

MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

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

MEETING MINUTES November 06, 2017

PRESENT:

Jacob Clemons, Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Steven Hunt, Vice-Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Creela Hamlin, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Dennis Vander Kooi, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Kevin Robson, Executive Director, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jennifer Spears, True Blue Farms, LLC
Mark Longstroth, Michigan State University
Lorrie Merker, MBG Marketing
Emily Helson, MBG Marketing
John Stolzenfeld, JBJ, LLC

ABSENT:

Shelly Hartmann, Secretary, Michigan Blueberry Commission
James Sumners, Michigan Blueberry Commission

ABSENT BUT PARTICIPATED VIA TELEPHONE:

Cheryl Sullins, Treasurer, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Heather Throne, MDARD

Call to Order

Chairman Jacob Clemons called the meeting to order at 2:10pm.

MOTION: Creela Hamlin moved to have Jennifer Spears sit in as Secretary in Shelly Hartmann's absence, Steve Hunt seconded; motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote.

No formal agenda was available or printed.

Meeting Minutes Approval

Table reviewed the amended minutes from September 19, 2017 where James Sumners' name was corrected and the detailed revisions to the Policy to Endorse/Support Researcher's Request for Support from MBC were added.

MOTION: Creela Hamlin moved to approve the September 19th amended minutes as written, seconded by Dennis Vander Kooi; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

Table reviewed minutes from October 27, 2017 meeting.

MOTION: Dennis Vander Kooi moved to approve the October 27, 2017 meeting minutes as written with support from Steve Hunt; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

Reports

Treasurers Report:

No official Treasurer's Report but Cheryl Sullins reported via telephone that we have received 2 assessment payments to date; one going into the checking account and the other going into the money market account to begin accruing interest. Will create a policy for transferring funds into money market at a later date.

Old Business/Open Issues

Sending a 3rd notice to the First Handlers needs to be done asap. Will need to send subsequent years' notices on same dates as this years' for consistency.

MOTION: Dennis Vander Kooi moved to have Secretary send 3rd notice to the First Handlers this week with support from Steve Hunt; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

MDARD's Specialty Crop Block Grant update- Kevin Robson reported that Chairman Clemons sent him the form/application. Kevin began filling it out and will get it submitted prior to the deadline so we can begin working on the website, logo, etc. Kevin, with help from Secretary, will be responsible for meeting grant deadlines. He noted that most grants are reimbursement-style processes/programs where MBC would be reimbursed for funds that it puts out.

MDARD's Rural Development Grant update- Kevin Robson reiterated Heather Throne's report from last meeting that the deadline is January 16, 2018. The grant is for \$100,000.00 with a 30% match for a total amount of \$130,000.00. Discussion on how Trevor Nichols Research Center is in a covered county (Allegan) under this grant. MBC will need to make some decisions with the help/recommendations from MSU Extension regarding how best to move forward should the grant be awarded. Soil amendments will need to be made to the block of ground/current plantings which could take some time. Heather Throne explained that the grant is a 2-year agreement that would be in place in approximately April of 2018, making the deadline for spending the grant April of 2020. AgBioResearch could possibly apply as well and help with the \$30,000.00 MBC would have to spend. Mark Longstroth will hopefully have a proposal by next meeting, December 6th.

MOTION: Steve Hunt moved to empower the Research Committee to look into leveraging up to \$30,000.00 in Rural Development Grants for improvements and investments into the Trevor Nichols Research Center blueberry research plots with support from Creela Hamlin; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

Current and next available grants are/will be Specialty Crop Block Grant, Rural Development, and Project GREEN.

Expiring Term of MBC board member Dennis Vander Kooi- Term ends December 31, 2017. Kevin Robson explained that the Michigan Blueberry Advisory Committee and MBG Marketing are to submit 2 nominations from same district as expiring member to the Governor's office asap. Dennis Vander Kooi would have to resubmit his application if interested. Executive Director submits letter of recommendation/support as well. Per MBC by-laws, the annual deadline for submitting nominations for expiring terms is October 1st.

Executive Director service agreement- Kevin Robson reported that the recommended revisions by Michigan Farm Bureau's legal department and MDARD's Brad Deacon have been applied and a signature is needed from Chairman Clemons. Steven Hunt asked questions regarding service agreement and was satisfied with replies. Chairman Clemons signed.

Calendar for 2018- Kevin Robson suggests that we do a Doodle Poll in January to set the 2018 meeting dates. Discussion on creating work groups so a full board meeting will not need to be called for every decision.

MOTION: Creela Hamlin made a motion to cancel the November 21, 2017 MBC board meeting with support from Dennis Vander Kooi; motion passed by unanimous verbal consent.

Public Comment period open for Specialty Crop Block Grants priorities- Heather Throne stated via telephone that the public comment period for Specialty Crop Block Grants is open until December 8th. In preparing for next round of grants, MDARD would like to know what areas are priorities or challenges for the industry. All comments are to go to the email "mdardgrants@michigan.gov". MDARD will have a Specialty Crop booth at the Great Lakes Expo that will have the capability of taking comments.

Discussion on having Kevin submit a letter on behalf of MBC with top 3 priorities of the blueberry industry. Discussion on amending the blueberry industry priorities. From our current adopted list, the board chose #1, #3, and #7 as the current priorities. #1 and #7 have been revised/amended as follows (#3 had no revisions):

- #1- Pest biology and control & management programs for invasive and problematic pests such as Blueberry Stem Gall Wasp and Spotted Wing Drosophila
- #3- Pesticide resistance management
 - a) SWD insecticides
 - b) fungicides
- #7- Better understanding of impact of pesticide inerts and adjuvants on efficacy and fruit quality

MOTION: Steve Hunt moved to adopt the priorities as amended with support from Dennis Vander Kooi; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

MOTION: Creela Hamlin moved to task Kevin Robson with drafting a letter of priorities to submit to MDARD by December 8th for the board to review at the December 6th, 2017 meeting. Dennis Vander Kooi seconded; motion carried by unanimous verbal consent.

Public Comments

No public comments were provided.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, December 06, 2017 at 4pm at the Great Lakes Expo in Grand Rapids (immediately following the blueberry program); room to be determined.

Adjournment

MOTION: Steve Hunt moved to adjourn meeting with support from Creela Hamlin; motion carried by unanimous verbal vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25pm.

Respectfully submitted by Jennifer Spears