

# **CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.**

## **Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday, August 11, 2022**

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Wednesday, August 11, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by Chairman Rob Atchley. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Executive Committee members present were Rob Atchley, Chris Gunter, Rick Dantzler, David Howard, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Morgan McKenna and John Updike. Also participating were James Cooper, Fred Gmitter, Mike Irely, Matt Mattia, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Rashmi Singh and Barbara Thompson.

Mr. Mahan made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2021, Executive Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by John Updike and with no further discussion passed unanimously.

Chairman Atchley asked Mr. Dantzler to lead the committee through the topics on the agenda. He began by explaining that there was a recommendation from the Review Panel on Plant Improvement that the first task for CRDF in plant improvement should be to create an inventory of everything that was in all field trials. In February, the board had asked Dr. Chater and Dr. Mattia to submit a proposal that would create this inventory, but when the proposals were considered by RMC, several deficiencies were noted, primarily that the proposals did not include inventorying all trials. Also, the committee thought it would be better to provide a broader opportunity for drone companies to bid on creating this inventory.

After the RMC meeting, at a staff level, a pilot project was drafted to make sure that the data gathered would be beneficial before the effort was taken statewide. That was shared with RMC, but the committee noted that it was not an RFP, so staff went back to the drawing board and drafted the RFP which Mr. Dantzler circulated with the University and USDA. After much discussion, it was decided that in lieu of the RFP, it would be more efficient and cost effective to have two Directed Research Proposals – one from UF and one from USDA.

Dr. John Chater, UF, was asked to submit a proposal for consideration which would create this inventory of all UF germplasm in all trials, and USDA was requested to do the same. That data would be kept with each of the respective institutions, but they would be required to share their findings with CRDF periodically. This was to set the stage to have a unified statewide citrus germplasm evaluation program with growers ultimately having data on this germplasms to help them make planting decisions.

Staff proposed that we first create the inventory of what we have and where it's located, and to determine if there are other "Donaldson" trees that need immediate attention. Perhaps by starting with Dr. Hatcher's 2017 inventory of field trials, UF and USDA would update the list. And fly the trials with existing drone services. Data would be shared periodically over the life of the project with final reports and plot maps submitted by March 1, 2023. It was suggested that breeders from both institutions meet annually to update the inventory, and that this language be included in the breeders' future proposals to make it part of the ongoing research.

The proposed Directed Research Proposal outline was included with materials; Mr. Dantzler provided a few clarifications to it. Mr. Mahan made a motion to accept the directed research proposal changes discussed and move forward with the proposal. Mr. Dantzler noted that the statement that the report shall include what varieties and selections each plot currently contains, etc., was included for discussion purposes and would not be included in the proposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Updike and passed unanimously.

The next item was the discussion of replacement tree costs for the rootstock trial grower cooperators. Since the US 1284 rootstock has failed and those trees are not going to be available for the trial, each of the grower cooperators have been informed that they can substitute the rootstock of their choice for those 300 trees in their trial and they would be reimbursed the \$8.05 per tree that would have otherwise been paid by CRDF.

There are five rootstock/scion combinations that do not have enough trees ready for a fall planting. The nursery will be ready to fulfill the order in the spring around March or April.

The committee would like to stick to the original trial design, to the extent possible, with trees that are available now. The grower cooperators will be informed of the Executive Committee's decisions and work with the cooperators to achieve the goals of the trials. If details cannot be worked out, the issue can be revisited at the Board meeting on August 23.

The contract would need to be amended to allow reimbursement to the grower for those trees substituted, and that the amount of the payment would be deducted from the nursery's payment. Mr. Howard made a motion to amend the grower cooperator contracts to allow for reimbursement at currently stated rates for the replacement trees that the grower must substitute. It was seconded by Ms. Morgan and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler presented the two bids that were received for the propagation of the trees for the CRDF scion trials. These scions were previously recommended by the Select Committee and approved by the Board. Bids were received from Agromillora (\$18,000), and from Southern Citrus Nurseries (13,485). Mr. Mahan made a motion to accept the Southern Citrus Nurseries bid. The motion was seconded by Mr. Updike and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler noted that with the restructure of the RMC earlier this year, both the University and USDA-ARS would have a representative. Dr. Brian Scully was the USDA representative but has since retired. While he would like to remain on the committee, it is unclear if he is permitted to officially represent USDA. Mr. Dantzler discussed the matter with Dr. Erin Roskopf and Dr. Shatters. Dr. Roskopf said she is inclined to defer to Dr. Scully. Mr. Updike indicated he would like to keep Dr. Scully on his committee since his experience is invaluable. Mr. Dantzler noted that Erin Roskopf would be willing to serve if needed.

Under new business, Mr. Updike noted that he would like for the RMC and Board to review the current Southern Gardens contract for PCR testing and to find out whether the growers are using the services or those funds could be better used elsewhere. Mr. Dantzler offered to get the information requested and report at the Board meeting. Mr. Ireby noted that the volume is currently what was budgeted. He explained there was a glitch in their process that has since been resolved.

There were no Public Comments, so with no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Minutes submitted by John Updike.