



Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at the Heritage Center, 2140 14th Ave., Vero Beach, Florida. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. President David Howard called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Rob Atchley, Aaron Himrod, Greg Hodges, David Howard, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Morgan McKenna, Pat Ouimet, Josh Snively, Matthew Story, and John Updike. Also participating were Rick Dantzler, Bill Dawson, Steve Futch, Jim Graham, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, and Deidra Whatley. Other participants were Mike Aerts, Bobby Barben, Ron Cave, Doug Bournique, Fred Gmitter, Catherine Hatcher, Mike Irely, Lisa Jensen, Matt Joyner, Michael Rogers, Brian Scully, Shannon Shepp, Ed Stover, Sal Tropea, Callie Walker, Rosa Walsh, Tamara Wood.

Mr. Howard opened the meeting with a review of the August 18, 2021 Board of Directors meeting minutes. Mr. Mahan moved to accept the minutes from the August 18th Board of Directors meeting, seconded by Dr. Hodges. Mr. Howard asked for an edit to the Governance Committee section correcting “interference with a specific proposal” to read “current RFP proposal.” With the amendment, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Howard welcomed the Board and audience to Vero Beach and thanked all for traveling and those online for participating. Mr. Howard introduced Lisa Jensen, Director of the Division of Fruit and Vegetables, FDACS. Ms. Jensen shared the history and background of the Grower Box Tax as well as the process and calendar for the upcoming Referendum which must be in place by mid-July 2022. She noted that regional groups should reach out to their grower members, and that the compiled list of growers would be available for review.

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

Finance and Audit Committee: Chairman Ron Mahan stated that the committee met prior to the Board meeting. He summarized the Financial Statement for the month ending August 31st. Mr. Mahan moved to the approval of the August financial statement. Mr. Atchley seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Mahan reported that Sal Tropea, Bunting, Tripp & Ingley, reviewed the FY2020-21 audit and Form 990 tax return during the F&A Committee meeting. He reported that there were no issues with the audit and accurately represented CRDF’s fiscal standing for the previous fiscal year. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the FY2020-21 audit as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKenna and passed unanimously.

Mr. Mahan continued with the discussion of the Form 990, pointing out the Income Statement Activities, the DSO status, and disclosures of the 503c amount to the University. Mr. Dantzler noted that the reference on Schedule O that donors provide “critical” research support would be amended to “important” prior to submission. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the Form 990, with the edit to Schedule O. The motion was seconded by Mr. Atchley and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler reported on the Legislative Planning meeting, noting CRDF’s legislative ask for the upcoming fiscal year, breaking ask down by category, with the goal to drive the reserve to at least \$1 Million.

Mr. Howard recognized Matt Joyner, Florida Citrus Mutual. Mr. Joyner discussed the planning meeting in greater detail, commenting it set out more priorities than just funding. Mr. Joyner also gave a brief rundown of other organizations’ asks and their reasonings behind the numbers.

Governance Committee: Governance Committee did not meet.

Research Management Committee: Dr. Ouimet reported that the committee had not met. She reported that the Scientific Advisory Board met on August 25th and 26th, where they reviewed, scored, and provided comments on the 24 full proposals. She mentioned Staff was working on their analysis of the SAB reviews and, when completed, would be disseminated to the RMC Committee and Board prior to the Committee’s meeting on October 14th.

Mr. Dantzler summarized the presentation given by UF/IFAS on Gibberellic Acid. Dr. Rogers reported research would continue with other fruit varieties to enhance data collection and findings.

Commercial Product Delivery Committee: Mr. Updike reported that the Commercial Product Delivery Committee had not met.

Mr. Updike reported that the CRAFT Foundation was in the process of receiving applications from grower cooperators for Phase III. Mr. Howard and Mr. Page commented on the CRDF Rootstock trial and the potential to apply for CRAFT and/or MAC funding. Mr. Page also discussed the acreage for the potential trials. Mr. Dantzler discussed the policy question surrounding CRDF becoming a CRAFT applicant and said that a conflict of interest did not exist. He explained that grower cooperators had applied, have begun to be vetted and chosen for the different trials, and each are interested in being a part of CRAFT trials for a myriad of reasons. Discussion followed whether the trials would a CRAFT project vs a CRDF project and how those processes coincide. There was overall agreement that CRDF grower cooperators should move forward in the pursuit of CRAFT funding for the rootstock trials. Mr. Howard stated that proposed MAC funding for the project would be secondary to CRAFT funding. Mr. Dantzler reported he was looking into the MAC funding timeframes for potential funding.

Mr. Updike invited Mr. Page to give a presentation on the tree injection device on loan from the company in the Midwest. CRDF had partnered with this company and was in the process of testing the device on blocks of trees.

Select Committee on Plant Improvement: Mr. Dantzler reported that the Committee met on September 20th to re-visit the rootstock trial design and spec sheet compared to the Denver protocol to be sure the more important provisions were met. The Committee added three elements from the protocol to the rootstock trial design: termination of the trial, propagation of the trees by genotype, and propagation of the trees from the same nursery to ensure uniformity. The same applied to the scion trial and those specifications. Mr. Dantzler stated that suggested changes to the document were being reviewed by Mr. Irey and hoped the document would be ready for the Board's review by the next meeting.

Mr. Dantzler noted concerns by one ad hoc member of the Select Committee that it is not functioning in the capacity that was intended, that is, as the interface between the breeders and industry. Mr. Dantzler agreed that in one respect that was true since field days and visits to trial sites had not occurred as initially intended.

Mr. Dantzler, Mr. Page, and Dr. Hatcher each commented on the Denver protocol and its purpose when put together, noting that plant breeding/plant improvement may have different needs presently than when the protocol was crafted.

Mr. Dantzler reviewed the Plant Improvement Review Panel proposal. He laid out the timeframe, budget, and objectives of the panel, and mentioned the areas of expertise of the invited panelists. Mr. Howard noted the review panel was previously approved by the board and the next step would be to allow Dr. Sheehan to move forward with the invitations to the panelists. Dr. Mastrodicasa recommended that objectives two through four should be the focus of the panel. Mr. Dantzler summarized the core breeding funding, by program, per year, and Mr. Howard followed up by stating the panel was not put together to review individual proposals but to help CRDF focus its investment if funding continues to decline.

COO Report: Mr. Dantzler reported that NIFA funding has been approved for the third year of the Bayer project.

He recapped an informational presentation given to a select group of Board and Committee members by Mike Irey of Southern Gardens Citrus on defensins and CTV vectoring and mentioned that changes were underway at Southern Gardens in the Research Division.

Mr. Dantzler noted the \$100,000.00 under contract with Pepsico and how he had not forgotten about it, that it may be that there is a project under consideration in the 2021 RFP to which it could be directed.

Mr. Howard thanked Mr. Dantzler for his presentation at the August 24th DOC meeting, and Mr. Atchley for his presence there.

Partnerships: Dr. Scully gave an update on the Whitmore Foundation, noting that most of the rootstock seed has been planted, and there is room for expansion. He mentioned the cultivar display block is being planted and, again, there is room for expansion. The original design was crafted by NVDMC. Dr. Scully discussed conversations with California breeders and the “re-establishment of citrus breeding”.

Dr. Ron Cave discussed the Millennium Block project, noting there will be a field day on Thursday, October 14, 2021.

Mr. Howard invited Mr. Bournique to speak on behalf of the Indian River Citrus League. Mr. Bournique gave a historical snapshot of the League’s involvement in support of the Box Tax and research due to their commitment for the eradication of HLB.

Extension Agent Report: None.

New Business: None

Public Comments: Florida Citrus Show is in the planning stages for January 2022.

Future CRDF Meetings: CRDF Board of Directors, Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. at the UF-IFAS, Southwest Florida Research and Education Center, Immokalee, FL.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Minutes submitted by John Updike, Secretary.