**MBC Meeting Minutes**

**December 12, 2024**

**Horizon Conference Center, Saginaw, Michigan**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger

District #2 Ted Bauer, Vice-Chair

District #3 Greg Ackerman

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5 Allen Bischer

District #6 Chase Voelker, Treasurer

District #7 Jessica Rader

At Large Steve Ewald, Chair

Shipper Representative

Executive Secretary Joe Cramer

Those Absent:

District #1

District #2

District #3

District #4

District #5

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative Neil French

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU-MBC Dry Bean Specialist

Jeff Haarer MDARD

Kylie Braun Nietzke & Faupel, PC

Chris Creguer MBC Nominee

Chairman Ewald called the meeting to order at 1:04 am. Following roll call, Ewald declared a quorum was present.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Rader moved to approve the agenda as presented. Noffsinger supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: It was noted that the Minutes from the October 14, 2024, meeting noted that Ackerman was recommended and appointed to PRAB when in fact, Voelker was recommended and appointed. Ackerman moved to accept the minutes including that correction. Noffsinger supported. ***Motion passed.***

**AUDITORS ANNUAL REPORT TO COMMISSIONERS – Kylie Braun**

In addition to sharing the responsibilities of an audit, auditor, management observations, generally accepted accounting practices, etc., Braun highlighted the recently completed FY 2023-2024 Audit. Some of those highlighted included:

* Assessment revenue was up slightly
* Interest income was up
* Expenses were down $9,765
* Unassigned funds of $858,510 which is about the same as our annual expenditures
* The change in net position was $34,506 or 2.5%

Findings were the same as the past several years pertaining to separation of duties and preparation of financial statements. Auditors also noted a budget overrun in the amount of $16,334 under grant expenditures.

Commissioners discussed the findings and notes with Braun, Haarer, and Cramer. Ackerman asked if USDBC Dues could be itemized in future reports. At the conclusion of the discussion, Noffsinger moved to accept the annual report. Voelker supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: The financial report included a current balance sheet, credit card and check registry through November 2024 and a P&L report including a budget comparison for FY 2023-2024. Cramer went through the highlights of revenue and expenses noting assessment revenue historically peaks before calendar year end. Following a brief discussion, Rader moved to accept the financial reports as presented. Voelker supported. ***Motion passed.***

**MDARD UPDATE**: Jeff Haarer updated Commissioners on status of several grant offerings MDARD is currently in the process of closing, scoring, and evaluating and/or opening. Haarer also noted the requirement of notifying the department if the Commission engages legal counsel.

**MBS Report** – With Shipper Representative Neil French travelling, there was no report.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT –** Joe Cramer commented on the following:

* USDA Exporter Roundtable
* Embargo at Laredo
* MCIA Board Meeting
* December MBC Field Trip
* RMA Springfield Notification
* Appropriations language in the Farm Bill

**USDBC UPDATE**

* Executive Committee
  + Past President Stoutenburg brought Commissioners up to speed on some challenges within the Council focusing on the lack of communication. Ewald, Bauer, Ackerman, Stoutenburg and Cramer will attend the next USDBC Board meeting scheduled for Friday, December 20, 2024. The agenda will include the presentation and approval of the 2025 budget (which drives dues) and a brief presentation from the Strategic Planning Committee.
* IPC
  + Voelker and Ackerman recently returned from USDBC trade missions. Voelker’s trade mission included Panama and Columbia which included a meeting and tour of CIAT! Ackerman’s included Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. Both shared highlights of their respective trips. Ackerman went into detail regarding the importance of cooking time and how it is determined. He recommended the Commission consider purchasing a Mattson Cooker to bring a standard method for evaluating cooking time. Cramer will pursue this concept and bring a recommendation to the next meeting. Ackerman feels Michigan has an advantage in these expanding markets.

* + Stoutenburg, Noffsinger and Cramer plan to attend the 2025 LATAM Conference in Mexico next month. Ackerman recommended USDBC Delegate Ewald also consider attending.
  + USDBC plans to send someone to Natural Products Expo West in early March to evaluate that show. They also plan to have a booth and reception at IFT next July like last year.

**DRY BEAN SPECIALIST REPORT – Scott Bales**

* Bales commented on the attendance at this week’s regional meetings and asked Commissioners for feedback on the programs. The only comment was to re-think the wildlife management presentation – this may not be the best setting.
* Bales was excused while Commissioners discussed his effort and many contributions to our industry. Commissioners shared compliments about his knowledge, work ethic, communication skills, etc. He has built a tremendous reputation. Commissioners discussed a strong desire to keep Bales and briefly considered a financial reward for him. Bischer commented and moved to award Bales a $15,000 bonus for a job well done. Voelker supported. ***Motion passed.***

**Chairman’s Choice Christmas Gift** – Chairman Ewald has chosen the Family of Derek and Jacki Wolschleger who’s 6-year-old daughter Shelby is dealing with a rare genetic disorder and requires frequent doctor and hospital care. Derek works for Gentner-Bischer Farms. Chairman Ewald thanked Allen and Debbie Bischer for suggesting the Wolschleger Family as this year’s recipient of the Chairman’s Choice Christmas Gift.

With no further business, Ewald adjourned the meeting at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully,

**Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary