

MICHIGAN BLUEBERRY COMMISSION

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

MEETING MINUTES

January 18, 2022

PRESENT:

Nancy Nyquist, Executive Director, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Dennis Vander Kooi, Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Creela Hamlin, Vice Chair, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Carly Parsley, Treasurer, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Rob Bodtke, Secretary, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Eric Jawor, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Dave Reenders, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jason Thomas, Michigan Blueberry Commission
Jennifer Spears, True Blue Farms/MBC Assistant Treasurer (Remote)
Cheyenne Sloan, MSU Extension (Remote)
Shelly Hartmann, True Blue Farms (Remote)
Heather Throne, MDARD (Remote)
Matt Smego, MFB
Chris Wilde, MBG
Matt Nilson, MBG
Derek Plotkowski, MSU Extension (Remote)
ABSENT: None

Call to Order

Chairman Dennis Vander Kooi called the meeting to order at 9:32 am, performed a roll call, and verified the presence of a quorum.

Adoption of Agenda

The Commission reviewed the proposed agenda (**ATTACHMENT A**). Denny asked to add a report from Matt Smego about the American Farm Bureau Annual Meeting.

MOTION: Eric moved to adopt the agenda as amended with support from Carly; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

Meeting Minutes Approval

The Commission reviewed the minutes from December 05, 2022 meeting (**ATTACHMENT B**).

MOTION: Creela moved to approve the December 05, 2022 meeting minutes as presented with support from Dave; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

Reports of Committee or Officers:

Chair's report:

Denny shared his appreciation for people getting their reports out ahead of time for review before the meeting so we can come prepared and move along. We have had a weird winter but a good bud set. We will see what the rest of winter holds for us before the spring, we hope winter is not over. He is happy for a good slate of research projects to go over today.

Treasurer's Report:

The MBC Financial Packet (**ATTACHMENT C**) was passed out to the group. Carly presented the balance sheet as of December 31, 2022. Total current assets of \$465,824.60. Next we looked at the 2022 budget to actual. Lastly she presented the P&L Budget through the 2023 Calendar year. We increased the meeting expense and Travel expense to \$5,000 each. We reduced the MSU Plant & Pest Diagnostics from 10k to 7.5k. Denny then talked about our request with MFB to reduce the directors contract expense from 50k to 40k. We appreciate that they agreed to reduce the fee in the short term and review the contract payment next year. They also agreed to not reduce the roles that Nancy will fill in MBC during this time.

MOTION: Eric moves that we approve the 2023 Executive director contract with MFB for \$40,000 with support from Jason; motion carries with unanimous verbal consent.

The 2022 audit with Maner and Costerisan is currently ongoing. Shelly, Jennifer, and Nancy are working on completing this.

MOTION: Carly moves that we approve the 2023 Budget as amended with support from Dave; motion carried with unanimous verbal consent.

MOTION: Creela moves that we approve the Jan 18, 2023 Treasurers report with support from Eric; motion carries with unanimous verbal consent.

Secretary's Report

We have not received any additional payments from previous crops. Nancy has followed up with individuals we are still waiting on payment. The offending party we are waiting payment from 2019-2022 has been sent a certified letter. If we do not hear from them the case will be passed along to MDARD for investigation. The individual that hasn't paid for the 2021 and 2022 crops will be sent a certified letter soon. We have received most first handler and grower reports for the 2022 crop but still have a few remaining first handler reports. We have currently received \$157,147.61 for the 2022 Crop and \$1,107.60 in reimbursement. This is based on 52,757,363.88 lbs. reported. This is based on a 50/50 split of fresh and process (with

much extrapolation due to unreported splits). With the remaining first handler reports outstanding I would estimate we end in the 55-57 million lbs. range.

Research Committee Report

Creela talked about the research committee meeting yesterday. TNRC is working on maintenance numbers for the blueberry test plot from the previous year. Eric with working with Springbrook to get a more computer-based irrigation scheduling system. She thinks that they are going to cover that in their budget. Ryan Wysocki from Endeavor Ag has pulled soil samples at SWMREC blueberry plot. The other considered plot has a higher pH and more copper issue than the previous site, creating a dead end there. They are continuing working by researching copper issues and looking into other sites because they need to get a decision to Josh by mid-February. Cheyenne has done some research and is not as concerned with the copper levels in site 1. Creela appreciated the results from the MSU Plant & Pest Diagnostics and looks forward to the growth of the program.

Break: 10:32- 10:42

Michigan Farm Bureau Annual Meeting- Matt Smego

The 2023 AFB meeting was in San Juan, Puerto Rico. We took about 42 policy recommendations to the meeting and had many approved with many affecting specialty crops (AWER). 2023 is the restart of the Farm Bill. There was much talk and policy development about that. The conversation will continue. The last policy that was approved at the meeting was the development of a Specialty Crop Summit to deal with Dumping issues and Trade. There was then discussion about the AWER and Michigan minimum wage.

MBBAC Update- Dave Reenders

Chad was not available to join our meeting. There is an ERP phase 2 that is starting to open up for applications. PARP is also available for farmers for losses during the pandemic. The next MBBAC meeting is tomorrow at TNRC at 1pm. Chad has been in discussion with MFB about a possible Specialty Crop Summit in November of 2023 to discuss import pressures rising in the US. This is in conjunction with Cherries and Asparagus.

MDARD Update

Heather is unavailable during this portion of the meeting. Nancy will reach out to Heather later for any other update.

MSU/MSUE Update

Carlos

Ron is unavailable due to meetings in Traverse City. 12 projects were sent to Project GREEN. Carlos has been working with Rufus to figure out what happened during pollination last year. They think it was too hot during pollination. If that happens again they encourage the

practice of evaporative cooling through overhead irrigation. Younsuk is looking for a farmer to help with the control farmer portion of his research project.

Executive Director Report - Nancy

Nancy is an evaluator of the Project GREEN research projects. MECA is doing an article on Michigan Blueberries and Nancy is hosting them for an interview. She is working to retain our domain name for the website but has not made much progress. Currently the website will expire in June of this year. We hope to get the name through AKEAs Lawyer, if that does not happen we will wait until the domain expires and we will repurchase it at that time. Michigan Grown, Michigan Great (Michigan Ag Council) reached out about a partnership. We decline at this time due to reduction in our funding. Denny requested for more information about Farms Crates for a possible future sponsorship.

MBC Research Proposal Review & Discussion (Attachment D)

1. **MBC23-01- Approved**
 - a. Marisol Quintanilla, Use of Nematodes and Fungai for SWD reduction.
 - b. There are questions about the feasibility of the project in application on a farm setting. This research will be lab and greenhouse work, preliminary work before field application in the future. The feasibility is unknown.
2. **MBC23-02- Approved**
 - a. Rufus Isaacs, Improving blueberry pollination.
 - b. This is a new project stemming from previous years research.

Break for Lunch: 11:50-12:30

3. **MBC23-03- Approved**
 - a. Rufus Isaacs, Biological control for SWD. Continued Samba Wasp and New research on the Ronin Wasp.
4. **MBC23-04- Not Approved**
 - a. Younsuk Dong Evaluate Irrigation Scheduling Methods to improve Blueberry Irrigation Management.
5. **MBC23-05- Approved**
 - a. Tim Miles, Control Challenges for Novel Stem and Shoot Blight Pathogens in Highbush Blueberries.
6. **MBC23-06- Approved**
 - a. Josh VanderWeide, Enhancing MI Blueberry Yields Using a Cytokinin PGR
7. **MBC23-07- Approved**
 - a. David Smitley, Biological Control of Japanese Beetle at MI Blueberry Farms with Host Specific Pathogen.
 - b. There is support for this due to track record. There is a recommendation that we borrow funds from promotion to fund this.

Motion: Rob moves that we fund projects 01,03,04,05,06 for \$75,000 and 07 is funded with money from the promotion budget with support from Denny; Motion fails 3-4.

Motion: Jason moves that we fund projects 01, 02, 03, 05, 06 with support from Eric; Motion passed with a vote of 5-2.

Motion: Dave moves that we fund MBC23-07 with \$3,000 from the promotion budget moved to our Annual grants budget with support from Creela; Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

None

Adjournment

MOTION: Rob moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:15pm with support from Creela; motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Robert Bodtke

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. 1/18/2023 MBC Meeting Agenda
- B. 12/5/2022 MBC Meeting Minutes
- C. MBC Financial Packet 0113023
- D. Proposed research projects