



Michigan Blueberry Commission

Minutes

October 27, 2021

9:00am

Southwest Michigan Research and Extension Center, Benton Harbor

1. Introductions/ Opening Remarks/ Roll Call/Approve Agenda

a. Call to Order

- i. Denny Called the meeting to order at 9:09 am

b. Attendance

- i. Nancy Nyquist, Executive Director, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- ii. Dennis Vander Kooi, Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- iii. Creela Hamlin, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- iv. Shelly Hartmann, Treasurer, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- v. Jennifer Spears, True Blue Farms, LLC/Michigan Blueberry Advisory Committee
- vi. Cheryl Sullins, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- vii. Carly Parsley, Vice-Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- viii. Rob Bodtke, Secretary, Michigan Blueberry Commission
- ix. Eric Jawor, Michigan Blueberry Commission (via ZOOM)
- x. Rex Schultz, President, Michigan Blueberry Advisory Committee
- xi. Heather Throne, MDARD
- xii. Mike Reinke, MSUE
- xiii. Rufus Isaacs, Michigan State University (via ZOOM)
- xiv. Emily Grabemeyer, Wilbur Ellis
- xv. Ryan DeMorrow, Wilbur Ellis
- xvi. Phillip Preston, Greenstone Farm Credit Services
- xvii. Carlos Garcia Salazar, MSUE (via ZOOM)
- xviii. Ron Bates, Michigan State University (via ZOOM)

c. Adoption of Agenda (ATTACHMENT A)

- i. **MOTION: Shelly moved to adopt the agenda as amended with Executive director report added to agenda, support from Creela; Motion carried unanimously by verbal consent.**

2. Review and approve meeting minutes (ATTACHMENT B)

- a. The commission reviewed the minutes from March 26, 2021
 - i. **MOTION: Rob moved, Shelly supports amending minutes to clarify that we are paying \$40,000/year over the next three years to support the small fruit extension agent position with MSU; Unanimous verbal support.**
 - ii. **MOTION: Cheryl moved to approve the March 26, 2021 meeting minutes as amended with support from Carly; Motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.**

3. Chair's Report

- a. Chairperson Denny reported Kevin resigned his post of executive director over the summer. Nancy was presented by Farm Bureau to fill the position. Denny welcomed new executive board as well.



- i. Nancy introduced herself to the group

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. Treasurer Shelly gave an update on financials (**ATTACHMENT C**). Checking has \$9751.32. Money market has \$375722.64. The budget was reviewed for 2021 compared to actual.
- b. Talked about the TRNC blueberry plot maintenance, looking for clarity in what we agreed to pay in our meeting last year. We agreed to support for 2020 and 21 crop maintenance.
 - i. Rufus will talk to TNRC if more funding will be required in 2022
- c. Follow up required with IPM alliance about yearly subscription.
 - i. **MOTION: Shelly moves to reimburse MBBAC for ½ of cost of summer USHBC meeting totaling \$1193.77. Carly supports. Unanimous verbal support**
- d. Shelly will start working with a CPA Laura Hayward of DeBoer, Baumann, & Co. to ensure correct accounting.
 - i. **MOTION: Creela moves we support the treasurer report as written. Eric seconds. Unanimous verbal approval**

5. Secretary's Report

- a. Secretary Rob covered the 2020 and 2021 crop. For the 2020 crop we have collected \$206,728.90 representing about 68,909,573lbs
 - i. We have reported lbs of 69,173,226 for the crop with an estimated 62% fresh and 38% process.
- b. He is in the process of sending out the 3rd and final Handler Notice for the 2021 crop. It is due the end of November.
- c. He has contracted MFB to send out the grower reports for the 2021 crop. They should be going out this week.
- d. So far we have collected 2 first handler reports for the 21 crop totaling 9,169,095.6 lbs (\$27,447.29).
- e. We have 2 remaining handler reports due from 2020 crop and one from 2019 representing an estimated total of 6-8 million lbs. I will start to work with Nancy to close these cases.
 - i. **MOTION: Creela moves we approve the secretary report. Cheryl supports. Verbal unanimous support**

6. Research Committee Report

- a. Creela talked about their meeting at TNRC. Visiting planting and barn we supported. She presented the 2022 MBC research priorities (**ATTACHMENT D**). They are posted to the project GREEN website to guide research projects. Last updated in 2017.
 - i. **MOTION: Rob moves that we post the updated MBC research priorities for 2022. Shelly seconds. Unanimous verbal approval.**
 - ii. Provide to Jim Kells (Ron Bates)
- b. Denny, Eric, Creela, and Dave Trinkka are on the research committee.
- c. TNRC Planting
 - i. Plants are alive but not growing as quickly as expected. Worked with the maintenance to guide best practices of nutrients and soil testing.
- d. MBC funding resistance testing



- i. Dave Trinka is requesting we sponsor this program at MSU. Paid for by MBC. Anthracnose resistance testing. Tim Miles is looking into the cost of this and we will come back to this in the future.
- ii. **MOTION: Shelly moves that approve the research committee report. Carly supports. Unanimous verbal approval**

BREAK: 10:25am

RECONVENE: 10:37am

7. Policies and Procedures Committee Report

- a. Cheryl presented 2 documents the P&P committee recommends we approve for our documentation.
- b. Purpose of documenting practices currently done and creating clarity for our annual audit
 - i. Cash receipts (**ATTACHMENT E**)
 1. **MOTION: Cheryl moves. Eric supports that we accept the procedure as written. Unanimous verbal approval**
 - ii. Bank Reconciliation (**ATTACHMENT F**)
 1. **MOTION: Cheryl moves. Rob supports that we accept the procedure as written. Unanimous verbal approval**
- c. Procedures coming in future meetings
 - i. Accounts payable
 - ii. Payouts for grants

8. USHBC NABC Update—Shelly

- a. USHBC
 - i. Shelly talked about the most current meeting in PNW. They just approved the 2022 strategic plan. They just hired a new director of health research Leslie Wada. Middle to the end of November we will have an idea from the USDA if the referendum passed.
 - ii. 2021 estimated Michigan crop is 72,000,000- per George Fritz
- b. NABC
 - i. Stayed neutral during the referendum process
 - ii. Task force created to maintain working relationship with importers who have agreed to pay double assessments to the USHBC which will increase budget an est. 3 mil\$/year

9. MBBAC Update—Rex

- a. MBBAC is looking into strategic planning in the next few months. They are interested in more synergy with the MBC (similar to USHBC and NABC). They have one open position they are looking to fill. They would like to jointly send out a flyer explaining the difference between MBBAC and MBC. Also, a regular flyer updating growers with things going on with our Michigan organizations.
- b. Current MBBAC board: Rex Shultz, Dan Stafford, Kelly Reenders, Jennifer Spears, Mike Roedger, Jason Hartmann, Debbie Ruff, Chad Reenders, Jared Marr

10. MDARD Update

- a. Heather Throne provided an update on current grant opportunities
 - i. SCBG \$1.9mil
 - ii. Rural grants currently accepting. \$1.7mil available. November grants are due



- iii. New Grant program
 - 1. Farm innovation program- innovations and solutions
 - a. In state universities and research centers available research grants
 - b. 3 mill\$ one time available (maybe split over a few years)
 - iv. New requirement that all state commodity boards' (including MBC) documents are stored at the state archives. They will have procedures rolling out soon.

11. MSU Update part 1

- a. Rufus
 - i. Expo presentations passed out (**ATTACHMENT G**). Main speaker is Rutgers researcher Gary Pavlis talking about fertilization. Mark Longstroth is putting a panel together talking about current available varieties.
 - ii. Predator Wasp for SWD. They have received approval and AFIS paperwork is being filed. 2022 minimal site testing will occur and monitoring releases. They may require MBC support to get the program established.
- b. Ron Bates was not available after Rufus was done so we moved to a different item on the agenda and met with Ron Bates when he was available

12. New Business part 1

- a. 2022 Take Root Succession Planning by Farm Bureau sponsorship
 - i. MBC supported the last program in 2018
 - ii. Looking for \$750 to support the new program
 - 1. **MOTION: Creela moves that we support the 2022 Take Root Succession Planning conference for \$750. Cheryl supports. Unanimous verbal approval**

13. MSU Update part 2

- a. Ron Bates
 - i. 3 candidates being interviewed for the faculty position at MSU Small fruit physiology (Eric Hansen position). Hope to have the position filled by the beginning of 2022 with an unknown start date (depending on candidate's availability)
 - ii. November 8- Cheyenne Sloan will start Blueberry/small fruit extension position (Mark Longstroth's position). Has Bachelors from MSU. Masters from Washington State with experience in blueberries. She will be based in Van Buren office in Paw Paw.
 - iii. Tim Miles update
 - 1. Anthracnose research
 - 2. Dagger nematodes
 - 3. Mummy berry research
 - iv. New director of extension
 - 1. Dr. Quentin Tyler
 - a. From Kentucky
 - v. Current search for dean of college of agriculture at MSU

14. Lunch

- a. Lunch started at 11:56 am
- b. Reconvened at 12:35 pm



15. Phillip Preston: Current Blueberry Crop Insurance Programs & Making Them Better for Growers

- a. Current policies
 - i. Catastrophic- every lb you are below 50%. You are owed 0.47\$/lb.
 - ii. Buy-up- 50% to 85% coverage at 100% of the listed price (\$0.85)
 - iii. SCO- 65% subsidized by usda since 2017
 - iv. Works but is not as good as many other blueberry states
- b. Future policies
 - i. Work with USDA-ARS to update Michigan policy to cover more lbs for more money like other states.
 - ii. Talk to Farm Bureau and Greenstone to help guide the process on working this issue out.
- c. Optional units
 - i. Michigan has fewer options than other states
 1. **MOTION: Shelly moves that we start a joint crop insurance task force with MBBAC and Phillip Preston with 2 people from MBC and 2 from MBBAC. Carly supports. Unanimous verbal approval**
 - a. First goal is an action plan and then the follow through with assistance from Greenstone crop insurance.
 - b. Shelly and Eric volunteer to be on the task force.

16. Executive Director report

- a. Website update
 - i. Working with Ash to update the website
 - ii. Need pictures and some bios
- b. MSU hiring process of faculty
- c. Letter of support for MSU greenhouses (**ATTACHMENT H**)
- d. Needs Executive committee to review MSUE contract with Cheyenne Sloan

17. New Business part 2

- a. 2022 Referendum Renewal
 - i. MBC referendum up for renewal/expires in April 2022
 - ii. MDARD supplied dates from which to choose- chose 02/21/22 – 03/04/22
 - iii. Will set up informational meetings
 - iv. Request MSU to help promote MBC referendum passing
- b. Commission appointments for 2022
 - i. 3 terms are expiring Dec 31, 2021
 - ii. 2 positions from district 1
 1. Eric desires to run again
 2. 3 other names are needed
 - iii. 1 position from district 2
 1. Cheryl is not seeking another term
 2. Shelly desires to run in district 2
 3. One other person is required
- c. 2022 Meeting Dates- we will discuss this in December



- d. Great Lakes EXPO hort show
 - i. Recommended that Nancy stay for the trade show on behalf of the MBC. She is looking to schedule a dinner for the group on Monday night after meeting.

18. Public Comment

- a. none

19. Adjourn

- a. Shelly moves. Creela support. Adjourned 2:18pm

Respectfully submitted by Rob Bodtke

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 10/27/21 MBC Meeting Agenda
- B. 03/26/21 MBC Meeting Minutes
- C. MBC Financials/Treasurer's Report
- D. MBC 2022 Research Priorities
- E. MBC Cash Receipts procedure
- F. MBC Bank Reconciliation procedure
- G. EXPO presentations
- H. Letter of support – MSU greenhouses
- I. Job Description – Small Fruit Extension
- J. MBC/MSU Extension agreement for funding Small fruit Extension position