Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

September 30, 2025

A meeting of the Board of Directors, Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, September 30, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the Lake Placid Government Center Community Room, 1069 US 27 North, Lake Placid, FL 33852. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. President Morgan Porter called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. Dr. Chris Gunter asked to verify that the meeting was being recorded, and it was. Roll was called and a quorum was present. Board members present were John Davis, Chris Gunter, George Hamner, Deeley Hunt, Matt Machata, Ron Mahan, Trevor Murphy, Morgan Porter, Joby Sherrod, and Sarah Spinosa.

President Morgan Porter thanked everyone for being at the meeting in person. Research is important and the best discussions are had when everyone is together at the table.

Ms. Porter noted that the minutes from the July 22, 2025, Board meeting were included in their packet for review since there was no quorum in July. Mr. Mahan made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed unanimously.

Ms. Porter then presented the minutes of the August 26, 2025, Board meeting for approval. Mr. Hamner made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Spinosa and passed unanimously.

Executive Committee: Ms. Porter noted that the Executive Committee met on Thursday, August 28, 2025, called because there was lack of a quorum at the Board meeting on Tuesday, August 26, and there were action items that needed to be addressed, to wit, approval of the CRAFT proposal in response to the RFP for Large-Scale Field Trials Cycle VII, CRDF's audit for FY 2024-25, and CRDF's tax return Form 990. In addition, Dr. Graham explained his position in the Complaint filed by TJ Biotech against AgroSource. Discussion followed regarding CRDF's position of neutrality and that Dr. Graham's participation as an expert witness for TJ Biotech was in a capacity other than as a project manager for CRDF. President Porter asked for one amendment to the minutes on page 3, para 1, noting that the data was from Syngenta and not Dr. Albrecht. Mr. Mahan made a motion to accept the minutes of the Executive Committee with the amendment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murphy and passed unanimously.

Finance and Audit Committee: Treasurer Mahan gave the financial summary for August 2025, stating there was nothing remarkable to report but did mention a decline in the Citrus Marketing Order balance sheet to under $580,000. He moved to accept the financial summary as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed unanimously.

Mr. Dantzler reported that, of the $1.2 million available in the budget for new projects, $342,000 had been obligated to projects approved for Dr. Stelinski, Southern Gardens Citrus Lab, and Cole Arrant. He noted that funding was available for the board to fund projects on the agenda, noting first-year spending is always lower than what is on paper because projects start later than anticipated and that funds could be made available by other means.

Mr. Dantzler reported that the board previously approved contracting with Dr. Leandro Pena as a consultant, with a focus on international research collaboration. The contract was now before the board. It had been reviewed by university lawyers and deemed acceptable. Dantzler walked the board through the contract. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the contract. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Governance Committee: Did not meet.

Plant Improvement Committee: Did not meet.

At this time, President Morgan introduced the recent FDOC nomination for CRDF's newest board member, Mr. Bill Bohde, noting that he was bringing valuable field knowledge and experience with the CUPS program. Mr. Bohde briefly discussed his background and his enthusiasm for serving on the board.

Research Management Committee: Mr. Machata noted that RMC met in Sebring on September 23, 2025. Six preproposals were received in response to the Juvenility RFP; the goal being to take immature, under-developed wood, and get it to a mature state to where it has good fruit characteristics, quality, and reduced thorniness on the trees.

K. Bowman – Manipulating Juvenility-Associated Tolerance to Increase Profitability of Sweet Orange: $345,000 for 3 years. After a wide discussion on the merits of juvenility research and whether much of that research had already been done, Mr. Machata moved to invite a full proposal in which Dr. Bowman would address these concerns. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed unanimously.

The next four preproposals were by Drs. El Mohtar, Huo, Killiny, and Lu. They involved genetic manipulation. Mr. Machata noted that none on their own would be capable of solving the issue of juvenility with immature budwood and would cost CRDF $1.7 million. Consequently, RMC recommended that Dr. Charlie Messina from the Crop Transformation Center facilitate a discussion with the PIs about merging their preproposals into a single preproposal. Mr. Machata so moved and the motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

The final preproposal was N. Wang – "Shorten the juvenility of non-transgenic Eds1 and Dmr6 edited citrus," which RMC deemed too expensive and not well-structured. Their recommendation was to revise the proposal and show separate funding allocations for each objective. Mr. Machata so moved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

This project raised issues with the high cost and release of Soilcea trees that command a relatively high royalty cost to growers. The question was asked as to why CRDF has not received any funding from the licensing of CRDF-funded work. RMC would like the board to address this issue. Mr. Dantzler shared that he had reached out to the university with those questions. They were responsive, and a meeting was scheduled for tomorrow, October 1, with John Butenmiller and those in Gainesville that were involved. Dr. Chris Gunter and Dr. John Davis would also be participating in the discussion. There should be some answers soon. The contract with the University allows CRDF 30% of the royalty.

There were two directed research proposals. F. Alferez #25-006 ‘Optimizing the use of individual protective covers and therapeutical materials to effectively protect young citrus trees against HLB.’ Mr. Machata made a motion not to move this project forward. Mr. Hamner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

S. Santra #25-007 ‘Novel trunk injection carriers for improving OTC and Zn distribution in HLB affected citrus trees.’ The budget is $309,907 for 3 years. This project utilizes an adjuvant that would allow for a pH-neutral OTC injection, and encapsulates the OTC, allowing for a controlled release that would potentially aid in distribution. Mr. Machata made a motion to tighten the budget and give more detail on fruit quality testing and analysis and what metrics were used. Mr. Mahan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Next was the year 3 funding request of $100,134 by L. Diepenbrock #22-014 ‘Developing management for *Bulimulus bonariensis* snails in Florida citrus.’ In her presentation, she gave updates on how her project was proceeding. She identified chemistries that were effective and should result in a better solution on treating snails. RMC recommended releasing the third year of funding. Mr. Machata so moved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Mr. Machata shared that RMC had brought up the issue of Dr. Graham's involvement as an expert witness for TJ Biotech and its lawsuit against AgroSource. RMC members opined that Dr. Graham should be recused from OTC projects, but that he has valuable knowledge and connections with Brazilian researchers that could be helpful to the industry, and that anything further should be directed to the Board and Governance Committee.

The second part of that discussion was TJ Biotech sharing a quote from Rick Dantzler suggesting that CRDF recommended the ReMedium product over another. Mr. Machata read the full quote from the Citrus Industry article showing the complete statement and noted that CRDF had always taken a stance of neutrality. He suggested that Mr. Dantzler send a letter to both parties stating CRDFs neutrality.

RMC did not get to the review and approval of the Dundee site cost estimate, so Dr. Steve Futch shared with the board the list of cost estimates. After discussion, Mr. Mahan made a motion to move forward with the Dundee site. The motion was seconded by Mr. Murphy and passed unanimously.

COO Report: Mr. Dantzler was asked by a board member if he had made progress on the contract as it relates to PMs. He responded that he had and that he would have it at the next board meeting, that it will probably revolve around the theme of notice. He was also contacted by growers about a peptide that has been identified through Artificial Intelligence in China. He said that Dr. Nian Wang has already tested this at two doses, and that a company has reached out to Mr. Dantzler regarding testing this in Florida.

Mr. Dantzler was asked for an update on using radio frequency for HLB. After discussions with Dr. Nabil Killiny ran out of steam, Dantzler put the company in touch with Dr. Ping Duan from the USDA in Fort Pierce. They brought their equipment to Ft. Pierce and proved that it does kill bacteria. They are now coming back later to test this on a larger scale.

Partnership Updates: None.

New Business: None.

Public Comments: None.

Future Meeting: The next Board of Directors meeting is TBD.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

Minutes submitted by George Hamner, Secretary.