

- Charles Fowler, NC - Chair
- Rex Korson, MI
- Betty Malone, OR
- Bob Schaefer, OR - Vice-Chair

Industry Relations Committee Members:

- Chris Aldrich, WA
- Beth Bossio, WV
- Mike Cocco, CA - Vice-Chair
- Travis Drexler, NY
- Tom Dull, IN
- Nigel Manley, NH
- Amber Scott, NC
- Gary Westlake, PA - Chair
- Bruce Wiseman, WA