

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

A teleconference meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, March 23, 2021. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. Vice President Rob Atchley called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Rob Atchley, Rob Gilbert, Ned Hancock, Aaron Himrod, Greg Hodges, David Howard, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Morgan McKenna, Mathew Story, and John Updike. Also participating were Rick Dantzler, Bill Dawson, Steve Futch, Jim Graham, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Jim Syvertsen, and Deidra Whatley.

Other participants were Mike Aerts, Kim Bowman, Kristen Carlson, Gary England, Fred Gmitter, Catherine Hatcher, Mike Irey, Kirsten Pelz-Stelinski, Mike Sparks, and Tamara Wood.

Mr. Atchley opened the meeting with the February 23, 2021 meeting minutes. Ron Mahan moved to approve the minutes of the February 23rd Board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by John Updike and passed unanimously.

Mr. Atchley shifted to the Partnership Updates and invited Mr. Sparks to give his report. Mr. Sparks reported the early draft of the appropriations bill was expected by the end of March, with CRDF having the same level of funding as previous years. Mr. Sparks noted that the session was not over until conference and could still prove to be challenging.

Special Presentation: Dr. Pelz-Stelinski gave a presentation on her recently completed CRDF-funded project #18-051C, “Improving bactericide therapy for young tree protection and inoculum reduction”. Upon conclusion, Mr. Dantzler asked her to provide a brief update of other projects she was working on, specifically the Wolbachia project. There were questions from the Board regarding commercialization timeline. Dr. Pelz-Stelinski reported that her application to NSF for a small business grant was unsuccessful and that she has been looking for other sources of funding of approximately \$500,000 over a couple years.

Executive Committee: Mr. Howard reported that the Executive Committee met on March 10, 2021 to continue discussions on moving forward from the traditional RFP model. The topics discussed were addressed under the appropriate committee during the Board meeting.

Research Management Committee: Mr. Dantzler, on behalf of Chair Dr. Ouimet, reviewed the topics focused on in the RFP, noting additional topics included developing an assay for tree response to damage, hedging and topping to control bloom, and greasy spot. Mr. Mahan moved to approve and announce the 2021 RFP as presented. Dr. Gilbert seconded the motion. After discussion of the potential for additional CRAFT-like projects, the motion passed unanimously.

The Executive Committee discussed the need for growers to receive timely research results and data considering the current level of decline of the industry. Mr. Dantzler explained that Dr. Graham completed a review of the current research portfolio, including informational data available that would prove helpful to growers. Dr. Graham noted three research areas, including tree covers, kaolin, and zinc phosphate that could have a positive impact on growers. Discussion followed how to quickly disseminate the information to growers, including utilizing the UF Extension Agents. Mr. Howard requested that Dr. Graham, prior to the April Board meeting, summarize those projects on the path to helping growers in the near term and report back with the next steps to field trials and/or commercialization of products.

Mr. Hancock questioned whether there are any early results from the Bayer project and products that could benefit the industry and be produced at the present time. Mr. Dantzler reported on the marketability of the product and the plant defense modulator currently showing the most hope. He noted that the Bayer Stakeholder Committee will convene for its bi-annual meeting in early June 2021. Mr. Howard continued with the discussion of plant improvement and reported that UF is working on improving the process and will be sharing their plans once formalized.

Mr. Dantzler stated that Dr. Moira Sheehan will provide a teleconference presentation on her breeding efforts during the April Board meeting, with plans to travel at a later date to attend a Board meeting or Plant Improvement meeting.

Select Committee on Plant Improvement: Mr. Dantzler reported that the Select Committee on Plant Improvement met on March 17, 2021, at which time they revisited the scion selections to include new nominations that had been received only recently, as well as correspondence from DPI outlining available budwoods. Mr. Page and Dr. Futch presented a breakdown of the scion categories and reviewed all of the selections: #1-23 were recommended, #24 was questionable due to its budwood certification, and #25-37 were not recommended. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the scion selections #1-24 with the contingency on pending budwood certification for #24. The motion was seconded by Aaron Himrod and, with no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Howard requested Staff make a correction to the Executive Committee minutes item #8(h), noting it should read “Are there other biotechnology research organizations that could help?”

Finance and Audit Committee: Chairman Ron Mahan discussed CRDF’s multi-year funded project commitments for the next three to five years. He stated if CRDF receives the \$8 million legislative commitment, with no restricting proviso language, there would be \$7 million available for new research projects. There was conversation regarding the amount of funds that should be held in reserve. Mr. Dantzler noted the contractual contingency regarding termination of projects due to financial constraint should it ever be necessary; other than that cause was required to terminate. Mr. Mahan reviewed the February Financial Statement and Summary. He moved to accept the February Financial Statement as presented. Mr. Updike seconded the motion, and with no discussion, it passed unanimously.

Commercial Product Delivery Committee: Mr. Howard initiated the discussion of peptide studies. Mr. Updike noted that he would like the committee to participate in upcoming roundtable discussions that were being planned with Dr. Dawson prior to the next Board meeting so they are better informed. Mr. Dantzler said CRDF staff was attempting to ascertain information from the peptide companies on whether their products work as advertised and how: by injection, CTV, spraying or genomic alteration. He reported that he has discussed these matters with several companies. Mr. Dantzler noted a request for a Letter of Support to the EPA on behalf of Elemental Enzymes, which the Executive Committee endorsed sending the letter.

Mr. Dantzler reported that Staff has continued to monitor compounds showing efficacy against HLB other than peptides to run the hairy root assay on, including one which was part of a proposal submitted through the 2020 Nutrition RFP.

Governance Committee: Governance Committee had not met.

Prior to the conclusion of the Committee reports, Mr. Howard requested an addition to the Executive Committee minutes under #11 which included the recommendation to provide a letter of support to Elemental Enzymes for their application for a use permit. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the Executive Committee Minutes with the two noted changes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Gilbert and, after brief discussion, passed unanimously.

COO Report: Mr. Dantzler reported that CRDF has not yet been notified whether the NIFA pre-application is being invited to submit a full proposal.

Partnerships: Dr. Gilbert mentioned that the Dean for Extension candidates' seminar was taking place on March 23, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. The Horticulture Chair interviews had concluded and a decision is forthcoming.

Extension Agent Report: None.

New Business/Public Comments: None.

Future CRDF Meetings: CRDF Board of Directors Meeting, Tues., April 27, 2021 at 10:00 a.m., at Lake Placid Governance Center, Lake Placid, FL.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Minutes submitted by John Updike, Secretary.