CRDF Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc.

CITRUS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
June 10, 2026

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, Inc. was held on Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa in Bonita Springs, Florida. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. Board President Morgan Porter called the meeting to order at 2:37 PM. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members participating were Bill Bohde, Chris Gunter, George Hamner, Deeley Hunt, Matt Machata, Ron Mahan, Trevor Murphy, Ajia Orth, Morgan Porter, Joby Sherrod, and Sarah Spinosa.

Ms. Porter presented the Minutes from the April 28, 2026, Board of Directors meeting. Mr. Hamner moved to accept the minutes of the April 28, 2026, Board of Directors meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee did not meet.

Finance and Audit Committee: Mr. Mahan gave his report of the June 8, 2026, meeting: The Committee reviewed the April and May 2026 Financial Summaries. There was nothing remarkable. Mr. Mahan moved to approve the May financial statements as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Spinosa and passed unanimously.

The Finance and Audit Committee also considered and approved moving forward with the audit. The audit proposal from the auditors was reviewed and accepted but no formal board action was needed.

The FY 2026-2027 budget was considered even though business and research projects would be turned over to CRAFT, along with funding for remaining administrative costs. The budget was included in the materials, and the Finance and Audit Committee moved for the Board to approve the budget as presented. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Governance Committee: Mr. Hamner gave his report of the June 8, 2026, meeting, to wit:

The Governance Committee reviewed the merger plan between the CRDF and CRAFT, reviewing each substantive provision which Mr. Hamner reviewed with the board. He also noted that the merger was tentatively set for August 1, 2026, but UF recently notified CRDF that the UF BOT wouldn’t meet until September of 2026 to consider the merger, so the merger plan would need to be changed from August 1, 2026, to October 1, 2026. Therefore, a motion was set forth to amend the previous motion from the Governance Committee to reflect the date of October 1, 2026, throughout the merger plan.

The floor was opened for anyone to comment on the merger plan. Mr. Machata noted that he thought both parties needed to be represented on the CRAFT board, and that the two additional grower seats for the CRAFT board should go to CRDF board members, which they apparently weren't despite what he thought was an agreement with CRAFT to do so.

President Morgan Porter asked that Chair of CRAFT, Tom Mitchell, and Stephen Hall to share their thoughts.

Chairman Mitchell stated that CRAFT's intention was to make the transition as seamless as possible to continue the great work of the CRDF board. The goal was to utilize the Research Management Committee to give recommendations to the board. In addition, they would have staff, i.e., Brandon Page, help coordinate the research being done and give recommendations to the board.

Steven Hall shared that CRAFT has one inclusive committee, the technical working group, which makes recommendations to the CRAFT board. He anticipated the RMC-like committee of CRAFT functioning much the same way using Brandon as the go-between between the committee and board. He noted the CRAFT meetings were public meetings and committee members could attend board meetings.

Mr. Hamner noted that Mr. Machata's concern was well taken, and that the difference between how the CRDF and CRAFT boards operate is essentially a cultural one. Consequently, he did not believe the merger should be held up over it. He continued with the motion on the floor. It was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed with Mr. Machata voting no.

Because of Mr. Dantzler's retirement, the next item was to recommend an interim COO. Mr. Hamner moved to nominate Steven Hall, which was seconded by Mr. Mahan. The motion passed unanimously.

The last item on the Governance's agenda was the discussion of a potential settlement with the University of Florida on a royalty issue. There was an offer for settlement from UF of around $94,000, which was less than CRDF had calculated was owed, but the Governance Committee recommendation was to accept the settlement from the University of Florida and recommend that CRAFT modify contract language going forward that would be more in keeping with CRDF's position. Mr. Machata stated that he believed the existing contract language supported CRDF's position and that the contract language didn't need to be changed.

Mr. Dantzler asked if the board wanted him to note CRDF's disagreement with the settlement methodology if the Board accepted UF's settlement offer. Sentiment was yes, so Mr. Hamner's motion, seconded by Mr. Sherrod, was to accept the settlement offer and let UF know we still disagree with the methodology it used. The motion passed with Mr. Machata voting no.

Plant Improvement: The Plant Improvement Committee did not meet.

Research Management Committee: Ms. Porter took a moment to acknowledge the work of Research Management Committee, especially the chairs, and asked for a show of hands for anyone in the audience who had previously participated in the RMC, of which there were many. She noted that it is a very time-consuming, volunteer job.

Ms. Porter then noted that 63 volunteers had served on CRDF committees, mostly growers, noting this work had gotten us to where we are. She specifically thanked Mr. Machata for his work on RMC and then turned it over to him to walk the board through the RMC portion of the agenda.

Preproposals: First was Dr. Baysal 'Virus-mediated in planta genome editing platform for accelerated trait discovery in Citrus' He noted that Dr. Baysal was proposing something that could shorten the time for citrus transformations significantly. He then walked the board through the three objectives of the proposal. Mr. Machata reported that the committee saw value in the work but was concerned about editing efficiency and a lack of justification for the viral vectors chosen. Nevertheless, RMC recommended inviting a full proposal with a directive for Dr. Baysal to address the points of concern and to work with Dr. Choaa Mohtar due to his experience in this field. It was seconded by Mr. Hamner and passed unanimously.

Next was Dr. M. Dutt 'Proactively developing transgenic lines stacked for resistance to HLB'. This pre-proposal seeks to develop transgenic lines stacked for resistance to HLB. Mr. Machata walked the board through the objectives, then recommended inviting a full proposal. It was seconded by Mr. Hunt and passed unanimously.

Full proposals:

Dr. A. Schultink, Fortiphyte 25-024, 'Using the FIT3 immune receptor gene to generate HLB-resistant citrus for Florida'.

RMC recommended funding with the requirement that he engage IFAS to conduct the screening and CLAS infection portion, which would speed up this portion of the project. As a result of that request, the budget increased by $50,000. Dr. Amit Levy has been brought in to do this portion of the scope of work. Mr. Machata moved the project, which was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Next was a project from Dr. Dutt, 25-023, Identification of key factors in citrus tolerance to HLB. It is a $198,090 3-year project. Mr. Machata explained the four objectives, noting RMC's concerns. There was also discussion on whether it would speed up work on the project if the postdoc was hired for a full year instead of just half the year. Mr. Dantzler explained the cost would increase by $40,000 and $43,000 per year, and that while more data be crunched but would not necessarily influence the timeline.

Additionally, there was a CRDF project with Dr. Yu Wang where she is doing metabolomics. Mr. Machata explained that while it wasn't a requirement, he wanted Dr. Dutt to reach out to Dr. Wang to see if there could be synergies. This was put forward as a motion. It was seconded by Mr. Mahan and passed unanimously.

Next was Dr. Baysal 25-021 ‘Engineering durable citrus tolerance to Huanglongbing via rational multi-layer defense stacking’ Mr. Machata explained the proposal and explained the history of it. Consequently, the PI has adequately addressed RMC’s concerns. RMC recommended funding contingent on the PI working with CRDF staff to get the budget down. The PI has since reduced the $614,532 budget to $455,532. This new budget falls in line with the other gene stack proposals, therefore RMC put forth a motion to approve funding. It was seconded by Mr. Sherrod and passed unanimously.

Mr. Machata continued with Dr. Bonning, 23-040, Continuation, optimal combination of BT toxins and gene silencing RNAs for management of citrus root weevil. He explained the evolution of this proposal and changes that had been asked of the PI by RMC. Those changes have been made. However, there are some loose ends, so Mr. Machata recommended that it go back to RMC for another review. which is what was decided.

Last was reconsideration of Dr. C. Messina (and Dr. A. Ho), 25-014, ‘Developing HLB-resistant sweet orange via mature tissue genetic modification for rapid evaluation. Mr. Machata walked through the details of the project as well as the changes.

The motion to approve funding was seconded by Mr. Bohde and passed unanimously.

Mr. Machata expressed thanks to RMC members, project managers, the CRDF board, the SAB, staff, Brandon, and everyone else who had a hand in these revisions, noting the projects had improved significantly and could make a real difference in the industry. He also suggested that CRAFT focus on regulatory matters.

With that, Ms. Porter noted that we have a lot to celebrate. She started with the merger and the passing of the torch. She is excited for the CRAFT and CRDF merger and pointed out that CRDF and CRAFT already had a close relationship, especially with ETT therapies that first started with CRDF. Now CRAFT can test them on a large scale.

Many of the varieties in CRAFT Cycles 1 through 7 were first funded by CRDF, so she believes it is a natural progression for both programs to be located under one house, especially at a time when we all must be as cost efficient as possible.

She pointed out that CRAFT had heard the discussion but understood that you want a future in this industry too, and it takes all research, field trial efforts, and growers working together to prosper. So, toasted to each of us in this transition.

She continued by recognizing the CRDF staff, starting with Barbara, our program assistant since 2022, and then Audrey, our office manager, who has been with this organization since it started in 2009 and does so much more than manage an office.

She pointed out that we were lucky to have Dr. Bill Dawson since 2021; Steve Futch from 2019; Jim Graham from 2018; and Jim Syvertsen since 2014, and Brandon Page as our field trial coordinator. We are very thankful for all that you have done and toasted to them.

Rick Dantzler: Your time as COO has been defined by the ability to bring researchers and growers to the same page. You have been a true mediator, someone who listens first, understands both sides, and then helps find a path forward that serves us all. That's not an easy role, but you've made it look natural. To your wife Julie: You have shared a lot of time and energy that Rick has devoted to us, and we are very grateful for that. Brandon Page and Jim Graham continued and shared their thanks and gratitude to Rick.

Mr. Hamner then addressed our President, Morgan Porter. “You know, all of us have served for a long time. Rick got his due honors, and all those people got due honors. Morgan, you have done a great job as our last existing president, and we would like to give you your due honors.”

COO Report: Rick Dantzler gave his response to the accolades and thanked those who had helped him and served CRDF and the industry.

Partnership Updates: Ms. Porter continued that we get most of our partnership updates throughout the conference but asked if there was anyone who wanted to speak now.

There was no New Business and were no Public Comments. Ms. Porter reported that the next Board of Directors meeting would be determined later and wished everyone a fun and enjoyable conference and hope they learn a lot.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by George Hamner, Secretary.