

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD TELECONFERENCE BOARD MEETING

May 17, 2016

MINUTES

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

Additional agenda items - There were no items added to the agenda.

Meeting Minutes – It was MOVED and SECONDED to approve the April 19, 2016 conference call minutes as presented. MOTION APPROVED.

Committee Reports

Finance –

Contract with Concept Farm – Cubby Steinhart and Tim O'Connor reported that the contract with Concept Farm is in the final review process at USDA and is for \$1 million. The additional \$250,000 budgeted can be made available to Concept Farm.

Allied Industries - Mark Arkills reported that he had started a list of Allied Industry members and has received input from some board members and staff. He will send it to the full board for input and contact information. Once identified, they will receive a letter requesting their financial support and board members will make personal follow up calls.

Promotion – Promotion Committee Chair, Jim Heater requested board approval to pay for travel for Promotion Committee members to attend a meeting in Pennsylvania prior to the board meeting. Board reviewed CTPB Travel Policy and its application to committee members.

It was MOVED and SECONDED to have the Promotion Committee meet in Allentown, Pennsylvania on July 20, 2016. MOTION APPROVED

It was MOVED and SECONDED to pay actual travel costs for Promotion Committee members who seek reimbursement to attend the Promotion Committee meeting funding to come from the Board Meeting budget. MOTION APPROVED.

Research – Research Committee Chair, Jim Rockis confirmed that we have moved forward with plans to work with the National Christmas Tree Association in participation in the NFPA Fire Prevention meeting in Las Vegas as well as assisting in Ellis Schmidt's travel to the product testing conference in Chicago.

Industry Relations – Betty Malone reported that the Industry Relations Committee is having conference call this week to get input on topics to include in future industry

communications. Soon we will be preparing our first electronic newsletter and we will be working with Constant Contact. Board members with topic suggestions should email those to Betty and Marsha.

Governance – Rex Korson reported on the board nomination and election process. National, state and regional associations were notified of the process by staff and nomination forms are due back to CTPB on June 1. Ballots with all qualified nominees will be sent to qualified producers in each region on June 15 and due back on July 15. Top two vote-getters for each seat will be forwarded to the Secretary of Agriculture for final appointment.

Staff updates –

Collections - Tim O'Connor distributed a report format for assessment collections. Board liked the format and it will be developed into a report that can be updated as needed. Board suggested greater frequency during collection months.

Tim O'Connor and Marsha Gray reported that collections and exemption responses increased after the last mailing. We received many comments that the wording was "threatening" and others saying "why didn't you do this sooner?" because they thought the previous mail was junk mail or a promotion. Staff doesn't anticipate large numbers of additional assessments to be paid until the ruling and notification of fees and penalties.

There was a board member suggestion that a paper stating "We are out of business" be included in the next mailing to the unresponsive portion of the database that they could sign and return.

Pennsylvania Meeting - Board will meet in Allentown July 21-22 and participate with the Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association meeting on the evening of July 22. Board members can stay for tours and programs on July 23. Board members will need to determine whether to travel in and out of Allentown or another airport such as Newark. Staff will email board members regarding travel plans.

USDA Issues– Marlene Betts reported that USDA is still in progress on the clearance for publication of the penalties and fees ruling. We will be notified of the publication date once it is determined. Marlene Betts thanked the board for the opportunity to join the meeting, and offered to have USDA work with the board in determining a process for auditing farms. She recommended setting an audit budget and developing a plan. Betty Malone requested an update on the FOIA request and Ms. Betts indicated that it is on the director's desk and has not yet been sent.

Next conference call/ meeting – Thursday, June 23 – 11 am Eastern, 10 am Central, 9 am Mountain and 8 am Pacific

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Walterscheidt,
Secretary