

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD

Board Meeting

March 18, 2021

Via Video Conference

Welcome and Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 11:06 a.m. Eastern time by Vice-Chairman Derek Ahl.

Derek Ahl read a statement from Chairman Roger Beyer regarding the Promotion Committee Report:

Before you proceed on this agenda item, I would like to remind the Board that today's discussion is intended to focus planning, solely on the 2021 Christmas Season Promotion.

It is my intent that at our April 15th Board meeting, we will have an agenda item to discuss the possibility of asking agencies, both currently used and new, to submit RFP's for the 2022 Christmas Season Promotion. If the Board chooses to adopt a proposal to look at new RFP's for promotion, we will ask staff to prepare the packet in a manner that will allow us to review and interview the potential agencies this summer, hopefully at our in-person meeting in August.

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

Board Members not in Attendance: Roger Beyer, Bill Brawley, and 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:

Mark Schmidlin requested the addition of "For the Good of the Order" following Announcements.

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

MOTION APPROVED.

Meeting Minutes:

Renee Campbell mentioned a spelling error under the Research Committee report. The second to last bullet should read "Seedling" survey.

It was **MOVED** by Chuck Berry and **SECONDED** by Charles Fowler to approve February 18, 2021 Board meeting minutes as corrected. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Committee Reports

Finance –

- Bob Schaefer shared a brief overview of the February 2021 financial statement. Marsha Gray pointed out a few items under Profit and Loss:
 - Under Expenses - Promotion Current Campaign, Campaign Planning, and Industry Relations are all under budget.
 - Operating expenses - 65000 Misc. , line-item is overspent due to thank you gifts for past Board members.
- Gray shared that she contacted all committee chairs regarding their budget for the upcoming fiscal year and has requested their proposed budget within the next week. The budget for the 2021/2022 fiscal year will be presented at the next Board meeting for approval.

It was **MOVED** by Charles Fowler and **SECONDED** by Mark Schmidlin to accept the February 2021 Financials as presented. **Motion Approved.**

Promotion – Jane Neubauer reported for Bill Brawley

- The CTPB received a thank you letter from the Christmas Spirit Foundation for the \$10,000 sponsorship.
- Promotion Committee met on March 11th with Fleishman Hillard and Concept Farm to review the 2020 campaign. Agencies commented on what went well and what didn't meet expectations.
- Promotion Committee will be meeting again on March 30th with Chuck Toombs, professor at Oregon State University, who will be presenting his consumer research findings and ideas for the coming year.
- The Promotion Committee recommended securing \$20,000 contracts with both Concept Farm and Fleishman Hillard to begin their planning work for the 2021 campaign.

It was **MOVED** by Chuck Berry and **SECONDED** by Bob Schaefer to approve two \$20,000 contracts, one for Concept Farm and one for Fleishman Hillard, to begin the planning work for the 2021 campaign. **MOTION APPROVED.**

- Neubauer shared that the Committee is under budget by \$30,000 with an additional \$9,000 credit from Concept Farm and is considering using some of the remaining funds to update the retail locator. This will allow additional outreach to wholesale growers so they can share this information with their retailers.
Marsha Gray shared that she has reached out to Concept Farm asking for a proposal and price that would provide all the revisions/plans needed to get the retail locator up and running by June 1st.
- The Committee will be discussing an RFP process and what that timeline would look like at their next Committee meeting.

Research –Mark Schmidlin reported

- Mark Schmidlin reported that the Committee had submitted their proposed budget for next year.
- Cyndi Knudson expanded on the budget, stating that the Committee will be requesting the same amount for the Research Grant Proposal Funding. Every other year, there is an international conference for the Christmas Tree Research and Extension. The Research Committee is requesting travel expenses for Knudson and the chair of the Research Committee to attend this conference.
- The Seedling Survey is completed and headed to USDA for approval.
- Fleming Gibson, Section Head, of the upcoming 2024 Census of Ag and Census of Horticulture, is looking for input from Christmas tree industry leaders on the questions that are on the survey.
- The Research Library/Portal material has been coming in from funded researchers. Knudson is working to put the material together.
- Knudson shared that a research project funded through Oregon State University involved collecting Trojan fir seed from Turkey. Several other research projects funded in previous years have not progressed since seed cone harvests have been disappointing in recent years. This year, there was a great crop. The amount of seed collected exceeded what was needed for current research projects. Knudson reached out to Christmas tree researchers (especially those conducting new tree species work), and State Associations to provide small amounts of trojan fir seed for seedling survival and growth trials in various regions of the US.
- Research Topic Survey for growers is ongoing and has received well over 100 responses. The results will be shared with researchers and the research committee early in April.
- The RFP process will begin in May following budget approval.

Industry Relations – Gary Westlake reported

- The Committee will be meeting Thursday, March 25th. The topic for discussion will be Christmas Tree Promotion Board outreach and grower engagement.

Governance – Charles Fowler reported

- The Committee held a meeting at the end of February; the Committee is working on Governance, they plan to bring their recommendations to a future Board meeting.

Compliance Committee – Derek Ahl reported

- The Compliance Committee has been in discussions with Jason Haselman to work as a Compliance Officer. Haselman is currently a contractor with the National Watermelon Promotion Board and has worked for them for the past 14-years and will continue to contract with them. The Compliance Committee would like to propose hiring Jason Haselmann on a trial basis through the end of this fiscal year for a budget of \$10,000.
- Open Board discussion regarding the contract for Compliance Officer.

It was **MOVED** by Bob Schaefer and **SECONDED** by Renee Campbell to contract Jason Hanselman for \$10,000 through the remainder of this fiscal year. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Management Staff Update – Marsha Gray reported

- Assessment Collection – A brief overview of the assessment collection report was provided. As of March 17th, a total of \$1,535,673.18 has been received.
- Gray provided a detailed explanation of the proposed webhosting and website updates, along with the steps that would need to take place to make this transition.
 - Step 1: Migrate www.christmastreepromotionboard.org to a new server, one-time cost of \$1,035.00. With an annual cost of \$30.00 to the Industry Relations budget.
 - Step 2: Domain Migration and Site Merge for www.ctpbresourcecenter.com one-time cost of \$1,468.87. With an annual cost of \$30.00 to the Promotion Committee budget.
 - Step 3: Creation of Research Library on .org website, one-time cost of \$5,904.30.
 - Annual server and hosting fees will cost \$1,030.20 through July 31st, with a yearly fee of \$7,324.80 divided between Industry Relations, Promotion and Assessment expenses in the future years.
 - This site would be robust enough to handle an online payment/reporting system.

It was **MOVED** by Bob Schaefer and **SECONDED** by Charles Fowler to accept the four charges to migrate the two websites, create the research library, and pay the annual hosting through the end of this fiscal year for a maximum of \$9,438.37.

Discussion regarding which charges are annual and which charges are a one-time charge.

MOTION APPROVED.

Old Business

- Voice of the Industry Follow-up - Bob Schaefer provided follow-up remarks regarding Schaefer's conversation with Dugald Kell with the National Christmas Tree Association.
- Schaefer shared they are attempting to schedule a face-to-face meeting in August.

New Business – no new business to report

USDA

- Sue Coleman reminded Board members that they are prohibited from any Lobbying efforts.
- Marsha Gray shared that she had a Zoom call with Administrator Bruce Summers and Erin Morris regarding the letter that was sent to all producers. Gray shared they touched on a couple of other issues that haven't been resolved yet, such as the pending reporting form and assessments not being collected at US Customs.
- The Executive Committee is considering a future Zoom call with upper-level USDA members.

Announcements/For the Good of the Order –

- Cyndi Knudson shared that ConShape, a PGR for leader control, has been approved and registered for use in Oregon and Washington. Registration is in process in most other major Christmas tree producing states. CTPB research funded a research project with Michigan State and Oregon State Universities that paved the way for private industry funds to further the development of this product.
- Derek Ahl shared that all Board members should have received an email from Roger Beyer regarding the Executive Director and Staff evaluations. Evaluations are due back to Roger Beyer.

Meeting Schedule

- The next Board Meeting will be held on April 15, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time.

Adjourn:

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

Vice-Chairman, Derek Ahl adjourned the meeting at 1:03 p.m. Eastern time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Westlake
Secretary