

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

A teleconference meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, August 25, 2020. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. Board President David Howard called the meeting to order at 9:02 am. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Rob Atchley, Larry Black, Aaron Himrod, Greg Hodges, David Howard, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Pat Ouimet, and John Updike. Also participating were Rick Dantzler, Steve Futch, Jim Graham, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Jim Syvertsen, and Deidra Whatley.

Other participants were Mike Aerts, Gary England, Fred Gmitter, Andrew Meadows, Michael Rogers, Callie Walker, and Rosa Walsh.

Mr. Howard opened with the approval of the June 23, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the minutes of the June 23rd Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Black and, with no discussion, it passed unanimously.

Executive Committee: Chairman David Howard reported that the Executive Committee met on August 12, 2020. Mr. Dantzler reported on the first matter the Executive Committee considered which was the proposed membership of the CRDF Committee on Plant Improvement. Mr. Dantzler read the names of the proposed participants for the Select Committee on Plant Improvement and stated that each of the individuals have been contacted and asked to serve, whether as a voting member or non-voting. He received positive responses from all but three Committee members at the time of the Board meeting.

The second item considered was proposed CRAFT contract language if CRAFT is the successful applicant for the large-scale field trial money that CRDF was directed to spend. He provided a brief background on how the new proposed contract language came about and explained that the Executive Committee had been uncomfortable with pushing the deadline for planting beyond June 30, 2021 unless there was an inability to have three thousand acres enrolled by the deadline. Should the CRAFT second round enrollment numbers not reach 3,000 acres then the contract language could be revisited if CRAFT was the successful applicant.

Moving forward, Mr. Dantzler reported on the Florida Citrus Mutual Virtual Educational Session invoice CRDF had received, noting that a contract had not been entered into by CRDF and Mutual due to the cancellation of the event. After receiving a draft invoice, for an amount higher than the \$10,000 approved in the budget, the Committee agreed to pay ten thousand dollars, as originally budgeted, and requested it be noted the contribution went to grower outreach and grower education in order to meet the requirement of the proviso language from the legislature.

The Executive Committee also discussed CRDF's sponsorship contribution for the Citrus Expo. While ten thousand dollars had been budgeted for the Expo, it was unclear if the Expo would take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. When the in-person event was cancelled, a virtual Expo was scheduled. Mr. Dantzler discussed sponsorship packages with Robin Loftin, and the Executive Committee recommended CRDF's contribution should not exceed five thousand dollars. Mr. Dantzler agreed with Ms. Loftin that CRDF would make a sponsorship contribution of three thousand dollars.

The next item the Executive Committee considered was the sharing of CRDF field trial data requested by Dr. Singerman. The Executive Committee agreed to release all the data he needed. Questioned whether a non-disclosure agreement would be necessary, Mr. Dantzler said he did not feel it would be needed.

The final portion of the Executive Committee meeting was closed to the general public and only permissible to the Executive Committee, CRDF Board members, and Staff. Mr. Dantzler had invited so that the committee could hear potentially confidential proprietary information from Dr. Hailing Jin on the peptide which she has discovered.

Mr. Mahan then moved to approve the minutes and actions of the Executive Committee from August 12, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock and, with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Research Management Committee: Dr. Ouimet reported that the Research Management Committee met on August 21, 2020 to review the ten full proposals received in response to the 2020 Nutrition RFP. The full proposals had first been reviewed by the ad hoc reviewers, the Scientific Advisory Board and RMC members to obtain the rankings being presented. Mr. Dantzler reminded the Committee of where CRDF stood as far as budget for the current fiscal year and potential future fiscal years was concerned. Five of the ten proposals were discussed individually, while the other five were recommended not to be funded. Dr. Ouimet proposed that the five proposals that were on the block for funding would be discussed individually by the Board as well.

The first proposal for discussion was project 20-011, by Dr. Tripti Vashisth. Mr. Dantzler reported that the project was well received by the SAB and the RMC. The project, also, followed the guidelines of the RFP, as did most, if not all, the other proposals. Mr. Dantzler discussed the contingencies that had been agreed on by both the SAB and the RMC; a cost benefit analysis would be a needed addition and the travel budget needed to be revised to remove international and some domestic travel. Mr. Himrod moved to approve for funding project 20-011, with the caveat of an included cost benefit analysis, revised travel budget, and nutrient concentration measurements changed from dry weight to leaf area basis revision to the final proposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Atchley. Mr. Howard called for a vote on the motion as previously stated, and the motion passed with eight “ayes” and two “nays”.

The second proposal brought for discussion was 20-008, by Dr. Randall Niedz. Mr. Dantzler briefly explained the project and its two phases. He also explained that although the proposal answered items specifically requested in the RFP, Dr. Niedz would work with non-HLB infected trees in Phase I and Phase II would be validation of Phase I. Dr. Niedz stated, during a telephone conference with Mr. Dantzler, his reason for not using HLB infected trees and it was the volume of trees he would be working with in Phase I. The SAB found merit with Dr. Niedz’s proposal and liked the systematic approach taken with Phase II building upon Phase I. Unfortunately, the RFP called for work to be done on HLB infected trees and the PI would have needed to rewrite his proposal. Mr. Updike moved to deny funding for proposal 20-008. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock. The motion passed unanimously.

The third proposal was project 20-004 by Dr. Evan Johnson. Mr. Dantzler, again, briefed the Board on the basis of the proposal. He stated that the proposal was directly related to the RFP and it directly discussed root health, which the Research Management Committee liked and wanted to recommend for funding. Mr. Dantzler discussed concerns the SAB members had regarding the measurements of nutrients on a dry weight versus a leaf area basis as had been discussed in previous proposals, the

transcriptomic work that needed to be dropped due to its superfluous price tag, and possibly, a discussion with both Dr. Johnson and Dr. Vashisth regarding a graduate student who was assigned to work with Dr. Vashisth doing greenhouse and field trial evaluations as well as working with Dr. Johnson on for technical tasks. Mr. Dantzler also mentioned comments from Dr. Obreza, he felt positive on the standpoints of soil improvement and soil amendment but did not feel as the project would mitigate a significant change in soil pH. Mr. Black moved to defer decision on proposal 20-004 and directed Mr. Dantzler and Staff to confer with the researcher regarding the comments and the contingencies of the transcriptomic work being dropped for budgetary reasons, the leaf nutrient value to be measured on dry weight versus a leaf area basis, a cost benefit relationship analysis to be added, and address the graduate student staff assignment for resubmittal, review, and consideration at next Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock and, with brief discussion regarding nutrients and root pH, the motion was approved nine to one.

The fourth proposal was project 20-007, by Dr. Amit Levy. Mr. Dantzler began by stating the SAB thought the proposal was well designed, straightforward, and impressed with the mechanistic approach the project took, but only marginally related to nutrition and very similar to a proposal from 2019. The SAB felt the testing frequency every six months was not enough and the RMC was concerned with the use of DDG during the second part of the trial and the regulation problems it may bring. The Committee also felt the budget for the field trial work looked too light. Dr. Graham expounded on SAB and RMC comments concerning the objectives for the project being met within the proposed two-year time of the proposal and appropriate trial sites picked for the project. Discussion was had briefly regarding DDG. Mr. Updike moved to deny funding for proposal 20-007. Mr. Atchley seconded the motion and the floor was opened for discussion. The motion passed.

The final proposal for discussion was project 20-003 by Dr. Rhaunito Ferrarezi. Mr. Dantzler began by saying the SAB was taken aback by the high cost of the project but generally supported the proposal. The RMC also was concerned with the budget of the project and the fact that nitrogen was the only nutrient being studied. The project would not have ranked as high except for the discussion brought up by Dr. Obreza on BMP compliance and persuaded many Committee members that the proposal could lead to a revision of BMP guidelines. Mr. Dantzler also discussed the deliverable contingencies brought up by both the SAB and the RMC during their review of the proposal. First, grower input was critical to this project and \$90,000 in expenses was too high and needed to be reduced. The SAB felt that an economic analysis needed to be added to this proposal, as well as the leaf nutrient value to be measured on dry weight versus a leaf area basis. There was also concern that surrounded the expense of the graduate student. Dr. Ouimet opined that an advantage of high-density planting could aid, in the future, with automated picking or harvesting. Dr. Futch mentioned that the root density, with higher density planting, one would have more roots per area, and that may lead to better efficiency. Mr. Howard then called for a motion to be entertained on proposal 20-003. Mr. Black moved to have Mr. Dantzler confer with the PI regarding a budget revision and a clear deliverable for BMP study. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mastrodicasa. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Ouimet moved to not approve for funding the remaining five proposals discussed based on RMC recommendation. Mr. Mahan seconded the motion, and, with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Finance and Audit Committee: Chairman Ron Mahan reviewed the Financial Statements of June 30, 2020, followed and July 31, 2020. Hearing no questions or comments, Mr. Mahan made a motion to approve the June 30th and July 31st Financial Statements as presented. Mr. Atchley seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Governance Committee: Chairman Larry Black stated the Governance Committee had not met and there was nothing to report.

Commercial Product Delivery Committee: Mr. Dantzler, on behalf of Mr. Updike, reported on a proposed nomination for membership to the Commercial Product Delivery Committee. Mr. Josh Kellam of Garcia Family Farms had been suggested for appointment. Mr. Dantzler gave the Board and audience a brief background on Mr. Kellam and reported that current members of the Committee had been informed of the proposed appointment and had received positive feedback. Mr. Kellam has been contacted regarding the committee role and was willing to serve. Mr. Hancock moved to add Josh Kellam to the CPD Committee. Both, Dr. Mastrodicasa and Mr. Black, seconded the motion and, with no discussion the motion passed unanimously.

COO Report: Mr. Dantzler reported on the potential off-cycle projects in the CRDF pipeline. He described each potential project to give the Board an idea as to what might be down the road for consideration. Mr. Dantzler mentioned the CRDF Field trials and the funding which had been set aside in the FY20-21 budget for the project. He also suggested a combined RMC and CPDC meeting to review the off-cycle projects mentioned prior.

Partnerships: Mr. Sparks discussed the upcoming legislative session in Tallahassee and said Mutual would be gearing up for a difficult funding year. Mr. Sparks noted that revenue was trending downward and would make for a tough year.

Dr. Rogers spoke regarding the Plant Transformation Labs at the CREC campus and how they had been developing business plans for both labs. The plans would allow the labs to eventually become self-sustaining, but before that would happen it would lessen the annual funding ask from CRDF. Dr. Zale's mature tissue transformation lab had been the first approved business plan through the IFAS committee and a portion of Dr. Zale's salary had been picked up to lessen the cost also. The only hinderance would be if IFAS's remaining budget did not come through due to COVID-19 shortfalls. Dr. Rogers also reported on the continuation of the update to the CREC website and Center news put out on the site.

Extension Agent Report: Dr. Mastrodicasa reported on behalf of the Extension Agents that Laurie Hurner had resigned from County Extension Agents and taken a position with Highlands County to become their Assistant County Administrator.

New Business/Public Comments: None.

Future CRDF Meetings: Teleconference CRDF Board of Directors Meeting, Tuesday, September 22, 2020 beginning at 9:00 a.m.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

Minutes submitted by John Updike, Secretary.