**MBC Meeting Minutes – February 11, 2021**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger, Treasurer

District #2 Ted Bauer

District #3 Greg Ackerman, Chairman

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5 Allen Bischer

District #6 Ross Voelker

District #7 Jessica Rader

At Large Steve Ewald

Shipper Representative Neil French

Executive Secretary Joe Cramer

Those Absent:

District #1

District #2

District #3

District #4

District #5

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU Dry Bean Specialist

Jeff Haarer MDARD

Kaleb Grapp Grapp Lerash

Jim Palmer Michigan Crop Improvement Association

Chairman Ackerman called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. He expressed his gratitude to District 2 Commissioner Mark Reif for his time, effort and contributions to the Industry during his years of service. Chairman Ackerman then welcomed recently appointed District 2 Commissioner Ted Bauer. Introductions were made before delving into the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** With no additions, a motion was made by Knoffsinger to approve the agenda as presented. French supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from the November 24, 2020 Commission meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion was made by Ewald with support from Bischer to approve the minutes as presented. ***Motion passed.***

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: Cramer presented MBC and PRAB YTD revenue and expenses through the first half of FY 20-21 as compared to the budgets. Revenues are ahead of schedule given the size of the 2020 crop. Expenses are down to date as compared to last year. This is the result of restrictions in place due to the pandemic. A brief discussion followed. A motion was made by Noffsinger to accept the report as presented. Bischer supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**MCIA (Michigan Crop Improvement Association) Update**

MCIA director Jim Palmer offered Commissioners a brief history of the program, reviewed current processes and Michigan’s dry bean seed acreage in 2020. Discussion followed. Palmer suggested a compliment between western seed and Michigan produced seed made be an acceptable risk management tool for Michigan’s dry bean growers.

**MBS UPDATE -** Shipper Representative Neil French

* Shipments continue to be steady across the industry.
* Grower prices continue to edge up in response to demand and to compete with CBOT
* New crop contracting continues. Growers have participated but are being patient.
* End users haven’t been as aggressive as sellers might like when adding current crop and new crop tonnage.
* Neil noted shippers are exporting beans to China. He is encouraged with some long term success.

**MDARD UPDATE** – Jeff Haarer

* Mr. Haarer updated the group on the Farm Produce Insurance. Information is always available on their website as to current issues, fund balance etc.
* Mr. Haarer also explained the oversight MDARD offers the Commission and the first receiver audit process.

**AUDITOR’S ANNUAL REPORT**

Kaleb Grapp, Grapp Lerash Accounting was on hand to present the annual audit report. Mr. Grapp discussed his responsibility as an auditor and invited Commissioners to contact him throughout the years with any comments or questions.

* Revenues were down from the previous year.
* Spending was within budget
* Fund balance is in an acceptable range / ratio as compared to annual average expenses.
* There were four findings noted. The first three are repetitive and pertain to appropriate staffing for separation of duties. The fourth was related to a minimal grant reimbursement that hadn’t been invoiced as of closing.
* Mr. Grapp noted that there were no significant changes or trends that were out of the ordinary.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

* The flour mill project is still at a standstill. The pandemic has delayed finding the properly sized motor to the mill designed for the FPIC footprint. Enagon has offered space at their facility that would accommodate a larger mill. Motors for the larger mill are more available. Cramer will discuss this change of plan with grant officials and MSU.
* The Communications project is moving forward. Data will be reviewed to evaluate the programs and participation. A follow-up application is under construction.
* Cramer explained that the Commission and MBS have partnered to purchase a Gold Sponsor at BeanCon21 scheduled for next month. Registrations continue to flow in. The agenda is exciting.
* UK trade talks continue. There does seem to be some willingness to discuss eliminating the retaliatory tariffs in place.

**PRAB APPOINTMENT**

Chairman Ackerman recommended District 2 Commissioner Ted Bauer to replace Commissioner Mark Reif on the PRAB. Voelker moved to accept the recommendation. Noffsinger supported. ***Motion passed.***

**DRY BEAN SPECIALIST REPORT**

* Dry Bean Specialist Scott Bales presented a quick overview for the canning evaluation that has taken place. Bales noted that utilizing the FPIC has allowed for much more caning capacity in a shorter period of time. The Industry has been invited to join a February 23, 2021 virtual presentation of the findings including a visual presentation highlighting the differences.
* Bales has had the 2020 Research Report published and has distributed through direct mailing, the bean elevators, university, etc.
* Bales then reviewed the participation in this years Grower Survey. Participation is encouraging but we need to continue to ask for more. The survey is a bit longer than in the past however the data collected does allow for a deeper look into the issues.
* This years Research Priorities Roundtable discussion will be help on March 17th. Survey results will be shared at that time.
* Bales recently participated in the 2021 Scleroctinia Initiative meeting. He has submitted is report to the US Dry Bean Council. He went on to explain a change in direction and focus for the group that he feels will be potentially more productive.

**USDBC UPDATE**

* USDBC Vice Chair Stoutenburg briefed Commissioners on his recent virtual trade mission to Central America. While not the same as meeting in person Clint felt the three day event was productive.
* The Executive Committee met following the Winter Meeting to discuss the re-location of executive director Bratter. Rebecca desires to live abroad but the Exec Committee is more comfortable having her home based in the USA.
* IPC Trade missions will continue to be virtual until deemed safe and until there are people to call on or events to attend.
* The Bean Innovation Committee chaired by Ackerman is also dealing with delays caused by the pandemic but the group has received some general fund funding and is optimistic about the various projects in 2021
* The Food Aid Committee has met a couple of time recently. The new administration has approved $800 million in the latest COVID Relief package earmarked specifically for aid. Committee member feels that beans will fit nicely into this budget along with other USA ag products. He believes white beans for aid to Yemen are probable.
* Cramer, Stoutenburg, Ackerman and Ewald participate in a USDBC virtual DC Fly-In in early December. The group felt the meetings were productive although all agreed that in person meetings have definite advantages.

Before adjourning, Chairman Ackerman discussed potential changes to the “death tax” being kicked around internally by Biden Administration should be on everyone’s radar. Cramer is arranging a series of meetings with members of the legislature, etc. to create understanding and awareness. Anything other than the status quo would be very detrimental to all of agriculture. Stay tuned for more.

Chairman Ackerman thanked everyone for their time. And, with no further business, adjourned the meeting at 12:43 PM.

Respectfully,

  **Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary