

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD BOARD MEETING

October 4, 2017

MINUTES

Welcome and Roll call – Meeting was called to order at 11:02 am Eastern time by Chairperson, Jim Rockis. Board members in attendance: Mark Arkills, Jim Heater, Rex Korson, Della Deal, Chris Maciborski, Jim Rockis, Mark Steelhammer, Beth Walterscheidt, Charles Fowler, Paul Battaglia and Betty Malone. Unavailable: Bentley Curry. USDA Representative in attendance: Vickie Carpenter. Staff in attendance: Tim O'Connor and Marsha Gray.

Additional Agenda Items –

Meeting Minutes – It was MOVED and SECONDED to approve the August 17, 2017 meeting minutes as presented. MOTION APPROVED.

New Business

- a. **Referendum Process Proposal** – Tim O'Connor and Betty Malone reviewed their meeting with AMS Acting Administrator, Bruce Summers and AMS Deputy Administrator, Sonia Jimenz. CTPB attorney, Wayne Watkinson also attended. They discussed the process for the upcoming referendum and there was general agreement on most items. CTPB board reviewed the proposal. It was MOVED and SECONDED to approve the Referendum Process presented to the board with references to “growers” and “growing companies” changed to “producers and importers.” MOTION APPROVED.
- b. **Grower Engagement** - Jim Rockis reported on his time in the Pacific Northwest, as well as other growing regions and feedback that he has received from growers. There was board discussion on grower outreach and a general thought that many growers may have more interest in research that CTPB is funding than promotion.
- c. **Strategic Planning** – Jim Rockis shared his desire for CTPB to engage in some strategic planning in the coming year, and his thoughts on involving a select group of industry members with a specific skill set, including statistics and finance.

Committee Reports

Promotion – Tim O'Connor reported that the promotion activities are moving forward. Concept Farm just completed a two-week video shoot for the grower videos and have more than 30 hours of video to review, select from and edit into content for the campaign. General press release is out to the print media. Tree lighting locations are selected and team is formalizing plans for on-site participation. Satellite media tour is set for Wednesday, November 29 with our paid spokesperson, Joe Washington (HGTV Groundbreakers) and grower, Steve VanderWeide. Promotion Committee is reviewing options for the remaining budget of approximately \$98,000. Those opportunities include two different television programs, a Trees for Troops partnership, additional grower video content and several additional ideas from Concept Farm. Committee will have a call on October 10 to provide feedback.

Marsha Gray reported on the need to cancel the Sprout program. With the constant changes and upgrades in security at Facebook, some participating growers were receiving security warning messages from Facebook. Jim Rockis and Mark Arkills agreed to terminate the program while there was still time to reach growers and encourage them to participate in the social media campaign by following and sharing Facebook content.

Finance – Paul Battaglia reported that we continue to carefully monitor expenses and cashflow. Cashflow is always a consideration as we fund the campaign and wait to receive grower assessments after the first of the year.

Research – Della Deal reported that many of the researchers that have been funded by the CTPB recently returned from the International Christmas Tree Researchers conference in Iceland. She is expecting Leyland Cypress project to be submitted.

Industry Relations – Betty Malone briefly reviewed some recent meetings with CTPB involvement, including Marsha Gray's Skype presentations to the Canadian Christmas Tree Council and the Lunenburg County (Nova Scotia) growers meeting.

Governance – No report

Unfinished Business/Staff Updates

Grower Audit Plan Update – The board's email vote approved the grower compliance audit plan as presented. The plan, budget amendment to fund the plan and the agreement with the CPA to conduct the audits have been sent to USDA for approval.

USDA – Vickie Carpenter referenced the Board's discussion about the referendum and clarified that a notice will get published to the federal register, USDA issues a press release. She noted that the Order states "give reasonable public notice of the referendum." The Board can utilize available media or public information sources, without incurring advertising expenses to communicate facts about the upcoming referendum. Carpenter verified that she was working on the board's budget amendment request.

Next Call/Meeting - Jim Rockis announced that the board will not plan to hold a meeting during the harvest season and board members will be notified about a January meeting date.

Adjourn – It was MOVED and SECONDED to adjourn. MOTION APPROVED.

Respectfully Submitted

Beth Walterscheidt,
Secretary