



Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday, January 24, 2023

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at USDA Horticultural Research Lab, 2001 S Rock Rd, Ft. Pierce, FL. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. President Rob Atchley called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Rob Atchley, Chris Gunter, George Hamner, Aaron Himrod, David Howard, Deeley Hunt, Ron Mahan, Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Morgan Porter, Eric Rohrig, Joby Sherrod, Matt Story and John Updike. Also participating were Ute Albrecht, Doug Bournique, Rick Dantzler, Ronald Edwards, Steve Futch, Jim Graham, Abigail Hazelbrook, Matt Mattia, Audrey Nowicki, Brandon Page, Michael Rogers, Erin Rosskopf, James Syvertsen, Barbara Thompson, Rosa Walsh, and Tamara Wood.

President Rob Atchley turned the meeting over to the newly elected president, Morgan Porter. Mr. Atchley expressed his thanks to the Board for their support the past year. Ms. Porter expressed gratitude for her appointment and noted she is looking forward to leading the Board in the next two years. Mr. Dantzler gave them a word of thanks as well as to past-president David Howard and Secretary John Updike who will be terming out and leaving the Board in December 2023.

President Porter noted the minutes from the December 13, 2022, board meeting were included in the materials for review and approval. Mr. Himrod made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Updike and passed unanimously.

Dr. Erin Rosskopf, Co-Acting Director for the host facility, welcomed the board to the USDA-ARS facility, and recognized Dr. Matt Mattia from their facility, who was also in attendance.

Executive Committee: Did not meet.

Finance and Audit Committee: Mr. Mahan presented the December 31, 2022, financial summary, noting net assets of \$2.2M. Mr. Mahan moved to accept the financial statement as presented. Mr. Himrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Mahan reported that the committee reviewed the Legislative request for FY 2023-2024. Mr. Dantzler provided a summary of the projections that went into the \$3M request, noting the Pathway 2.0 document, recent projects funded, the current and proposed RFPs, and funds for plant improvement.

He also reported that \$750,000 is allocated to CRAFT from this year's Legislative funding to be used to get products (2,4-D, GA, OTC, Brassinosteroids) into trees. There was a motion from Mr. Howard to proceed with the \$3M request for FY 2023-2024 Legislative funds. The motion was seconded by Mr. Atchley and passed unanimously.

Governance Committee: Mr. Dantzler noted that updates to the Business Plan, committee membership and the COO Review are topics that will come before the committee in the next couple months.

Research Management Committee:

Mr. Updike reported that Dr. Yongping Duan requested that his preproposal, *Characterization of a new citrus virus and its potential for HLB control*, be deferred for 3 months. Mr. Himrod moved to defer action. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

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Mr. Updike noted that the committee recommended that Drs. Lukasz and Kirsten Stelinski be invited to submit a full proposal on their project, *Effects of trunk-injected oxytetracycline on tree infection and health, psyllid pathogenicity, and vector population*. Staff was directed to meet with the PIs to discuss the following issues: 1) Monthly sprays of insecticides are not used by growers. Why evaluate it, even though it is for control? 2) First do a greenhouse study to prove the concept that psyllids can take up OTC from a tree that was injected with OTC. 3) If “tree health” means canopy volume, why evaluate that? 4) Should we test other OTC formulations that are coming to the marketplace? 5) Assess fruit drop as part of the study. Mr. Updike moved to invite a full proposal with these five contingencies. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Mr. Updike addressed Dr. Albrecht’s pre-proposal, *Evaluating different rates of oxytetracycline administered by trunk injection in mature sweet orange trees*, and moved to request a full proposal that would include Vernia and Hamlin, change the project from a 2-yr. project to a 3-yr. project, and include a test of treating trees in year one and year three. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Mr. Updike reported on Dr. Ritenour’s pre-proposal, *Evaluation of potential HLB tolerant grapefruit rootstock/scion combination in Florida*, noting that the committee recommended that the PI be invited to submit a full proposal, subject to the following contingencies: 1) Budget is too high. Strike canopy volume as one way to reduce the budget. Focus on yield and fruit quality. 2) Maybe a limb study would be good enough instead of picking and counting all the fruit on the tree. 3) Jim Syvertsen, Brandon Page, Daniel Scott, and Mark Ritenour need to discuss the most essential work, as well as meet with the grower cooperators to decide which trees to pull for non-performance. A motion was made by Mr. Atchley to request a full proposal with the suggestions discussed. Seconded by Mr. Himrod, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Updike discussed allocating remaining uncommitted FY 2022-2023 funds to CRAFT 2.0 for an existing tree rehabilitation program to assist growers with costs and answering questions on the novel new therapies including OTC. Mr. Himrod made a motion to invite a proposal from CRAFT. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Mr. Updike discussed the potential RFP topics being considered, beginning with the Application of OTC in combination with other antimicrobials. The committee recommended approval of the RFP without limiting it to using in combination with OTC, to allow standalones. Mr. Himrod asked what the timeline was to run samples through the hairy root assay. Mr. Howard noted that the Bayer product might be a candidate to be studied if Bayer’s technology could be pursued elsewhere. Mr. Dantzler stated that Bayer has identified an OTC derivative that has excellent efficacy against Clas. It is performing equally well with the OTC that Remedium is using, but since this OTC is used in human pharmacology, there has been no interest in proceeding with its commercialization. So maybe CRDF could do some testing with this to see if there is somebody else that might not mind stepping in and carrying it forward from a commercialization standpoint. Bayer would have intellectual rights so they would have to release it. There would have to be an agreement between Bayer and the company that wanted to take it to commercialization. Mr. Mahan made a motion to proceed with the RFP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Himrod and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler discussed suggested research topics shared with him by the IRCL. Growers in that region want to discuss it further and refine the document before submitting a formal request for CRDF action. Mr. Bournique noted that Indian River growers have been sharing therapies working for them, including the use of oak leaf mulch. Dr. Graham recalled that Dr. Lorenzo Rossi published research stating that after 3 years of detailed study the oak leaf mulch had no effect on HLB tree health.

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Mr. Updike noted that the question was raised as to whether CRDF should fund research on questions by North Florida growers. The committee suggested that a good policy might be to fund those that have the potential to help all growers of the state.

Mr. Updike asked Mr. Page to provide an update on the Ridge rootstock trial. He noted that over half the trees were lost as a result of Hurricane Ian and the grower cooperator requested that he be released from his obligation because of the storm and overall market conditions. The grower cooperator has continued caring for the trees and has offered the surviving trees to CRDF or growers wishing to take them. After advertising on the CRDF website and in grower association newsletters, CRDF had three inquiries and will continue working with these growers to determine how best to allocate them.

Regarding the trees still with Agromillora, CRDF has received an inquiry from someone who expressed interest in obtaining the Valencia trees to conduct that portion of the trial.

Mr. Page gave an update on the Scion Trials, noting that all is progressing well. We will be looking for grower cooperators for these small-scale trials. It will be less than three-acre sites in the Flatwood and Ridge. CRDF has budgeted an amount to offset production costs for these trials.

Mr. Dantzer reported that seventeen pre-proposals have been received in response to the Gamechangers RFP. Ms. Porter suggested that, if any of the projects prove worthy, that they be fast-tracked for immediate consideration and funding.

Mr. Dantzer reported that bids are being solicited for eight topics related to OTC research.

Mr. Dantzer reported that CRDF has made the request to IR-4 requesting assistance in commercializing CTV Vectoring, the first step in their process. Mr. Irey will be providing the input required from Southern Gardens before IR-4 can proceed with the request.

Mr. Dantzer expressed disappointment that the EPA has not issued a decision on the application on Vismax™.

Mr. Updike reported that Dr. Brlansky and his team presented on a blight project for which they would like to submit a proposal. The committee showed some interest in hearing the details. Mr. Howard moved to request Dr. Brlansky submit a pre-proposal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Updike and passed.

Under his COO report, Mr. Dantzer noted there was vigorous conversation by the Research Management Committee about injecting OTC and the cost of Remedium TI. This led to discussion of the need for competing products. Ms. Amy Brown weighed in, as well as Mr. Aerts discussing the 'me too' provision. Mr. Dantzer noted that a couple other companies could be asking CRDF for some form of assistance besides letters of support. Mr. Howard asked how to approach these companies. Mr. Mahan made a motion to provide support to Invaio as well as AgroSource. The motion was seconded by Mr. Howard. Mr. Himrod expressed his gratitude for TJ Biotech stepping up and making the investment in the research and coming out with the Remedium TI product, and cautioned against doing things deemed too unfriendly towards TJ Biotech because it could have a chilling effect on other companies investing to assist the citrus industry. The motion passed unanimously.

There was further discussion about how best to help companies that might be willing to develop OTC products that could be more affordable. Mr. Dantzer said that an RFP would be the best way because it would be open to everyone or all companies.

Mr. Dantzer reported he is working with Yianni Lagos, Soilcea, on the language for the CRISPR trials project.

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Mr. Dantzer reported that FDACS has recommended Dr. Eric Rohrig's appointment to take Dr. Greg Hodges seat on the board, since his term ended December 31st.

Ms. Wood reported on behalf of Matt Joyner that Mutual was in Tallahassee last week to meet with the Senate Ag Committee and that the new chair of the Ag Committee, Senator Jack Collings, is a citrus supporter.

Dr. Michael Rogers gave a slide presentation on CRISPR and gene-editing of citrus.

Dr. Mattia reported on the status of the aerial inventory project, noting they are working on the data analysis.

New Business: None

Public Comments: There were no public comments.

Future Meeting: February 28, 2023, 10:00 a.m., at SWFREC, Immokalee.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:04 pm
Minutes submitted by John Updike, Secretary