

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

A teleconference meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, September 22, 2020. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. Board President David Howard called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Rob Atchley, Larry Black, Greg Hodges, David Howard, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Pat Ouimet, and Josh Snively. Also participating were Rick Dantzler, Steve Futch, Jim Graham, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Jim Syvertsen, and Deidra Whatley.

Other participants were Mike Aerts, Rhuanito Ferrarezi, Matt Joyner, Ernie Neff, Michael Rogers, Shannon Shepp, Steve Smith, Jim Snively, and Rosa Walsh.

Mr. Howard opened with the approval of the August 25, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the minutes of the August 25th Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Atchley and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Howard reported on the meeting which Mr. Dantzler, Dr. Gilbert and he attended on September 8, 2020 with Dr. Scott Angle. The meeting gave them an opportunity to meet Dr. Angle and discuss the history, past and present projects, and plans forward of CRDF.

Executive Committee: Mr. Howard reported that the Executive Committee had not met.

Finance and Audit Committee: Chairman Ron Mahan reviewed the Financial Statements of August 31, 2020. Mr. Mahan reported CRDF has received a directive from FDACS to hold 8.6%, or \$688,000, from the current year state funds appropriated until further notified.

Mr. Mahan stated that the annual audit was almost complete and would be reported at the next Board meeting. He also noted that the Finance and Audit Committee will meet after the Crop Estimate is released in October. Mr. Dantzler also discussed the projected budget holdbacks and the need for even greater discernment in approving future projects for funding. He asked Mr. Matt Joyner, Florida Citrus Mutual, to provide an update from Tallahassee. Mr. Joyner reported that the upcoming year is expected to be a tight budget year and planning had begun for these difficult decisions. He also discussed the legislative holdbacks, noting that the Governor's office had not released the final numbers as to how these cuts would take effect, i.e. quarterly or all up front, and which departments would be affected. Mr. Joyner also gave a brief update on CRAFT Cycle II. Hearing no other questions or comments, Mr. Mahan made a motion to approve the August Financial Statements as presented. Dr. Mastrodicasa seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Governance Committee: Chairman Larry Black stated the Governance Committee had not met.

Research Management Committee: Dr. Ouimet reported that, while the Research Management Committee had not met since the August 25th Board meeting, there were matters which the Committee requested the Board, Mr. Dantzler and project management Staff be tasked with relative to the Nutrition proposals and contingency terms for which three researchers had been requested to amend

proposals and re-present to the Board for consideration before approval, and asked Mr. Dantzler to elaborate further.

Mr. Dantzler began with Dr. Vashisth's project, "Right Leaf Sampling". He and the PI agreed on a reduction of international travel; no further action was required by the Board.

The next project for reconsideration was Dr. Evan Johnson's "Roots" proposal. While he had agreed to drop the transcriptomic scope of research, discussion continued of a cost saving measure related to the prospective employee to be hired. Dr. Johnson requested that his amended proposal be reviewed at the October Board of Directors meeting.

The third proposal for reconsideration was Dr. Ferrarezi's "High Density Planting". Dr. Ferrarezi reduced the proposal budget from \$535,000 to approximately \$372,000 through utilization of OPS employees instead of an FTE employee and grad student, and a further reduction in material costs. It was emphasized that Dr. Ferrarezi's research would include BMP standards. Mr. Dantzler and Dr. Futch detailed other cost saving details for the Board and then Mr. Howard asked to entertain a motion to continue discussion. Dr. Ouimet moved to approve Dr. Ferrarezi's project with an adjusted budget of \$371,836.00 by the substitution of OPS workers for FTE employees, acquiring a leased vehicle instead of buying a vehicle, a reduction in material costs, and the elimination of root analysis work. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan.

There was general discussion regarding available funds. Dr. Ferrarezi was asked the start time of the project, which was January 2021. Mr. Mahan made a motion to table the matter until after the CPD Committee report in order to better understand the financial outlook of all projects being presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Hodges and passed.

Upon completion of the Commercial Product Delivery Committee report, Mr. Mahan moved to bring back the tabled motion regarding Dr. Ferrarezi's project. The motion was seconded by Dr. Ouimet. Dr. Futch opened the discussion and ensured the Board that the project deliverables included focus on BMP standards. Discussion continued and Mr. Atchley moved to again table consideration for Dr. Ferrarezi's project until after the USDA crop estimate was released. Before a second was voiced, Mr. Howard interrupted regarding procedural matters. Mr. Mahan's motion to un-table the motion was voted on and, with no further discussion, passed unanimously.

Mr. Howard reminded the Board that the original motion to approve Dr. Ferrarezi's project with the adjusted budget of \$371,836.00 was active and open for discussion. The Board members directed questions to Dr. Ferrarezi for answers. Mr. Atchley then moved to amend the original motion and defer consideration of Dr. Ferrarezi's project until the October Board of Directors meeting so there would be budget clarification. Mr. Snively seconded the motion. There was further discussion on the budget for the 2020 Nutrition RFP and combined first-year costs, as well as potential funding being held back from the legislature. With no more discussion, Mr. Howard called for a vote on Mr. Atchley's amendment to the motion, which passed with two votes in opposition. The amended motion passed with three votes of opposition.

Commercial Product Delivery Committee: Mr. Dantzler, on behalf of Mr. Updike, reported on the September 18th meeting of the CPD Committee. He advised the Board on the off-cycle projects that had been considered beginning with a project on "Improving Data Collection for Citrus Field Trials" by Dr. Mark Ritenour. Dr. Ritenour's project was to modify a Compac sorting machine to collect harvested fruit data, i.e. color, size and weight distribution, fruit density, internal Brix from HLB-

symptomatic and non-symptomatic fruit. The purchase of the machine was funded by CRDF in 2019. Dr. Ritenour attempted to pursue the rest of the funding from MAC but was unsuccessful. The off-cycle proposal would be for CRDF to fund the balance of his three-year project. The Committee recommended funding to complete the setup of the equipment and testing to ensure said equipment was operational. It was also recommended that a survey of the research community to better determine how much the machine would be used.

The next off-cycle project CPDC considered was a project on the Optimization of Psyllid-based CLAs in vitro biofilm cultures and their use in testing Koch's postulates via psyllid transmission by Dr. David Gang. Dr. Gang and his team at the University of Washington, along with Dr. Nabil Killiny of UF/IFAS, have established methods to readily culture and transfer CLAs in biofilms and are confident they can optimize CLAs growth and purity in laboratory biofilms. The Committee recommended a panel of experts be convened to review Dr. Gang's project before a decision was made on funding.

The third proposal was "Control and Suppression of *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* in citrus trees by trunk injections of a novel anti-bacterial compound" by Dr. Ute Albrecht, research consisting of two field trials that compared the efficacy of trunk injection of oxytetracycline in direct comparison with a newly formulated anti-bacterial compound to control CLAs and enhance tree health and productivity. The CPD Committee recommended the advancement of the proposal for the SAB to review.

The fourth off-cycle project was "Understanding the role of systemic acquired resistance (SAR) in enhancing tolerance to HLB in the Parson Brown sweet orange" by Dr. Manjul Dutt. Parson Brown sweet oranges have been observed to be more tolerant to HLB in several locations. The scope of work for this project would begin with quarterly tissue sampling and PR gene analysis of Parson Brown trees in Lake, Highlands, Polk, and St. Lucie counties. Samples would be compared to tissue samples from the Parson Brown clones enrolled in the budwood program. Dr. Dutt was asked to submit a proposal for the SAB to review.

The CRDF Phase III Rootstock Field Trials were also presented to the Committee for consideration of advancement through the off-cycle process. The Committee recommended that the newly formed Select Committee on Plant Improvement be tasked with the selection of rootstocks for the trial and moved for the project be advanced to the SAB panel for review.

The final off-cycle project was the "Commercialization of the finger lime peptide to control HLB" brought to the CPDC by Invaio. The project consisted of a proprietary peptide found by Dr. Hailing Jin at UC-Riverside. Dr. Jin had enlisted the assistance of Dr. Megan Dewdney (IFAS) and Dr. Greg McCollum (ARS) to further test the peptide. Invaio had presented a proposal that encompassed the full process of creating a commercial product for commercial citrus. CPDC recommended that CRDF fund the testing of the peptide against the hairy root assay.

The next matter for Board consideration was the 2020 Large-Scale Field Trial RFP. Mr. Dantzler gave opening remarks regarding the appropriation of the designated \$3 million dollars from the legislature and stated that the call for large-scale field trial research was open to all researchers and the CRAFT program. There was discussion of the legislative holdback and funding adjustments that would need to be made for the appropriated \$3 million for large-scale field trials. Mr. Black moved to accept the 2020 Large-Scale Field Trial RFP as drafted. Mr. Atchley seconded the motion and, with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

COO Report: Mr. Dantzler reported that he had been in discussion with the California Research Board regarding collaborating on a few projects that were coming down the pipeline, specifically Invaio and Dr. Gang's culturing projects. Mr. Dantzler also mentioned that the Select Committee on Plant Improvement would be meeting in October.

Partnerships: Dr. Rogers answered questions from the Board regarding activity and progress at the Research Center. Dr. Rogers reported that although CREC is not running at full capacity, movement is restricted among labs and across station, researchers have worked in shifts to ensure research is continued and accomplished.

Extension Agent Report: Dr. Mastrodicasa reported on behalf of the Extension Agents. She reported that travel requests are still being reviewed and monitored for necessity. Budgetary uncertainty was felt throughout all departments, not just research. Dr. Gilbert spoke about the two hundred research activities which had been approved to date and the grant writing which had been accomplished throughout the month of August. Dr. Gilbert also reported that the Extension Dean would be moving on to the University of Georgia as of January 1, 2021.

New Business/Public Comments: Mike Aerts reported that the Streptomycin for citrus Section 18 registration did not get approved for calendar year 2021. A recertification application will be submitted for EPA approval on the active ingredient.

Dr. Ferrarezi mentioned a potential drive-through field day at IREC on October 9, 2020. This would be a field day for project 18-037C. He was still awaiting proper approval.

Future CRDF Meetings: Teleconference CRDF Board of Directors Meeting, Tuesday, October 27, 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.