

MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

Trevor Nichols Research Facility
6237 124th Ave Fennville, MI 49408

MEETING MINUTES September 19, 2017

PRESENT:

Jacob Clemons, Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Steven Hunt, Vice-Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jennifer Spears, True Blue Farms, LLC
Cheryl Sullins, Treasurer, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Heather Throne, MDARD
Creela Hamlin, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Dennis Vander Kooi, Michigan Blueberry Commission
James Sumners, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Mark Longstroth, Michigan State University
Kevin Robson, Michigan Farm Bureau
Lorrie Merker, MBG Marketing

Call to Order

Chairman Jacob Clemons called the meeting to order at 10:13am.

The Chairman presented the agenda; table reviewed. Two requested items were added; Heather Throne asked to give an MDARD update and Treasurer Cheryl Sullins requested that an item be added to New Business.

MOTION: Steve Hunt moved to adopt the agenda, James Sumners seconded; motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Table reviewed the minutes from August 5, 2017.

MOTION: Creela Hamlin moved to approve the minutes as written with support from Steve Hunt; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

Open Issues

Forming of Oversight Committee – tabled.

Discussion regarding upcoming visit to Michigan State University on October 27th, 2017.

Chairman gave update on the progress of the creation of a Michigan Blueberry Commission webpage. Discussion on the same. Heather Throne will send Chairman USDA Specialty Crop Grant form to apply for funds in the amount of \$30,000.00 to use towards MBC website, outreach to growers, etc. that must be spent by August 30, 2018.

Chairman also discussed a Gmail suite of emails for MBC board that he is in process of setting up.

New Business

Cheryl Sullins had asked for time on the agenda to discuss MBC contributing towards the sponsoring the USHBC/NABC's hosting of the fall meetings in Grand Rapids in October. Discussion of the same.

MOTION: Cheryl moved to contribute \$100.00 (one hundred) to the USHBC meetings in order to have Michigan Blueberry Commission's name printed on the promotional materials. Steve seconded, motion carried by unanimous verbal vote.

Heather Throne requested to give an update from MDARD. The first was the announcement of Value Added Grant opportunities for Processors and Food Hubs. The grant will award a maximum of \$125,000.00 per proposal and requires a 30% match. Proposals are due by November 7, 2017.

The second announcement is the date of the 5th Annual Pure Michigan Agriculture Summit in Novi on March 14, 2018.

Policy to endorse/support researcher's requests for support from MBC: Discussion around table after reviewing Chairman Jacob's written policy and procedure in regards to researchers requesting support letters or endorsement from the Michigan Blueberry Commission. The following revisions were discussed, made, and attached:

- Strike the "or the chair of the research committee" line from the policy
- Add "All members of the Research Committee must be in agreement" between "..started. and "This is limited to..." in the policy
- Add "Research Committee must report all endorsements at the next regularly scheduled board meeting of the MBC" as the last line of the policy.
- Strike the last sentence starting with "If the request is time sensitive..." from the procedure.

MOTION: Creela moved to adopt the stated policy and procedure of research initiative requests as revised. Dennis Vander Kooi seconded; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

Recess at 11:11am

Reconvened at 11:20am

Reports of Committees

Chairman informed the table that he had communication with the USDA after the 08/05/2017 meeting to inquire about grants. MBC is now on the list of approved Commissions who can submit proposals to the USDA.

Executive Director Committee: Creela reported that she, Dennis, and Cheryl have been meeting and drafted a job description for the Executive Director position. The description was distributed to the table for review.

Discussion regarding revisions to job description and posting of the same. Discussion regarding interviewing candidates.

MOTION: Steve moved to accept the Executive Director job description with discussed revisions with support from Jim; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

Treasurers Report: Cheryl reported that a checking account was opened at PNC Bank in Hartford, MI on 09/18/17. Chairman Jacob Clemons, Treasurer Cheryl Sullins, and Secretary Shelly Hartmann are all signers on the account. MBC owes the Michigan Blueberry Advisory Committee (MBBAC) a total of \$6,777.77 (six thousand, seven hundred seventy-seven dollars and seventy-seven cents) for startup costs that were borrowed.

Public Comments

Lorrie Merker pointed out that a roll call is needed at the start of meetings. Lorrie also noted that in Secretary Shelly Hartmann's absence, a motion is needed to appoint the Secretary's assistant, Jennifer Spears of True Blue Farms, as acting Secretary of the MBC for the day to officially take the minutes.

MOTION: Creela moved to recognize Jennifer Spears as the acting Secretary for the day in Shelly Hartmann's absence, Dennis seconded; motion carried by unanimous verbal vote.

Dennis informed the room about the upcoming Field Day at Trevor Nichols Research Complex on September 26th from 1-4pm.

Kevin Robson suggested that from now on we put the next meeting's date, time, and location on the agendas.

Chairman reviewed the next meeting dates: October 27th in Lansing on MSU's campus; November 21st at 10am at TNRC; December 6th at the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable, and Farm Market Expo after the blueberry program; then January 16th, time and location TBD.

Discussion regarding closed sessions. NO CLOSED SESSION HELD at this meeting.

MOTION: Dennis moved to adjourn meeting, James supported; motion carried by unanimous verbal vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:12pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Spears