

MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

MDOT Southwest Region Office
1501 E. Kilgore Rd.
Kalamazoo, MI 49001

MEETING MINUTES May 30, 2017

PRESENT:

Dennis Vander Kooi, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jacob Clemons, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Shelly Ann Hartmann, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Cheryl Sullins, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Steven Hunt, Michigan Blueberry Commission
James Sumners, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Creela Overton Hamlin, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jamie Clover Adams, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Brad Deacon, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Heather Throne, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Elizabeth Weier, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Phil Korson, Cherry Marketing Institute
Kevin Robson, Michigan Farm Bureau
Teresa Rosado, LLEAD
Emily Marx, MBG Marketing
Lorrie Merker, MBG Marketing

Call to Order and Roll Call

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) Director Jamie Clover Adams called the first meeting of the Michigan Blueberry Commission order at 9:08 a.m. on May 30, 2017. She had each of the commissioners introduce themselves and noted that all seven commissioners were in attendance. Director Clover Adams welcomed everyone to the meeting. Since officers were to be elected later in the meeting, Director Clover Adams served as Chair and Elizabeth Weier took minutes.

Introduction of MDARD Staff & Board Member Priorities

Director Clover Adams introduced the MDARD staff present and explained their roles related to the legislatively organized commodity groups.

Director Clovers Adams asked each of the Commissioners to explain their goals and priorities for the Commission. The board members emphasized that research

as well as promotion and education were among their main priorities. Board members wanted to address specific issues like gall wasp, production competition and varietal selections, ability to raise matching funds for grants, and being a voice for the blueberry industry.

History of the Michigan Blueberry Research and Education Program & 1965 PA 232 and Commodity Programs

Brad Deacon, Director, Office of Legal Affairs, MDARD, discussed MDARD's oversight responsibility for PA 232 groups. He discussed the Commission member responsibilities as provided for in the Michigan Blueberry Research and Education Program and 1965 PA 232. Copies of the Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act were provided and discussed. Additionally, it was noted that all meetings should be run according to Roberts Rules of Order.

It was noted that there is a process for non-payment of assessments and requirements for financial audits. Jeff Haarer from MDARD will be available at a future meeting to discuss these items in more detail.

Presentation by Michigan Cherry Committee – Phil Korson

Phil Korson, Executive Director of the Michigan Cherry Committee and Cherry Marketing Institute, discussed best practices for check-off groups and offered examples of operating models. He encouraged the group to think and dream big, and to think about what the group is meant to do and stand for. He discussed topics such as funding, banking, effective use of funds to drive research, and selecting an administrator. Most of all, he encouraged the group to reach out to other commodity groups and MDARD for help and examples as often as needed.

Public Comment

Lorrie Merker noted this will be a smaller budget so it may not be feasible to hire an employee. It will be important to growers to get a lot of bang for their buck.

Phil Korson noted check-offs with only a research program can be easily run without a hired or contracted administrator, but it more difficult to run when other tasks are added.

Recess at 10:24 a.m.

Reconvened at 10:44 a.m.

Election of Officers

Director Clover Adams called for nominations for the election of the Committee Officers.

MOTION: Dennis Vander Kooi nominated Jacob Clemons for Chairman. Shelly Hartmann seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote.

MOTION: Cheryl Sullins nominated Steven Hunt for Vice Chairman. Jacob Clemons seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote.

MOTION: Creela Overton Hamlin nominated Shelly Hartmann for Secretary. Cheryl Sullins seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote.

MOTION: Dennis Vanderkooi nominated Cheryl Sullins for Treasurer. Steven Hunt seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote.

Newly appointed Chairman Clemons began to chair the meeting.

Program Administration

Heather Throne discussed her role as a resource for commodity groups, being the point of contact for anything they might need from the Department. She gives MDARD updates at each meeting, can arrange for MDARD subject matter experts to present on special topics at meetings, and will keep the group updated on future grants, such as the specialty crop block grant.

Brad Deacon noted there will be another round of appointments in December, and that current appointee will continue to serve until the successor is named or the current appointee resigns.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Clemons thanked MDARD for the support they've provided thus far and he began discussion on assessment rates.

Motion: Steven Hunt motioned for 3/10th of a cent for the assessment for 2017. Dennis Vander Kooi seconded the motion. Motion was carried by a unanimous verbal vote. Motion carried.

The group discussed selection of a fiscal year period.

Motion: Shelley Hartmann motioned the fiscal year 1/1 – 12/31. James Summers seconded the motion. Motion was carried by a unanimous verbal vote. Motion carried. Director consents with the fiscal year.

Meeting Schedule for 2017

The group discussed selection of meeting dates for 2017.

MOTION: Dennis Vander Kooi moved to set the next meeting date. Jim Clemons seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous verbal vote and the meeting date and location is set as follows:

June 8th, 2017 – 7:00 pm

**Trevor Nichols MSU Research Center
Fennville, MI**

The group discussed agenda items for the June 8th, 2017 meeting. Among the topics planned for the agenda are creation of a research subcommittee, drafting the assessment letter and form, the role of an executive director/administrator, setting the remaining meeting dates for 2017, and establishment of a P.O. Box, banking institution, and policy manual.

Creela Hamlin, Cheryl Sullins, and Dennis Vander Kooi were appointed by Chairman Clemons to a subcommittee to research options filling the role of executive director or administrator.

Elizabeth Weier will send the minutes, handler list, and notice of meeting example after the meeting.

Public Comment

No additional public comment.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Shelly Hartmann moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Dennis Vander Kooi. Motion carried unanimously by verbal vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.