

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD TELECONFERENCE BOARD MEETING

June 23, 2016

MINUTES

Welcome and Roll call - Meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Betty Malone at 11:00 am Eastern. Board members in attendance: Betty Malone, Paul Battaglia, Mark Arkills, Rex Korson, Beth Walterscheidt, Mark Steelhammer, Jim Rockis, Jim Heater, Della Deal and Chris Maciborski. USDA Representative: Vickie Carpenter. Staff in attendance: Tim O'Connor and Marsha Gray. Absent: Bentley Curry.

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

Meeting Minutes – It was MOVED and SECONDED to approve the May 17, 2016 conference call minutes as presented. MOTION APPROVED.

New Business

Board Vacancy – Betty Malone acknowledged the resignation of board member, Conrad Steinhart. Nomination process to fill the vacancy in the eastern region is underway. Nominees will be placed on a vacancy ballot and sent to qualified growers in the Eastern Region. Two nominees for the vacancy will be sent to the Secretary of Agriculture on August 1, 2016

Penalties and Fees Ruling - CTPB penalties and fees ruling became effective on June 16, 2016 and rule was approved as requested by CTPB. Staff developed a letter that was approved by USDA to notified non-responsive growers of their requirement to pay the assessment or submit an application for exemption in the 30 grace period before fees and interest charges accrue.

Sharing of Database – We have received informal requests to share the CTPB database. It was MOVED and SECONDED to share contact information only from the CTPB database with industry state or regional associations with the request that they reciprocate. MOTION APPROVED.

Committee Reports

Finance – Mark Arkills was appointed by Betty Malone to serve as Interim Treasurer due to the resignation of Conrad Steinhart. Arkills reviewed the May financial statement. Staff to send updated collections report to board.

Allied Industries - Mark Arkills reported that the committee and staff developed a letter to encourage financial support from allied industries and will send once it is approved by USDA. The committee has developed a list of industry contacts and asked the board to provide any additional contact information.

Board discussed paying for meals of guests invited to meet with CTPB.

Promotion – Promotion Committee Chair, Jim Heater apologized for missing the last Promotion committee call. Tim O'Connor reported that Concept Farm presented their campaign plan to the committee and committee response was quite positive. The committee is scheduling a number of calls with Concept Farm prior to the July meeting in Pennsylvania. Most Promotion committee members are expected to attend.

Research – Jim Heater reported on his participation in the National Fire Prevention Association meeting with Ellis Schmidt. The booth was very attractive, they made a good number of contacts and were able to share the message of educating consumers about holiday safety rather than scaring them. Booth was not in the main exhibit room, so they did not get all the traffic. Recommendation to attend next year in Boston. Jim Heater tentatively reserved an exhibit space for 2017.

Industry Relations - Committee chairperson, Betty Malone reported that the first electronic newsletter was sent and we have received many positive comments. According to Constant Contact we have a 48% open percentage and 27% click rate in the first 48 hours which is excellent. Malone also reported that Jim Rockis' gave an excellent update at the PNW meeting. The schedule of summer meetings was reviewed and board members and staff will be attending at least eight meetings.

Governance – Rex Korson asked staff to report on the board nomination and election status. Marsha Gray reported that ballots were mailed for the three board seats that expire on December 31 and ballots are due to the CTPB by July 15 and nomination packets will be sent to the Secretary of Agriculture on August 1. Special election to fulfill seat held by Conrad Steinhart is in the process and will be sent to qualified voters in the Eastern region next week. Ballots due on July 22 with nomination packets going to USDA on August 1.

Staff updates –

Collections – Tim O'Connor reported that we have surpassed \$1.6 million in collections with very few payments being received at the current time. Staff is expecting much activity; payments, exemptions and phone calls, once the letter outlining fees and penalties is received by growers. With July 16 being the deadline for assessment payments with no penalties, staff expects to have a good report for the board at the Pennsylvania meeting.

Pennsylvania Meeting - Tim O'Connor reported that hotel reservations have been made for board and committee members in Allentown.

USDA Issues– Vickie Carpenter reported that the documentation for the FOIA request has not yet been sent.

Next meeting – July 21-22, 2016 in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Marsha Gray for Beth Walterscheidt,
Secretary