

## CHRISTMAS TREE PROMOTION BOARD

### Board Meeting

April 21, 2022

Via Video Conference

**Welcome and Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 11:01 a.m. Eastern time by Chairman, Roger Beyer.

**Board Members in Attendance:** Derek Ahl, Gary Westlake, Charles Fowler, Chuck Berry, Bob Schaefer, Roger Beyer, Bill Brawley, Jane Neubauer, Mark Schmidlin, Larry Downey, Mike Cocco, and Renee Beutell

**USDA Representative(s) in Attendance:** George Webster

**Staff in Attendance:** Marsha Gray, Cyndi Knudson, and Jenny Tomaszewski

**Guest(s) in Attendance:** Frans Kok, Sam Cartner, and David Cartner

#### Agenda:

It was **MOVED** by Mark Schmidlin and **SECONDED** by Chuck Berry to approve the agenda as presented.

**MOTION APPROVED.**

#### Meeting Minutes:

Two typos were mentioned and corrected.

It was **MOVED** by Derek Ahl and **SECONDED** by Renee Beutell to approve April 7, 2022, Board meeting minutes as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

#### Chairman's Report

- a. Management Evaluation – Roger Beyer shared that the Board completes an evaluation of the management staff each year. Beyer has already sent the evaluation forms via email to all Board members and requested they be returned to him by the end of April.
- b. Nominations for 2023 Board Seat Appointments – Roger Beyer shared three positions are up for appointment starting January 1, 2023 - one in the Eastern Region, one in the Central Region, and one in the Western Region. An e-blast was sent to the industry last week announcing the open positions.

#### Committee Reports

##### Finance Committee – Bob Schaefer reported

- a. March 2022 Financials – Schaefer provided a brief overview of the March 2022 financials.
  - Question was raised regarding the donations line item. Marsha Gray shared that 119 growers made a donation in the 2021 harvest year. A one-time journal entry will be made to move those donations from the assessment collection line item to the donations line item. Total assessment income includes over \$4,000 in donations.
  - Gray shared that as of today, assessment and donation income is \$1,732,484.00.

It was **MOVED** by Chuck Berry and **SECONDED** by Larry Downey to accept the March 2022 Financials as presented. **MOTION APPROVED.**

##### Research Committee – Mark Schmidlin and Cyndi Knudson reported

- a. Research Topic Survey – Knudson shared they have been compiling the survey results as they arrive. The Research Committee has received 71 online responses and 18 additional responses. The survey is still available for growers to complete online.
- b. RFP Process – Knudson shared the documents have been updated for the 2022 proposals. The updated forms will be heading to USDA for final approval and should be released in early May. Once released, the RFPs will be sent to over 100 email addresses, researchers, various Universities, and various horticulture websites.
  - Question was raised about the length of time the research topic survey will be displayed on the

website. Knudson shared she will investigate the contract and cost with Survey Monkey.

**Industry Relations Committee** – Gary Westlake

- The Industry Relations Committee met in April and are recommending that the board support creating a low-budget production of short research interview videos to be shared with the industry. The Committee is hoping to conduct these short interviews with researchers as they will all be gathering in California in mid-June.
- Board discussed different ideas in creating the videos and the best places to share them.

**Governance Committee** – Charles Fowler reported

- The Governance Committee continues to work with the Order's wording and hopes to have a report in 2 or 3 months.

**Compliance Committee**– Derek Ahl reported

- The Compliance Committee plans to meet on April 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. Central time to go over the compliance policy that Marsha Gray and Sue Coleman have been working on. They hope to present the compliance policy at the next Board meeting in May.

**Promotion Committee** – Bill Brawley reported

- Earlier this month, the entire Promotion Committee met to hear the campaign presentation for the coming year, which is the same presentation the Board heard from FleishmanHillard in Phoenix, AZ, in February. The Committee was very enthusiastic about the entire presentation.
- The Promotion Committee will be moving forward with the campaign “Joy to the Real.”
- Brawley answered a question regarding the Fleishman Hillard team; which has been addressed by the promotion committee.
- The Promotional Committee will have their “Big Idea” meeting in May. FleishmanHillard will present each part of the campaign recommendations and associated budget for the 2022 campaign year.
- Jane Neubauer wanted to reinforce what a positive committee meeting they had. A lot of excellent feedback was received.
- Roger Beyer shared that the Committee recommendations will come before the Board for approval at the May or June meeting.

**Management Staff Update** – Marsha Gray reported

- a. Assessment Collection – A brief overview of the assessment collection report was provided. As of April 20, 2022, a total of \$1,669,769 has been received.
- The Board approved budget has been sent to USDA for approval.
  - Fidelity Bond – USDA requested that the CTPB increase their fidelity Bond. Gray has been working with USDA and other R&P programs to understand coverage and pricing. Gray has created a report with her findings and has submitted it to USDA for their review and approval.
  - The Consumer Research contract with FleishmanHillard has been approved and signed. The first round of questions has not been released, but it is expected to be available any day.

**Old Business** – no new items to report.

**New Business** – no new items to report.

**USDA** – George Webster reported

- Update on US Customs Collections – Webster shared nothing new to report. They are working through the contracting process with US Customs. Once there is more definitive information, they will share it with the Board.
- The budget has been received at USDA, and the initial review has been conducted. The budget is moving its way through their channels, and once it has been approved, they will let the Board know.

- Marsha Gray shared that she spoke with Larry Downey, and he has met with other Canadian Producers and has put together a list of questions regarding assessment collections at Customs. Gray has requested that Sue Coleman connect her with the AMS department individual that works directly with US Customs.

**For the Good of the Order /Announcements:**

- David Cartner had no comments for the Board.
- Frans Kok is disappointed that there is absolutely no research or funds devoted to measuring the program's impact. Kok believes that there should be some methodology to measure the campaign's effect after seven years. Roger Beyer shared that the Board has conducted an independent study and that it is available on the industry website for all to review.
- Sam Cartner had no comments but thanked the Board for allowing him to attend.
- Bob Schaefer comments that prices of cut Christmas trees are a measure that should be looked at. His company has had double-digit price increases over the last several years, and they have experienced no pushback at the retail level.

**Meeting Schedule:**

- a. The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 19, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time.
- b. The next in-person Board meeting will be held in Burlington, VT, at the Best Western Plus. Arrival on Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, all-day Board meeting, and June 25<sup>th</sup>, VT/NH Association meeting in Middlebury, VT.

**Adjourn:**

It was **MOVED** by Bill Brawley and **SECONDED** by Charles Fowler to adjourn the meeting. **MOTION APPROVED.**

Chairman Roger Beyer adjourned the meeting at 12:01 a.m. Eastern time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gary Westlake  
Secretary