

CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD

BOARD MEETING

Okemos, MI
July 26, 2018

MINUTES

Welcome and Roll call – Meeting was called to order at 8:00 am by Chairperson, Jim Rockis after opening prayer by Bentley Curry. Board members in attendance: Rex Korson, Della Deal, Jim Heater, Chris Maciborski, Jim Rockis, Mark Steelhammer, Paul Battaglia, Betty Malone, Jim Corliss, Roger Beyer, Bentley Curry and Beth Walterscheidt. USDA Representatives in attendance: Vickie Carpenter and Charles Stephens. Staff in attendance: Tim O'Connor and Marsha Gray. Guest: Paul Schroeder (for a portion of the meeting)

Additional Agenda Items – Participation in the Agriculture Promotion Group Educational Showcase was added to the agenda.

Meeting Minutes – It was MOVED and SECONDED to approve the May 31, 2018 meeting minutes as presented. MOTION APPROVED.

Update – Current News - Tim O'Connor updated the board on the recent passage of the referendum, the close vote and the Secretary's announcement of another referendum in approximately one year. Board members asked questions and shared their displeasure with the Secretary's ruling with Charles Stephens, Associate Deputy Administrator of AMS, USDA. Stephens answered board questions and provided some information. Board received a document that summarized the voting. Board requested more details on the vote, including vote by state and province, explanation of how non-payers were allowed to vote and how those voters were vetted. A written request for these items was sent to Associate Administrator, Bruce Summers, by Tim O'Connor.

New Business

FY 18/19 Budget – Tim O'Connor presented the recommended budget to the full board. It was MOVED and SECONDED to table further budget discussion and approval to later in the meeting. MOTION APPROVED.

Long Range Planning Task Force Report – Tim O'Connor reviewed the report prepared as a summary of the work and recommendations of the Long Range Planning Task Force. It was MOVED and SECONDED to accept the recommendation of the committee. Discussion to clarify the four recommendations. MOTION APPROVED.

2018 Voice of the Industry – Tim O'Connor requested CTPB financial support for the NCTA Voice of the Industry program again in 2018. The amount requested was \$13,500, the same as in 2017. It was MOVED and SECONDED to fund the Voice of the Industry campaign for \$13,500. MOTION FAILS. The CTPB directed staff to secure a written request from NCTA for consideration at the next board meeting.

Nominations – Tim O’Connor reported that the ballots for the board candidate nominees are at the printer and should be mailed next week. Openings in the eastern and western regions. Central region and importers will not receive ballots.

Management Evaluation and 2018-19 Contract Approval – Beth Walterscheidt reviewed the results of the management evaluation for Tim O’Connor and Associates. The Executive Committee met the previous evening to review and discuss the evaluation with Tim O’Connor and Marsha Gray. The committee is requesting more frequent board conference calls, more communication with the board, and more staff involvement with committees. The executive committee has requested a list of staff members and duties and job descriptions and well as a calendar or time line of deadlines and projects. Walterscheidt commended O’Connor and Gray for agreeing to the evening meeting to have this review.

Participation in the Agriculture Promotion Group Educational Showcase – Tim O’Connor shared information on an upcoming Showcase of the Agriculture Promotion groups to take place in September in Washington DC. The purpose is to engage with legislators, staffers, USDA staff and others to provide information on the programs. The cost of the booth is \$1,810 plus travel and booth materials. Staff confirmed that we have some booth components that we could use for this purpose. It was MOVED and SECONDED to participate in the showcase. MOTION APPROVED. Board directed staff to coordinate and Marsha Gray to attend along with a board member.

USDA Orientation Presentation - Vickie Carpenter presented an orientation session for the board; reminding them of their responsibilities, the rules that govern our program and their role as well as USDA’s role in the program.

Executive Session – It was MOVED and SECONDED to enter executive session. MOTION APPROVED. Tim O’Connor and Marsha Gray left the meeting.

Resumption of Board Meeting – IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED to emerge from executive session. MOTION APPROVED. O’Connor and Gray re-joined the meeting.

Management Evaluation and 2018-19 Contract Approval Continued – It was MOVED and SECONDED to extend the current management contract with Tim O’Connor and Associates for one month to provide time for a new contract to be written and agreed upon. A draft of the contract is due in two weeks. MOTION APPROVED.

It was MOVED and SECONDED to require job descriptions of staff members, duties and responsibilities and a calendar of deadlines to be included with the contract proposal from Tim O’Connor and Associates. MOTION APPROVED.

Board requested that Tim O’Connor and Associates revisit the \$27,000 increase in the management contract in 2016 and to define the work covered by this fee. Recommendation should be included with contract proposal. Board requested contract proposal in two weeks.

Staff Reports

Collections and Enforcement – Staff presented the assessment collections report through July 11, 2018. Board discussed collection and compliance plans. It was MOVED and SECONDED that staff make the best

use of existing time and resources to address compliance and bring in the greatest amount of money.
MOTION APPROVED.

Committee Reports

Promotion – Rex Korson reported on the Consumer Message Survey that was undertaken by Fleishman Hillard in early June. The results will help to craft messaging for current and future campaigns. Primary take-away from this research is that our target customer is more likely to respond to the experience of the real Christmas tree versus the environmental benefits. Staff will share this report with the board. Tim O’Connor also mentioned the re-work of the 2017 post campaign data, using responses from just millennial moms to also help guide campaign.

Board also discussed possibility of focusing on how the CTPB can be a greater benefit to the largest growers and their work with large retail outlets. There was also brief discussion of providing videos and other content to grower organizations when they participate in consumer-reaching events (ie: state fair, festivals)

Research – Della Deal provided a written research synopsis of the research projects being funded by the CTPB and distributed it to all board members. She reported that her committee is developing a more structured format for requesting, reviewing and selecting research projects.

Industry Relations – Betty Malone led discussion on how to reach the growers that don’t seem to know what is happening with the Promotion Board and the promotional campaign. Suggestions included postcard mailings going into the season to demonstrate where our campaign will appear; more frequent distribution of the electronic newsletter, greater visibility of campaign in large production regions via local media buys.

Finance Committee – No report in addition to budget.

Governance Committee – Betty Malone shared information regarding proposed amendments to the Farm Bill that were directed at “check off” programs. The amendments were either withdrawn or defeated, however they would have been very detrimental to check off programs.

NCTA Update - NCTA President, Paul Schroeder briefly addressed the board and emphasized the importance of working together as we move forward. He mentioned an idea that he is considering to execute a grower survey.

2018-2019 Budget – Board revisited budget discussion. It was MOVED and SECONDED to approve 2018-19 Budget as presented (attached). MOTION APPROVED.

Announcements –

Next conference call was scheduled for Tuesday, August 14 at 11 am Eastern.

Next in-person meeting to take place in Washington DC in February or March and to include visits to USDA leaders. Option to meet next summer in coordination with the Pennsylvania Meeting (also NCTA meeting, NCTA Christmas Tree Contest) in August of 2019.

Adjourn

It was MOVED and SECONDED to adjourn the meeting. MOTION APPROVED.

Respectfully Submitted

Beth Walterscheidt, Secretary
Christmas Tree Promotion Board