



CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

March 24, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at the UF-IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center, 2199 S Rock Road, Fort Pierce, Florida 34945. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. Board President Morgan Porter called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members participating were Bill Bohde, Dr. Chris Gunter, George Hamner, Matt Machata, Morgan Porter, Joby Sherrod, Sarah Spinosa and Matt Story.

Ms. Porter presented the Minutes from the January 27, 2026, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Dantzler noted that an erroneous sentence on page 3 and on page 4 of the original posted minutes had been deleted when it was called to his attention and the minutes were re-distributed to the board the day before the meeting. Mr. Hamner moved to accept the minutes of the January 27, 2026, Board of Directors meeting as revised. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bohde and passed.

Ms. Porter thanked Dr. Kistler for hosting the board at IRREC today.

Public Comments – Dr. Nicole Quinn introduced herself and thanked the board for their past support.

Ms. Porter asked Mr. Dantzler to update the board on the Farm Bill. Signed by the governor yesterday, the Farm Bill provides for the merger of CRDF into CRAFT effective July 1, 2026. He is meeting with Dr. Angle this week and will discuss. Dantzler noted his desire that most of the process will be completed by June 1, so all will be finalized by June 30.

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee did not meet.

Finance and Audit Committee: Ms. Nowicki summarized the financial statement, noting a cash balance of \$669,011 as of February 28 and most noticeable variance being uncommitted research revenue and expenses. Mr. Dantzler outlined the reasons the uncommitted funds were not utilized, noting that the projects for an alternative to OTC and the potential combination of OTC and streptomycin were abandoned. They are still trying to bring a thousand transgenic trees from Brazil to Florida. A backstop for these funds would be additional funds committed to CRAFT to fund growers currently on their waiting list for funding. Mr. Machata noted too that the RFP on juvenility did not produce the projects expected that would utilize those funds. Mr. Hamner moved to accept the February Financial Statement. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bohde and passed.

Ms. Porter continued with the request from Florida Citrus Mutual for \$30,000 sponsorship for the June 10-12, 2026 Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference in Bonita Springs. CRDF historically sponsored at \$10,000 but the higher request was made so that growers don't have higher fees to register. The staff recommendation is to fund the request. Mr. Hamner moved to fund FCM's request for a \$30,000 sponsorship of the Annual Conference. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bohde and passed.

Mr. Dantzler continued with the royalty discussion. Since it is difficult to connect specific project dollars to a specific scion or rootstock, staff decided to use the DPI budwood report which provides the numbers of each creation. Mr. Hamner noted that details must be passed along to CRAFT in the event this is not resolved by the time the merger takes place, in a white paper. Ms. Porter said it is very important that we find the middle ground and include the moving forward plan in the white paper.

Governance Committee: The Governance Committee did not meet.

Plant Improvement Committee: The Plant Improvement Committee did not meet.

Research Management Committee: Mr. Machata proceeded with the discussion of proposals and preproposals addressed during the March 19, 2026, RMC meeting:

H. Jin, 25-018 ‘Field Evaluation of SAMP-Expressing Carrizo Rootstock for Protection of Citrus Scions Against HLB’ – Mr. Machata summarized the RMC discussions, noting that questions on human health and regulatory concerns were not answered. Mr. Machata moved to approve funding and directed staff to learn the answers on regulatory requirements prior to contracting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bohde and passed. Mr. Hamner asked if there was any word on whether this will be used on grapefruit.

Z. Mou, 25-017 ‘Enabling transgene-free editing in mature citrus’ – Mr. Machata reported that Dr. Mou met with Dr. Peña, resulting in improvements to the project. Mr. Machata moved to approve funding. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner, who questioned whether the research agreement will involve Soilcea, noting that CRDF should not be involved. The motion passed.

C. Messina & A. Huo, 25-014 ‘Rapid Development of Transgene-Free, Phloem-Enhanced Valencia Sweet Orange for HLB Tolerance via Mature-Tissue CRISPR Editing’ – Dr. Dawson summarized the project and the SAB and Staff comments, noting that it would be helpful for the PI to discuss the project details with Dr. Peña. Mr. Machata moved to have Dr. Huo discuss the project with Dr. Peña and the RMC will further consider the project.

D. Norman & P. Schirard, ‘Development of SP2 as a Biological Biostimulant to Mitigate Huanglongbing in Florida Citrus’ – Noting what’s been learned from the pilot project on a small basis from grower funding initially and the need to perform larger field trials which will provide quantitative data, Mr. Machata moved to fund Dr. Norman’s project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bohde and passed with one abstention, by Ms. Porter.

R. Turgeon project 22-020, ‘Protecting citrus trees from citrus greening with anchored, single-chain antibodies’ continuation funding – Mr. Machata noted the RMC concerns on regulatory approval, and moved to approve Dr. Turgeon’s continuation funding, directing staff to find out what steps are being taken to satisfy regulatory requirements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed.

C. Messina & C. El Mohtar, 25-016 ‘Developing an efficient system to accelerate flowering in citrus seedlings’ – Mr. Machata moved to get the SAB comments on Dr. El Mohtar’s responses for RMC to reconsider the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed.

Y. Wang, 'Using Machine Learning on Juvenile Leaf Chemistry to Predict Future Sweet Orange Juice Quality' – Noting the potential value as a breeding tool, Mr. Machata moved to invite a full proposal on the project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed.

Mr. Machata reported that the committee heard a presentation by Dr. Dutt on his Parson Brown project.

COO Report: Mr. Dantzler said he spoke with Matt Joyner about an FCM conference being planned at the CUPS U-Pick facility and they were looking for presenters.

Mr. Hamner asked if the Governance or Executive Committee should weigh in on who should be recommended for service on CRAFT. Mr. Machata asked to hear Mr. Hall's idea on how it will run and emphasized the importance of research and the value added by the project managers and scientific advisory board. Mr. Hall said feedback on those Board and RMC members interested in participating would be helpful in setting up a committee like the RMC. The CRAFT Board will make recommendations to the Commissioner for approval, adding two new grower members.

Partnership Updates

Dr. Gunter thanked the Board for their continued support.

Ms. Shepp said she attended the first meeting of the CRDF Board and will also be attending the last meetings. She sees the research continuing with the hope the CRAFT merger is a success. The DOC remains a partner to make sure there is a market for citrus and stands by for any assistance needed.

Mr. Hall noted they received \$226M in requests for the \$100M received this year. They are working with growers on freeze damage assessments. He is looking forward to continuing the mission of CRDF through the merger with CRAFT.

New Business – there was no new business.

Public Comments –

Dr. Kistler thanked the Board for bringing their meeting to IRREC, noted their collaboration with Grove First and working with the symbiont technology to assist with managing greening.

Dr. Zambon noted their continuing work at Picos Farm and starting field work with Bob Adair's lab and the Florida Research Center.

Dr. Quinn thanked the Board for its support of the snails and mealybug projects.

The next board meeting will be held on April 28, 2026, at BHG, UF-IFAS CREC, Lake Alfred at 10:00 AM.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Minutes submitted by George Hamner, Secretary.