

**Citrus Research and Field Trial (CRAFT) Foundation, Inc.**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**May 21, 2021**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Citrus Research and Field Trial (CRAFT) Foundation, Inc. was held on Friday, May 21, 2021 at CRAFT headquarters in Bartow and via Zoom web conferencing. The meeting was properly noticed and recorded. Chairman Glenn Beck called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was present. Board members present were Glenn Beck, Dr. Harold Browning, Tom Mitchell (phone), Phillip Rucks, and John Updike, Jr.

Also participating were Kristen Carlson and Tamara Wood.

Also present were Paul Millhouser, Caryn Nezat, Mike Sparks and Bruce Vandenberg.

**Presentation and Approval of Minutes:** Minutes of the April 29, 2021 Board of Directors meeting were provided to members via email prior to the meeting. **Dr. Browning moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Updike seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Presentation and Approval of Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Mitchell presented the Treasurer's Report providing an overview of CRAFT's financial standing thru April 30, 2021. The Report was also provided to members electronically prior to the meeting. **Mr. Rucks moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Mr. Updike seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Consideration of Contract Engaging Bunting, Tripp & Ingley LLP for Audit and Tax Services:** Ms. Carlson presented proposed agreements from Bunting, Tripp & Ingley LLP for 2021 tax and auditing services with estimates of \$1,800 and \$11,500 respectively. **Mr. Updike moved to accept the proposed engagement agreements from Bunting, Tripp & Ingley LLP. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Discussion of Carryover Funds from FDACS and CRDF:** Ms. Wood presented an update on the carryover of funds from current agreements between CRAFT and FDACS as well as CRAFT and CRDF. FDACS will be requesting an extension from the USDA regarding funding from their 2019-21 agreement, of which CRAFT is a subrecipient. This funding was originally set to expire in September 2021, but an additional one-year extension will be requested and is expected to be approved by all parties. In addition, there was \$25,000 of unused funds remaining from the 2019-20 agreement between CRAFT and CRDF. CRDF's Board of Directors voted to allow those funds to be rolled over and utilized by a CRAFT Cycle II project.

**Consideration of Contract Amendment with CRDF:** Ms. Carlson reported that CRAFT staff has been in discussion with CRDF staff to request an amendment to the 2020 agreement, raising the per acre rate of payment from \$1,000 to \$1,150. Due to a higher level of solid set projects versus reset projects the total acreage of Cycle II is anticipated to be less than originally estimated, which would lead to a portion of the CRDF funding not being utilized without the amendment. This proposed per acre increase would not impact the total contract value of \$3 million and would have no net difference to growers.

Dr. Browning asked if the proposed amendment was not accepted and a portion of the funding was not utilized by CRAFT, would the CRDF be able to utilize those funds elsewhere. Mr. Updike stated that he was not sure that there was any other way to utilize those funds at this time.

**Dr. Browning moved to approved the request for an amendment to the 2020 CRAFT-CRDF agreement raising the per acre rate from \$1,000 to \$1,150 in order to fully utilize the \$3 million allocated to the CRAFT program. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Report from Technical Working Group and Request for Approval of Contracts:** Ms. Carlson presented three projects to the Board of Directors for consideration following recommendations of approval from the Technical Working Group. Those projects included:

- CRAFT\_2020\_059S amended
- CRAFT\_2020\_110S
- CRAFT\_2020\_114S

Dr. Browning asked if there had been any pushback from growers or TWG members regarding the use of branded products in various trials. Ms. Carlson indicated that there had been no

issues identified so far, but that language could be added to contracts to say “may use equivalent products for replication” in an effort to prevent any issues.

**Mr. Updike moved to approved CRAFT\_2020\_059S as amended; CRAFT\_2020\_110S; and CRAFT\_2020\_114S as presented. Mr. Rucks seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Report on Initial Ideas by TWG on CRAFT Cycle III:** Ms. Carlson reported that CRDF will issue an RFP in late June or July at which time CRAFT will apply for the funding. If CRAFT were to be successful in the request for Cycle III funding, a contract would be anticipated sometime in August.

She shared with the Board the proviso language included in the 2021 Florida State General Revenue allocation of \$5 million to the Citrus Research and Development Foundation for large-scale field trials. She informed the Board that she had proposed to the TWG that as long as Cycle III research could be applied to new plantings, it did not necessarily have to be conducted on new plantings. She noted that the language also did not specify that the field trials must focus on HLB. The TWG is looking at “buckets” of research that were initially established in Cycle I, and adjusting to determine what needs remain following the development of Cycles I and II.

Mr. Sparks stated that while legislative language could be interpreted, it was important to note that the legislative intent was to continue to focus on new plantings.

Dr. Browning indicated that he was not in favor of the idea of not focusing on new plantings, as that is what the program was designed for. In addition, he stated that he has already gotten calls stating that researchers are planning to apply for CRAFT Cycle III directly. His concern was that this type of research is already funded by multiple sources including NIFA, MAC and CRDF and should not be included in the CRAFT program.

Mr. Mitchell stated that as the success of the CRAFT program becomes more apparent, others are now wanting to conduct similar field trials, but that as an industry we need to ensure that we are not unnecessarily duplicating efforts. He noted that it is important that each industry organization’s role is clearly defined to avoid overlap.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the program has looked at all viable commercially available rootstocks and scions through Cycles I and II. Mr. Rucks offered to provide a report at the June meeting on what is being planted throughout the industry as well as what is available from a nursery standpoint.

Additional discussion regarding CRAFT Cycle III will be added to the June meeting agenda in order to finalize objectives.

**Explanation of Future Funding for USDA-ARS-PDI for Data Management and Analysis:** Ms.

Carlson reported that CRAFT has had a two-year fiscal relationship with USDA-ARS-PDI for the development and administration of the CRAFT Data Portal through the allocation of MAC funding directly to PDI. This funding is set to expire in September 2021. CRAFT staff recently met via Zoom with the PDI team as well as others to discuss continuing the relationship between the organizations. Dr. Tim Rinehart sent an email to the group stating he is optimistic that they will be able to secure full funding for the continuation of the administration of the Data Portal as well as additional funding for data analysis.

Mr. Vandenberg noted that he and his team at PDI have a meeting scheduled for next week with USDA-APHIS for further discussions and he will keep CRAFT posted on the status of the work.

Following this discussion Mr. Vandenberg and Ms. Nezat provided an update on the Data Portal noting that they are currently working on cleaning up all of the Cycle I dashboards and working with Aerobotics to incorporate the data that they are collecting.

Ms. Carlson asked what services PDI may be able to provide utilizing Esri that may duplicate those services provided by Aerobotics. Mr. Vandenberg noted that they could potentially use imagery with AI to map project sites rather than relying on drone flights, in turn saving CRAFT money.

Dr. Browning asked when an overview of the data in the Portal would be available. Mr. Vandenberg noted that once they complete the verification of designs and the first round of testing is received, the Portal will be able to be shared. They anticipated approximately 3-4 months for that to occur.

**Consideration of CRAFT Outreach Ad Placement in Fresh From Florida Magazine:** CRAFT staff

was recently approached about purchasing ad space in the Fresh From Florida Magazine, published by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Ms. Carlson, along with Mr. Sparks, believes the citrus industry should be represented in the magazine and have discussed working together along with the Florida Citrus Processors Association to share the cost of a full-page ad and online banner with a link to the CRAFT website. This purchase would

also show support for FDACS. CRAFT's share of the ad would be at a cost of \$1,400 which is available within the communications budget. Members of the Board were shown a draft ad design. Dr. Browning requested that information on the number of acres in the CRAFT Program be added to the design.

**Dr. Browning moved to approve the shared purchase of a full-page ad, not to exceed \$1,500, in the Fresh from Florida Magazine. Mr. Updike seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

**Discussion Regarding Succession Planning for Executive Director Position:** Two candidates were scheduled to be interviewed during the meeting, however an email was received from one of the candidates two nights prior to the meeting withdrawing from consideration due to a non-compete clause with their existing employer. This left only one candidate, Mr. Brandon Page, which does not lend itself to a competitive process so all interviews were postponed. Ms. Carlson would still like to end her tenure with the organization by the end of June or July at the latest. She noted that Ms. Wood could potentially manage on her own for a while but that a long-term solution is needed as soon as possible. She also noted that the Citrus Service Organization could provide some support from a basic personnel standpoint if needed. Mr. Updike asked what opportunities there were to advertise for the position. Ms. Carlson suggested that it could be posted in the Florida Citrus Mutual *Triangle* newsletter as well as on online job sites.

Dr. Browning noted that the relative temporary nature of the position creates a challenge in asking someone to make a career change. He stated that Mr. Page is perfect in the role that he currently fills professionally and is also a valuable asset in his volunteer role on the TWG, but that it would be a large risk to Mr. Page personally to leave his more stable position to come to CRAFT.

Mr. Beck asked if there was a way to engage the Citrus Service Organization to help staff CRAFT. Ms. Carlson responded that the CSO would be set up like a temp agency, providing various areas of support. She indicated that Mr. Mike Sparks could work part-time with Florida Citrus Mutual and part-time with the CSO to lead CRAFT, and additional FCM staff could work similarly.

Dr. Browning asked if Mr. Peter Chaires or an employee from the Florida Department of Citrus could be contracted through the CSO to serve as Program Manager. He noted that utilizing a group rather than an individual would provide more capabilities.

Mr. Beck noted that contracting with the CSO to provided services may be the best short-term solution while the Board continues to look for other options or candidates. Ms. Carlson stated that CRAFT does need a named Program Director, from an operations standpoint, but that Ms. Wood could potentially be named "Acting Program Manager." Dr. Browning noted that a Board member could also serve as Program Manager in name.

The Board requested that the Citrus Service Organization provide a proposal of services and rates to be considered at the next meeting.

Ms. Carlson noted that CRAFT's agreement with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services lists prohibited activities including being involved in political activities. She suggested that CRAFT request a legal opinion from FDACS on utilizing the services of CSO employees who also work for Florida Citrus Mutual.

**Dr. Browning moved to request that the Citrus Service Organization present a proposal on providing administrative oversight of CRAFT with current affiliated personnel and other potential partners, and that CRAFT staff assess the potential liability of the association between CRAFT and Florida Citrus Mutual staff members contracted through the CSO. Mr. Rucks seconded the motion which passed unanimously.**

The Board noted that there may be other potential candidates to serve as Program Director, and as such any potential agreement with the CSO should be executed on a floating basis to allow for flexibility in moving forward.

**New Business:** Mr. Beck expressed his appreciation for the work that Ms. Carlson and Ms. Wood have done to get the organization to this point and reiterated that he did not want to get to the point that Ms. Wood was overwhelmed with work during the transition. He noted that he is confident that utilizing all available resources, that situation will be avoidable.

Seeing no further business, Mr. Beck adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Tamara C. Wood, Secretary.