**MBC Meeting Minutes**

**December 10, 2021**

**Bay City, Michigan**

Those Present:

District #1 Kevin Noffsinger, Chair

District #2 Ted Bauer, Treasurer

District #3 Greg Ackerman

District #4 Clint Stoutenburg

District #5

District #6 Ross 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

District #5 Allen Bischer

District #6

District #7

At Large

Shipper Representative

Others Present:

Scott Bales MSU-MBC Dry Bean Specialist

Heather Throne MDARD

Shari Steinbach Steinbach & Associates

Dr. Sharon Hooper Michigan State University

Chairman Noffsinger called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. and thanked Michigan Sugar Company for generously letting us meet in the Conference Meeting Center.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: Minutes from the October 5, 2021 Commission meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion was made by Stoutenburg with support from Ewald to approve the minutes as presented. ***Motion passed.***

**FINANCIAL REPORT**: Cramer presented September – November P&L reports for MBC and PRAB included comparison to budgets. Cramer noted assessment revenue received to date appears to be ahead of normal. He also commented on US Dry Bean Council annual dues which have been paid for January – August 2022. Dues for 2022 are $51,000. Following discussion, a motion was made by Ackerman to accept the reports as presented. Rader supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**MDARD UPDATE:** Heather Throne gave Commissioners an update on state and federal grant opportunities for 2022. Dollars coming from farm bill and COVID 19 programs will fund SCBG, rural development grant programs and a new innovation program. The next RFP will be shared on January 4, 2022.

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

* French noted the increased use of “brown bag seed” last spring resulting in poor or lower quality this harvest. He discourages growers from resorting to brown bag seed in the best interest of the industry.
* French considers the seed supply for 2022 to be good. He also suggests that grower plan ahead for larger seed size.
* NASS estimates the 2021 average yield to be 26 bags per acre which would be a record. French agree that it was a great crop for the most part but believes the final number won’t actually be that high.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

* Communications Grant - Shari Steinbach joined the meeting virtually to update Commissioners on the work that’s been completed in the past year and shared some of the highlights that the next grant. Her presentation is attached.
* Three 2022 Dry Bean Regional Production and Outlook meetings were held this week. We would always like more grower participation but was good. Grower panels conducted at each meeting were well received.
* Cramer shared highlights of the World of Flavors event he attended in early November. USDBC was a sponsor.
* Cramer is part of several sustainability discussions taking place within MSU, the USDBC, and GPC. The goal is to get to a common definition and statement for the pulse industry that is scientifically sound.
* The 2022 Dry Bean & Sugar Beet Symposium will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Bay City on February 22, 2022. The next planning meeting is scheduled for December 13th.
* Flour Milling Project - Dr. Sharon Hooper joined the meeting virtually to help us better understand the challenges that lectin presents to the pulse flour industry. The level of lectin in pulses varies from class to class. The combination of moisture and heat appear to be most effective at neutralizing the negative effect of the protein.
* Cramer reviewed the financial agreement between the MBC and MSU to fund the dry bean specialist position. The Commission’s half of the position for MSU’s FY 21-22 is $60,500. Cramer also noted some of the steps MSU has taken during the pandemic to manage costs. Of course, these affected Dry Bean Specialist Scott Bales. These steps included wage freezes, adjustments in contributions in retirement plans, etc. Commissioners, who are very happy with Bales, felt compelled to compensate him fairly during this difficult time. After discussion and some calculating (COLA, inflation, etc.) Ackerman, noting that these are unusual circumstances, moved to add $10,000 to our 2021 contribution to the position specifically for Bales payroll. Ewald supported the motion also noting that he hopes MSU can at some point return to more traditional compensation adjustments. ***Motion passed***.

**CHECK SIGNING –** Since 2013**,** Cramer has signed all hand-written checks and had an authorized Commissioner also sign. This is only a few checks per year. Cramer asked Commissioners to consider a formal check signing policy. After discussion, French moved that only checks written to the executive director for reimbursement for expenses be signed by an authorized Commissioner. Stoutenburg supported the motion. Chairman Noffsinger asked for a roll call vote. ***Motion passed.***

**MBC MONTHLY ASSESSMENT REPORTING EXCEPTION POLICY –** After reviewing the monthly assessment reporting requirements included in PA114 Cramer explained that there are some first receivers that because of the nature of their business for example, seed, etc. would opt to report at times other than monthly given an option. Cramer has had discussion with Jeff Haarer, MDARD and with their support, proposed the following policy language:

First Receivers that, due to the uniqueness of their business, may ask for an exception to the *monthly* reporting requirement in PA114 of 1965.  An exemption would be granted or denied by the executive director.  Examples might include:

* seed companies that settle with growers only after seed inventory has been processed
* trading companies that purchase directly from growers, processors that only process their own inventory and would opt to pay the assessment when they are paid

French moved to adopt the policy as presented. Stoutenburg supported the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**DRY BEAN SPECIALIST REPORT – Scott Bales**

* Bales shared an overview of harvest noting that all of the variety plots had similar yield results. This is somewhat different than years past when there always was a location(s) that didn’t produce like the best plot locations.
* Bales participated in the annual Bean Improvement Cooperative (BIC) met virtually again this year.
* Bales commented on the grower participation filling out this year’s PRAB Survey this week during the three Regional Production and Outlook meetings held this week. Scott will share the QR Code with the entire grower base later this month.
* Bales and Cramer are working with MSU staff to schedule canning and can opening in early 2022. They will recommend holding a virtual canning quality evaluation seminar again this year given the broad participation last year. They are considering also holding an in-person event.
* Bales updated Commissioners on some of the activities that the MSU Dry Bean Committee is working on.
* Bales concluded his report by sharing some of the agronomic work being done to better understand the potential to improve biofortification.

**USDBC UPDATE**

* The Executive Committee hasn’t met since July. USDBC Vice Chair Clint Stoutenburg shared some frustration he has with leadership, decision making process and communications.
* IPC is meeting with each overseas representative next week to weigh in on programs that will be included in the UES application. Cramer will attend as many of these meetings as possible.
* USDBC Innovation Committee will be discussing next steps.
* Cramer explained some of the discussion and efforts to increase consumption through USDA’s food aid programs.
* Food Aid Committee has nothing new to report

MBC Chairman Kevin Noffsinger recommended Social “U” to receive our annual $500 Chairman’s Choice Christmas Gift. Commissioners were glad to support such a worthy cause. Cramer will notify Social “U” co-chair Connie Mossner.

Chairman Noffsinger started a discussion with Commissioners about replacing the 2017 Grand Cherokee vehicle Cramer drives. Cramer will get an update on the status of warranty coverage, establish an app. Value and an app. Value of a replacement. Discussion to continue.

With no further business Chairman Noffsinger mentioned his appreciation for being able to meet at MSC, wished everyone a Merry Christmas and adjourned the meeting at 5:29 PM.

Respectfully,

**Joe Cramer**

Joe Cramer, Executive Secretary