

MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

Phone and Virtual Conference via Webex

MEETING MINUTES

May 27, 2020

PRESENT:

Kevin Robson, Executive Director, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Creela Hamlin, Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Shelly Hartmann, Secretary, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Cheryl Sullins, Treasurer, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Eric Jawor, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Dennis Vander Kooi, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jennifer Spears, True Blue Farms, LLC
Carley Parsley, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Robert Bodtke, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Mark Longstroth, MSUE
Rex Schultz, Heritage Blueberries, LLC
Heather Throne, MDARD
Richard Raffielli, Peterson Farms
Lorrie Merker, MBG Marketing
Jonathan Ringlein, Maner & Costerisan

ABSENT:

None

Call to Order

Chairman Creela Hamlin called the meeting to order at 8:00am, performed a roll call, and verified the presence of a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda (ATTACHMENT A):

The Commission reviewed the proposed agenda.

MOTION: Dennis Vander Kooi moved to adopt the agenda as presented with support from Shelly Hartmann; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

Meeting Minutes Approval

The Commission reviewed the minutes from January 15, 2020 (ATTACHMENT B).

MOTION: Shelly Hartmann moved to approve the January 15, 2020 meeting minutes as written with support from Robert Bodtke; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

Secretary's Report:

Secretary Shelly Hartmann reported that there are still 3 outstanding First Handler reports/payments for 2019. To date, MBC has collected on over 78 million pounds.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Cheryl Sullins reported that the three \$20,000 checks for the approved Research Proposals were sent out. Discussion on MSU horticulture position to replace retired Eric Hanson being put on hold for 6-12 months. Research continues despite virus shutdown.

Maner & Costerisan Audit Report Review

Jonathan Ringlein of audit firm, Manor & Costerisan, announced to the Commission that it passed it's 2019 audit. Review and discussion of audit (**ATTACHMENT C**).

MOTION: Robert Bodtke motioned to approve the 2019 Audit with support from Dennis Vander Kooi; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

West Central Research Station Presentation

Richard Raffielli of Peterson Farms presented a proposal for financial support of a research station in the Oceana/Mason/Newaygo County area to the MBC in the form of a PowerPoint presentation (**ATTACHMENT D**). The Commission and Mr. Raffielli participated in a questions and answers session and discussion took place regarding the proposal and financial commitment.

MOTION: Shelly Hartmann moved to decline the proposal with support from Dennis Vander Kooi; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

MDARD Update

Heather Throne noted she will provide the completed audit to the state for review and approval. Heather announced that value added grants have been put on hold for now due to the virus. She also noted that she would like to report any frost damage to MDARD.

MSU Update:

Mark Longstroth reported that MSUE is working from home due to the virus. He is retiring soon and MSU does plan to fill his position depending on any budget issues due to COVID. He will know more later.

Executive Director Update:

Kevin Robson thanked everyone for participating in the call and MDARD for allowing us to host a virtual meeting. The EPA decision makers tour has been cancelled for this year. Discussed this year's National Blueberry Fest and possibility that will it be cancelled.

MBBAC Update:

Rex Schultz reported the Michigan Blueberry Advisory Committee is hosting a membership drive and encourages everyone to visit their website, mbbac.us, and complete an application for a FREE membership for the rest of the year. He also reported that MBBAC's Promotion committee is working on an idea for a rebate or coupon program to entice the consumer to purchase local blueberries over imported berries.

Public Comments

None.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 13th, 2020 in Lansing, MI.

Adjournment

MOTION: Shelly Hartmann moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30am; motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shelly Hartmann/jls

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 05/27/20 MBC Meeting Agenda**
- B. 01/15/2020 MBC Meeting Minutes**
- C. Maner & Costerisan 2019 MBC Audit report**
- D. West Central Research Station PowerPoint presentation**