



## **Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 26, 2021**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee, Florida. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. President David Howard called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Rob Atchley, Ned Hancock, Aaron Himrod, David Howard, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Morgan McKenna, Pat Ouimet, and Matthew Story. Also participating were Rick Dantzler, Bill Dawson, Steve Futch, Jim Graham, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Jim Syvertsen, and Deidra Whatley. Other participants were Kim Bowman, Ron Cave, Fred Gmitter, Chris Gunter, Matt Joyner, Michael Rogers, Mike Sparks, Shannon Shepp, Ed Stover, Rosa Walsh, Tamara Wood.

Mr. Howard began the meeting with a review of the minutes from the September 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. Mr. Atchley moved to approve the September 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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

**Finance and Audit Committee:** Chairman Ron Mahan reported on the Financial Statement for the month ending September 30<sup>th</sup>. He discussed the collected revenues to date and asked Ms. Nowicki to report on the status of invoicing. She mentioned there had been an increase over the past few months. Mr. Mahan motioned for the approval of the September financial statement. Mr. Hancock seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Howard recognized Matt Joyner, Florida Citrus Mutual, to provide a legislative update. He reported that Ms. Shepp, Dr. Rogers, and others had given presentations in the past week to the legislature regarding happenings in the citrus industry. Mr. Joyner also discussed potential revisions to Chapter 601. Changes mentioned included expanding DOC districts from three to six, increasing the number of Commissioners, codifying the proviso language that requires that CRDF, CRAFT, and NVDMC consult with DOC, as well as giving the Florida citrus industry first right of refusal for new tree releases that were developed with State funding.

**Governance Committee:** Mr. Hancock reported that the Governance Committee had not met; however, a Governance Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> to determine the slate of officers for the next calendar year and define the CRDF Committee structure going forward. There was renewed discussion among the Board regarding annual presentations by researchers and the importance of the PI presenting regularly to the Board for accountability purposes.

Due to computer issues, Mr. Howard passed the gavel to Vice President Rob Atchley prior to the start of the Research Management Committee discussions.

**Research Management Committee:** Dr. Ouimet reported that the Research Management Committee met on October 14<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the full proposals submitted for the 2021 RFP.

Dr. Ouimet mentioned there were four projects recommended for funding in the area of Plant Improvement for which funding decisions were held back until the Review Panel had issued its report and recommendations. Should the projects be deferred, there was also the question of bridge funding for one or more of the Plant Improvement projects.

Mr. Dantzler clarified that there were twelve projects recommended for funding by the Committee and five that fall under the area of Plant Improvement. A few of the plant improvement projects were continuation projects and one, Dr. Bowman's project 18-004, had an expiration date of October 31<sup>st</sup>. The Committee, Mr. Dantzler explained, had recommended six months of bridge funding to maintain his current rootstock project until after the Panel had submitted its review.

He reiterated that the Plant Improvement Review Panel would not be evaluating current individual proposals but reviewing things more holistically. Mr. Dantzler also presented possible questions for the panel to review.

He went on to describe the RMC's reluctance to make a funding commitment on the five projects concerning Plant Improvement and presented the question of possible deferment until after the Review Panel had met and issued its findings. Mr. Dantzler explained that one of the projects, from Dr. Albrecht, was a continuation project not using new trees which possibly could be put into a different category if so desired by the Board.

He presented the Board with the idea of individually reviewing each of the Plant Improvement projects and making a decision on each, as well as relaying that on the non-plant improvement projects recommended for funding some had contingencies by the Committee that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Howard moved, for the purpose of discussion, to bundle the five plant improvement projects into a unit with potential bridge funding until such time that the Plant Improvement Panel issues its report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod. There were questions and discussion regarding the definition of bridge funding and the exact length for such. Mr. Dantzler explained it would be an allotment of funding for current projects being performed by the PIs for a specific period. For these projects, the bridge funding would begin at the natural expiration period of the current project and run through April 30, 2022. Mrs. Nowicki provided the end dates for each project, noting that only four of the five current projects would require bridge funding, as Project 18-025 was already under a no cost extension through the end of April. One of the projects, Dr. Bowman's Project 18-004, expired at the end of October; he was requested to submit a bridge funding budget for the Board to approve later in the meeting. Dr. Stover's Project 18-058C had an expiration date that would occur before the next Board meeting. Mr. Hancock offered an amendment to Mr. Howard's motion to strike the bridge

funding for all five projects and to consider each project on an individual basis. Mr. Howard withdrew his original motion. No motion was on the table for voting.

Mr. Atchley continued with Project 21-028, N. Wang, for consideration of funding. The project, as previously stated, was a continuation project of 18-025 and would not need bridge funding due to a no cost extension being in place until the conclusion of April, 2022. Mr. Howard moved to deny RMC's recommendation for funding Project 21-028. Mr. Hancock seconded Mr. Howard's motion. Mr. Howard withdrew his motion. Ms. McKenna moved to defer action on Project 21-028 until April 2022. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mastrodicasa and passed unanimously.

The next project discussed was Dr. Albrecht's 21-005. Mr. Dantzer explained this was a continuation of 18-028C, which terminates on December 31<sup>st</sup>. There was discussion regarding funding for Project 21-005 tied into Dr. Stover's project and Mr. Dantzer reported that it was separate work. Mr. Howard moved to approve Project 21-005 based on RMC's recommendations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock and passed unanimously.

The next project considered for funding was Dr. Stover's 21-025. Mr. Hancock asked if Dr. Stover had provided a bridge funding budget and it was determined he had not yet done so. Mr. Mahan moved to defer action on Project 21-025 and request that Dr. Bowman submit a bridge funding budget on his current project 18-028C through April 30, 2022, for Executive Committee consideration on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock and passed unanimously.

For Dr. Bowman's 21-008, continuation project and bridge funding budget on his current project 18-004 was brought for discussion. Mr. Dantzer briefly described the project and its goal. It was again mentioned there was approximately \$29,000.00 included for Dr. Albrecht for subcontract work at the field site. Mr. Hancock moved to approve the bridge funding budget for Project 18-004 in the amount of \$131,719.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod and Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Next, Project 21-014, "CTV vectoring as a tool for inducing early flowering in citrus by Dr. El-Mohtar," was discussed. This project is a new project and Dr. El-Mohtar is not currently funded. Mr. Himrod moved to approve funding for Project 21-014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hancock and passed unanimously.

Project 21-021 by Dr. Pelz-Stelinski was brought for discussion. Mr. Dantzer described the project for the Board and there were discussions regarding the limited varieties being tested. Mr. Hancock moved to approved Project 21-021 with the contingency that the research would expand the project to include other varieties besides Valencias, if possible. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

The next project presented was Project 21-006 by Dr. Alferez. The project details were discussed and the economy of the treatment regime. There was discussion confirming the importance of the project; however, the cost was quite large. Mr. Mahan suggested a cost benefit analysis be presented as a contingency. Mr. Mahan moved to approve Project 21-006 with the contingency of the cost benefit

analysis presentation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mastrodicasa. Discussion ensued regarding the exorbitant budget of the project and suggestions made for potential recommendation for a CRAFT project. The vote was called and failed 8 to 1.

Dr. Dewdney's Project 21-012 on greasy spot was discussed next. Mr. Dantzler explained that the members from RMC representing the East Coast felt the project was very important but there were concerns pertaining to objectives within the project. Specifically, resistance testing of fungicides and comparisons of fungicides. Mr. Dantzler reiterated that the Committee recommended the project be funded but with only three objectives versus the five laid out in the original proposal. There was the question of a budget reduction due to the elimination of objectives for the project. Mr. Hancock moved to defer until the PI, Dr. Dewdney, presented a revised budget for consideration by the Executive Committee. Mr. Howard seconded the motion. The motion passed with one vote in opposition.

Project 21-024, "Determination of optimal time for application of fertilizer to improve fruit quality and the reduction of preharvest drop," by Dr. Schumann, was discussed next. Mr. Dantzler reported that the SAB thought the proposal was straight forward. He also explained the varieties and fertilizer ingredients that would be used during the study. Mr. Mahan moved to approve Project 21-024 as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mastrodicasa. There was discussion regarding varietal choices and budget. The motion passed with one vote in opposition.

Dr. Alferez's project 21-007, "Reduction of fruit drop by altering hormonal responses," was brought for discussion. Mr. Dantzler briefed the Board on the project details and the SAB recommendation of eliminating funding for auxin analysis until a field trial proved the concept. Dr. Graham discussed the budget ramifications in greater detail and made mention that the budget reduction would be significant without the auxin study included in the project. Mr. Himrod moved to request a revised budget without the auxin work and for it to be compared to the original budget at the next Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Dr. Foliminova's Project 21-015 on the "Manipulation of expression of the citrus miraculin-like protein 2 via CTV to defend against CLAs" was discussed. Mr. Dantzler noted that Dr. Foliminova had already built transgenics and constructs, then asked Dr. Dawson to expound upon the project details. The work would be regulated by USDA and EPA. The SAB felt that the project was straight forward but had reservations about the insect assay deletion from the project. Dr. Dawson explained that the budget had been reworked and the proposal revised to incorporate the elimination of the laboratory work and one inoculation site. Dr. Mastrodicasa moved to approve the project as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Howard for purpose of discussion. Dr. Dawson was asked to explain the project in greater detail and questions were raised as to Southern Gardens' potential involvement. Mr. Dantzler explained Southern Gardens would not be handling any further regulatory work. The direction Southern Gardens was headed was discussed, and Mr. Dantzler explained the spinach defensins. The question was called. The motion failed.

The final project recommended for funding by RMC was project 21-013, “Integrated management of sting nematode in newly planted citrus trees,” by Dr. Duncan. Mr. Dantzler gave a few of the project’s highlights and asked Dr. Graham to expound on the project’s details. Mr. Hancock moved to approve Project 21-013 as the Committee recommended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed with two votes in opposition.

After a short recess, the Board reconvened for discussion of the proposals not recommended for funding by RMC. Specifically, Project 21-031 from Drs. Grosser and Gmitter. Mr. Dantzler made note that Project 21-031 was not moved forward for funding but deferred by the Research Management Committee until the Plant Improvement Review Panel delivers its findings. He also mentioned correspondence received from Dr. Gmitter correcting what he thought was misinformation disseminated to RMC and the board regarding funding for the IFAS core breeding program. Mr. Dantzler that when he received the email from Dr. Gmitter, he sent it to the members of RMC and asked if the funding information had influenced their votes. None said it had. Those who responded said it was the feedback from the SAB and their perception of the overall merit of the project which drove their votes.

Mr. Mahan moved to accept the Research Management Committee’s recommendations for the remaining projects which would be to not fund the remaining projects, with the exception of Project 21-031, that would be deferred until the Review Panel’s report. Also, projects 21-011 and 21-027, which involve the finger lime peptide, would be held in abeyance until current work showed whether it had potential. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKenna and passed unanimously.

Mr. Atchley continued with the next item, the submission of a revised budget for Project 18-037C, Millennium Block project. Mr. Dantzler quickly briefed everyone on details leading up to the submission of the budgets. It was explained that Dr. Cave submitted the revised budget, which would result in a savings of approximately \$77,000.00 to CRDF. Mr. Mahan moved to accept the revised budget for the Millennium Block Project 18-037C. The motion was seconded by Dr. Mastrodicasa and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler briefed the Board on correspondence received from Dr. David Gang. He was unsuccessful in securing federal funding for continuation on a CLas biofilm culturing project. Dr. Gang has inquired as to CRDF’s interest in potentially funding his work. The matter was brought before RMC. There were hesitations to proceed in light of the development of other assays like the hairy root assay, although everyone realized that culturing in real time could offer advantages. Mr. Dantzler also explained that the work was not short term. The board saw no harm in asking Dr. Gang for a proposal so long as he realized there were no guarantees and that it would have to go through the same process as other projects.

Mr. Dantzler reported that he had taken board member suggestions from the previous meeting and edited the Pathway to a Sustainable Citrus Industry document to tone down the optimism. He has passed along the document to Florida Citrus Mutual for use as they see fit.

**Commercial Product Delivery Committee:** Mr. Dantzler, on behalf of Mr. Updike, reported that the Commercial Product Delivery Committee had not met.

**Select Committee on Plant Improvement:** Mr. Dantzler stated the Select Committee had not met.

**COO Report:** Mr. Dantzler reported that the Plant Improvement Review Panel would be holding its first meeting in the near future. Dr. Ralph Scorza had agreed to chair the panel and act as moderator, along with Dr. Sheehan. An interim report would be provided by the end of the calendar year and a final report date by the end of February or early March 2022.

He gave an update on his trip to California to present at the California Citrus Conference, noting that one of the things he had spoken to CRB about was helping to fund work on CTV.

Lastly, he reported that Dr. Kelly Morgan was no longer the Center Director in Immokalee and had relocated to Gainesville to begin work on BMPs and nutrition with the University. There would be a search for a new Center Director at Southwest Florida Research and Education Center, and that Dr. Gilly Evans was serving as Interim Director.

**Partnerships:** Dr. Mastrodicasa, on behalf of Dr. Michael Rogers, announced a CREC Open House and Field Day on November 16<sup>th</sup>. She also reintroduced Dr. Chris Gunter, UF/IFAS' Dean of Horticulture, as he was present in the meeting.

**Extension Agent Report:** None.

**New Business:** None

**Public Comments:** None.

**Future CRDF Meetings:** CRDF Board of Directors, Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. at the UF-IFAS, Citrus Research and Education Center, Ben Hill Griffin Hall, Lake Alfred.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

Minutes submitted by John Updike, Secretary.