



Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting December 3, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Directors, Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at the Highlands County UF-IFAS Extension Office, Bert J. Harris Agriculture Civic Center Auditorium, 4509 George Blvd, Sebring, FL 33875. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. President Morgan Porter called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Board members present were John Davis, Chris Gunter, George Hamner, Aaron Himrod, Deeley Hunt, Matt Machata, Ron Mahan, Trevor Murphy, Morgan Porter, Joby Sherrod, Sarah Spinosa, and John Updike.

President Morgan Porter introduced our newest Board member John Davis. He shared that he had been working in administrative leadership for 9 years. He was hired by Jackie Burns and was now working under Rob Gilbert. He is located at UF as the Senior Associate Dean for Research in IFAS. His background is in plant breeding and genetics with a specialty in Forest Biotechnology.

President Morgan Porter noted the minutes from the September 24, 2024 Board meeting were available in their packet for review and approval. Mr. Himrod made a motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None

Executive Committee: Did not meet.

Finance and Audit Committee: Treasurer, Ron Mahan, gave the financial summary for October 31, 2024. The net assets were just over \$1.1 million. Revenue was about \$732,000 which was about \$1.4 million under plan. Accounts Payable was outstanding of a little over \$400,000. Research Expenses were at about \$800,000 below for a Net Decrease of about \$546,000. The ending Citrus Marketing Order balance was about \$1.2 million. Mr. Mahan brought forth the motion to accept the financial summary as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler mentioned that if they chose to fund everything on the agenda today, they would still have \$375,000 remaining to commit between now and the end of the fiscal year. We will be discussing ways to utilize these funds at our Plant Improvement meeting immediately following the Board meeting.

Governance Committee: Mr. Hamner noted that they had met immediately before the Board meeting. They found no issues with the Conflict-of-Interest forms and moved to present them to the Board for approval. Mr. Himrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. He also made a motion to accept the same slate of officers that was serving this year to retain their positions for

another year. Mr. Himrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. This retains Morgan Porter as President, Joby Sherrod as Vice-President, George Hamner as Secretary, and Ron Mahan as Treasurer.

Plant Improvement Committee: Did not meet since the last meeting but would be meeting immediately following the Board meeting where there would be presentations and discussions by IFAS, USDA, and Coca Cola.

Research Management Committee: Mr. Himrod noted that the RMC had met last on November 14, 2024. Project funding consideration was given to the following proposals:

24-005 – S. Santra – Revised proposal: “Protecting trees using nano-GRAS IPM strategy.” Dr. Santra’s premise is that there is a nanocarrier that will increase the efficacy of coppers. Mr. Himrod brought forth the motion from RMC to the Board for funding approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed unanimously.

24-015 – M. Dutt – “Rapid production of non-transgenic genome edited citrus plants.” This proposal is to get another qualified scientist working in this capacity. Ms. Porter noted that she had confidence in Dr. Dutt and supported having more researchers in on this endeavor. Mr. Himrod brought forth the motion to the Board for funding approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed unanimously.

23-021 – R. Brlansky – “Using improved diagnostics to determine citrus blight prevalence”. This is a continuation of Dr. Brlansky’s project. While this virus is associated with blight, there is not conclusive evidence that it is the cause of blight. Nevertheless, if it is, and because it is so ubiquitous, knocking out the virus with CRISPR appears to be the best way to proceed, which this continuation project does. Mr. Himrod brought forth the motion to the Board for funding approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed unanimously.

D. Manker – Consideration of two preproposals to continue Project 16-026C (Bayer): “Completion of final USDA NIFA CAP trials, Plant Defense Inducers to support OTC injections for healthy citrus and alternative mode of action” – \$12,000 – 0.5 year; or “Extension of final USDA NIFA CAP trials, Plant Defense Inducers to support OTC injections for healthy citrus and alternative mode of action” – \$124,000 – 1.5 years. There was a vote to approve one or the other. The first project was for half a year to harvest data in relation to their plant defense inducers. The second one was to get this harvest data as well as an extra year. RMC chose the latter since so much funding had already been invested in the project. Mr. Himrod brought forth the motion for funding approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed unanimously.

COO Report: CRDF is actively considering pursuing a combination of streptomycin and oxytetracycline product. Mike Aerts was consulted on regulatory matters. He suggested that we

have a potential registrant before we go through this effort. EPA has asked that we be sure this combination works better than just OTC before we start the regulatory process. We convened a meeting of university researchers who are doing work in this space, and they are not certain that this combination of bactericides works as well as we once thought, so shortly you will be receiving a request for funding to lock down this scientific point.

Dr. Duan's workshop on culturing CLas has not been set. We would pay for the cost for him to teach other researchers what he has learned.

Two outfits have approached CRDF to aid in funding them to craft a beer that includes citrus.

Dr. Chaparro in Gainesville hosted a fruit field day and had some interesting selections for testing. Some of the selections may need an additional cross or two to be as good as they can be, but they are getting very close.

Silvec Biologics has an interest in pursuing a section 18 or 24C label in the near future on CTV vectoring.

HLB Mac project will likely be funding some of the Grove First and possibly some Silvec projects in the near future.

A company has discussed doing work where drones released *Tamarixia* over groves. They may be giving us a preproposal for a system to aid ACP management.

Mr. Dantzler will be making a presentation to the FDOC on current projects and submit our commercialization report to the FCC in the next few weeks.

A Board Retreat will likely be held in conjunction with the January board meeting.

Partnership Updates:

Tamara Wood, Florida Citrus Mutual – Matt and two other board members were in DC continuing conversations regarding disaster relief and the Farm Bill. Also, they asked if anyone knew of students in their area who were interested in the Julian Blackmore speech contest to make them aware of the deadline of December 30th. The winner would receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

Chris Gunter, UF-IFAS- CREC – Dr. Gunter announced the December retirement of Dr. Elaine Turner, the Cals Dean at IFAS. She will be stepping back into a part-time role in the faculty. Katie Migliaccio from ABE will be replacing her as Dean in January. Also, progress was moving forward with hiring Crop Transformation Center staff. For those who worked with Dr. Lorenzo Rossi at IRREC, he will be leaving UF in the New Year to take a position at another university.

Erin Rosskopf, USDA – Since our field day was canceled, there will be a fruit tasting with our IFAS neighbors this coming Saturday with Matt Mattia and Ann Plato. We are also interviewing three individuals this week for the McCollum citrus horticulturist position. She also shared that almost all of their greenhouses were compromised as a result of the tornadoes that came along with the last hurricane. Some houses have been able to receive material temporarily. They are looking for alternatives as they go forward. The estimate is that it would take \$14 million to replace their greenhouse complex. They are working diligently at finding support for that. In the meantime, they are patching up a few that will get them through the next couple of months just to be able to maintain plant material.

New Business: Jody Sherrod asked if we needed to take board action for the Strep/OTC combo. In response to this, Mr. Himrod made a motion to seek a Directed Research proposal related to the combination of OTC. Mr. Sherrod seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comments: Mike Aerts mentioned that Fish and Wildlife would be listing the monarch butterflies either as a threatened or endangered species. Depending on the listing status, this could create significant issues for current and future citrus pesticide registration to meet the protection requirement for the species.

Future Meeting: The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2025. The location will be determined and announced at a later time.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:34 AM.

Minutes submitted by George Hamner, Secretary.