**MBC Meeting Minutes**

**March 8, 2023**

**DMSU SVREC, 3775 South Reese Road, Frankenmuth, Michigan**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger, Chair

District #2 Ted Bauer, Treasurer

District #3 Greg Ackerman

District #4

District #5 Allen Bischer (V)

District #6 Chase Voelker

District #7 Jessica Rader

At Large Steve Ewald, Vice-Chair

Shipper Representative Neil French

Executive Secretary Joe Cramer

Those Absent:

District #1

District #2

District #3

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU-MBC Dry Bean Specialist

Clint Hagen Atwater Farms

Chairman Noffsinger called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. and welcomed guest, Clint Hagen.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** PRAB Chairman Ewald asked to add Project Greeen Priorities and 2023 Research Plans to the agenda. Chairman Noffsinger added them under the Research Specialist’s Report. A motion was made by Ewald to approve the agenda including the additions. Rader supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**CORRESPONDANCE:** Hidden Harvest, Michigan Farmer’s Hall of Fame

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from the December 12, 2023, Commission meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion was made by French with support from Bauer to approve the minutes as presented. ***Motion passed.***

**AUDITOR’S RECOMMENDED** (during their presentation at the December Commission meeting) that Commissioners consider investing in the insurance a surety bond would provide. Cramer included communications and quotes for various levels of coverage. Following a discussion focused on evaluating the risk, Commissioners opted not to pursue at this time. Cramer will include this as an agenda item for consideration annually.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: Cramer included a current balance sheet, P&L, and budget comparison in the meeting packet. Cramer reviewed the reports including commentary on handling of this year’s Dry Bean & Sugar Beet Symposium. Ackerman questioned the annual cost of the USDBC. Cramer will forward the invoice for review. The Financial Report also included the check registry for the December 2022 – February 2023 period. Following some explanation and a few questions, Ackerman moved to accept the reports as presented. Ewald supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

*(Omitted from the meeting agenda and discussion was Cramer’s February 22nd request for the Officers to temporarily increase the credit card limit to $30,000. This was necessary because of recent travel to Columbia, 2023 Research Report payment, and the cost the day before, the day of and day after the 2023 Dry Bean & Sugar Beet Symposium. Officers approved the request. The limit will be reduced after the March AmEx Statement is settled to the level set in the Credit Card Policy.)*

**MDARD UPDATE – Heather Throne**

* MDARD will be granted $2.2 million to be awarded in the next round of Specialty Crop Block Grants. (MBC has submitted two applications)
* Throne stressed the importance of grower participation in the Ag Census and its relationship to funding opportunities.
* Funding from HR133 is over.
* Value added grant application period is open. These grants require a 30% match.

**MBS UPDATE – Neil French, Shipper Representative**

* Seed discussions have leveled off. Growers have the coverage needed.
* Shipments continue to be steady for everyone. Container and rail car availability is decent.
* Navy acreage is expected to be down significantly, black acreage is expected to be up slightly and small red acreage is expected to be steady.
* CBOT values have slipped.

**DRY BEAN SPECIALIST REPORT – Scott Bales**

* Bales felt that the RoundTable went well earlier in the day.
  + Cramer wonders if the discussion might flow steadier if we ask growers to inject before hearing from non-growers in attendance. We might try this next year.
  + It was suggested that we add young, next generation growers next year.
* Bales and Cramer will update Project Greeen priorities based on today’s discussion.
  + Consider how we might add sustainability.
* Plans for 2023 Research is well underway. Workload is a concern. The consensus is to locate the Tuscola County plot at the MSU SVREC, locate the Sanilac County plot in the northwest corner of the county, maintain plot locations in Montcalm, Bay, and (central) Huron counties. This will sharply reduce drive times and effectively maintain communication and educational efforts. Bales is adding white mold research including Dr. Martin Chilvers and, increasing private, sometimes confidential fee-based research.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – Joe Cramer**

* DRY BEAN REVENUE INSURANCE – Watts & Associates has been tasked with determining if our US dry bean industry would be better served to mirror commodities that have one, national system of price discovery. Commissioner Ackerman has studied this option with a few of his advisors and shared handouts that lay out several scenarios that demonstrate how Michigan’s policy holders would be disadvantaged with a national dry bean price system as compared to the current, regional price discovery. Chairman Noffsinger thanked Ackerman for studying and presenting this information. Cramer will communicate with Watts & Associates this week.

The lawsuit that growers entered into following the 2015 harvest remains unsettled. The Court issued a reward order which was discussed at RMA’s February meeting, but no outcomes have been reported. Attorney John Tallman continues to dig into the outcome. Gowers returned enough letters to help offset some of the attorney fees when this suit is finally settled.

* Cramer commented on/asked for input on:
  + the progress of the Phase II of the Communications Grant and the social media focus (managed by Ignite) of Phase III if awarded.
  + 2024 Regional Production and Outlook Meetings held in December 2023
  + The (February) 2023 and 2024 Canning Evaluation
  + The 2023 State of the Union and Hill Visits
  + The 2023 Dry Bean & Sugar Beet Symposium including Goya Foods participation.
  + Creating an RFP process for future research projects

**USDBC UPDATE**

* Ackerman, Bales and Cramer attended BeanCon24 in February. Ackerman commented on the innovation focused event complimenting USDBC for a great meeting. Cramer and Bales agree that it was one of the better meetings to attend and had successfully created excitement and optimism for the future of the bean industry. BeanCon24 will be held in Mexico and innovation will continue to be the focus.
* USDBC will attend IFT in July (Cramer to attend)
* IPC has prioritized trade missions to most effectively invest and stretch the dollars we have. To date, this includes cuts in Brazil, Shanghai, and Singapore. Participation in the May GPC Conference in Sydney has been reduced, and the trade show in Chile will likely be eliminated. Changes and re-organization of overseas representation is likely.
* The Summer Meeting is in early August in Seattle.

**OTHER**

* Chairman Noffsinger appointed Commissioner Chase Voelker to the MSU SVREC Committee.

With no further business, Chairman Noffsinger adjourned the meeting at 3:37 PM.

Respectfully,

**Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary