

**MINUTES**

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2018  
LOUISIANA STRAWBERRY MARKETING BOARD MEETING  
47076 NORTH MORRISON BOULEVARD  
HAMMOND, LA

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman William Fletcher called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Strawberry Marketing Board Director Rebecca Riecke called the roll.

**DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

The presence of a quorum was declared by Ms. Riecke.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

DAWN BELOSO  
EDDIE FAUST  
WILLIAM FLETCHER  
DR. CHARLIE HUTCHISON  
KEVIN LIUZZA (JOINED MEETING AFTER ROLL CALL)  
MARK LIUZZA  
ERIC MORROW  
REBECCA RIECKE (COMMISSIONER MIKE STRAIN DVM'S DESIGNEE)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

DAVID ATKINS  
HEATHER ROBERTSON

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion made by Dawn Beloso and second by Eddie Faust to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2017, meeting. The motion carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Ms. Riecke read the August through November 2017 financial reports, copies of which were distributed to each member.

A motion made by Dawn Beloso and second by Eddie Faust to approve the August through November 2017 financial reports. The motion carried.

## **GARRISON ADVERTISING REPORT AND 2018 PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY**

Gerald Garrison of Garrison Advertising presented the advertising report with a handout being provided to each member. He reviewed the budgetary breakdown for the 2017 campaign including radio (budget - \$4,030.00, YTD spent - \$3,648.16 with a variance of \$381.84); billboards (budget - \$22,000.00, YTD spent - \$21,267.11 with a variance of \$732.89); and website monitoring, meetings, planning and other hourly support (budget - \$1,470.00, YTD spent - \$715.50 with a variance of \$754.50) for a total of \$27,500.00 budgeted, \$25,630.77 YTD spent with a variance of \$1,869.23.

Mr. Garrison explained that the 2018 campaign will deliver awareness of our Pick Louisiana Strawberries message and target South Louisiana buyers. He reviewed the proposed budgetary breakdown for the 2018 campaign: \$4,030.00 for radio (Louisiana Radio Network - will use Commissioner Mike Strain's spot from 2015); \$22,000.00 for billboards [five billboard locations in New Orleans, Baton Rouge (I-12), Lafayette, Baton Rouge (Gonzales) and North Shore]; and \$2,550.00 for website monitoring, meetings, planning and other hourly support [website monitoring, analysis, design updates, and support; graphic design (mostly changes to existing designs); meetings, planning activities and support for LSMB; and supported grant application needs of LSMB] for a total of \$28,580.00.

Mr. Garrison explained that Louisiana Radio Network promotes the Board's radio message across the state. He stated that the current ad designs will be maintained creating familiarity with Louisiana Strawberries as a "brand." Mr. Garrison informed board members that they identified some great locations for the billboards last fiscal year. He asked board members about the timing of when billboards should go up this year, and they recommended early in the season with all of them being up by Valentine's Day at the latest. Eddie Faust asked Mr. Garrison if there is any data regarding people that bought Louisiana strawberries due to seeing the billboards and inquired about other potential avenues of advertising. He said the Board has done several forms of advertising in the past when the budget allowed for it. Mr. Garrison stated that it would be very difficult to get statistics on who bought Louisiana strawberries without hiring a research firm to question consumers at the point-of-sale, which would be expensive to do. He said that their agency can provide the number of people who drove by the billboards and listened to the radio station, but cannot say that they bought Louisiana strawberries because of that. Mr. Garrison stated that advertising dollars are being spent as cost effective as possible with the current budget and if additional funding is obtained in the future, digital advertising on websites, television advertising, and additional radio advertising including satellite and internet could be done.

Mr. Garrison said that Louisiana strawberries continued to be promoted at the point of sale (grocery stores, farmers markets and farmers' individual stands) with stickers and other promotional items that were previously purchased. He updated the Board on website activity and explained that it follows availability of our strawberries and marketing promotion periods.

Mr. Garrison presented photos of the Board's banners, banner flags, tablecloths, ink pens and stickers being used at various events. He said that he will check on billboard locations as soon as possible so they can go up in mid-February and stay up through mid-April. Mr. Fletcher requested that Mr. Garrison tentatively plan on going up with the billboards in mid-February again next year.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and second by Dawn Beloso to approve Garrison Advertising's market proposal for 2018 as presented. The motion carried.

Ms. Riecke informed board members of the 2018 Certified Louisiana Program Promotional Grant from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry in which the Board may apply for an amount up to \$30,000.00 to be used for promotion. She stated that applications are due February 1 and reimbursement requests June 1. Ms. Riecke explained that the Certified logo must be used on all advertising and reviewed the grant application handout which details eligible expenses.

Board members were in favor of applying for the grant to use the funding for television advertising. Ms. Riecke explained that the Certified logo would need to be added to the Board's current television commercial along with the board's logo. She said that Garrison Advertising would be able to edit the commercial to add the Certified logo and work on helping place the ads, but their contract would need to be amended to allow for this to happen. Gerald Garrison suggested having the television ads on cable through Cox which would reach the Board's target market in the New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Lafayette areas and is less expensive than broadcast network advertising. Board members were in favor of using the Certified Farm to Table logo on the television ads.

A motion made by Mark Liuzza and second by Kevin Liuzza to approve the Director to apply for 2018 Certified Louisiana Program Promotional Grant funding for television advertising in the amount of \$30,000.00. The motion carried.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and second by Dawn Beloso to amend the contract with Garrison Advertising for consulting services by increasing the amount not to exceed from \$28,580.00 to \$40,000.00 for year one. The motion carried.

### **2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT SUBMISSION**

Ms. Riecke informed board members that the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant opportunity would be coming up soon. She stated that actual sales numbers must be provided for marketing projects now which would make doing promotions very difficult since those figures would be nearly impossible to obtain. Ms. Riecke said that educational projects that provide a more obtainable measure would be recommended to still reach the consumer and suggested educating children and adults about Louisiana strawberries including the nutritional benefits, storage and handling, availability and ways to prepare.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and second by Mark Liuzza to approve the Director to apply for 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant funding and submit a proposal regarding educating children and adults about Louisiana strawberries including the nutritional benefits, storage and handling, availability and ways to prepare and any other additional proposal ideas developed that can enhance the strawberry industry. The motion carried.

Mr. Fletcher read a resolution which would allow Ms. Riecke to apply for the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant on behalf of the Board.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and second by Dawn Beloso to adopt a resolution authorizing Director Rebecca Riecke to prepare and execute any proposals and contracts necessary to seek funding from the LDAF through the 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant for Louisiana strawberries and for that authority to continue until revocation from the Board. The motion carried.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Riecke informed the Board that Southland Container is no longer selling strawberry containers to Louisiana producers and, therefore, will no longer be paying the strawberry assessment on behalf of Louisiana producers who purchased from them. She stated that Louisiana law requires Louisiana strawberry producers to pay the assessment and asked board members for feedback regarding future assessment collection from producers who previously bought containers from Southland Container. Board members suggested sending a notice to Louisiana strawberry producers making them aware of the requirement to pay the assessment. Ms. Riecke stated that she had a list of producers and would send it to board members for assistance in identifying the producers that are no longer in business and any producers that should be added to the list. She said that she would also send a draft of the notice to board members for their review before mailing to all Louisiana producers.

Ms. Riecke stated that LSU had suggested changing the ex-officio position on the Board from resident coordinator of the LSU Ag Experiment Station at Hammond to a horticulturalist due to strawberry research no longer being conducted there. She said that this change would need to be made legislatively and the next session would be coming up soon. Ms. Riecke asked board members for feedback on making other changes to the Board makeup such as eliminating the agricultural chemical dealer position which is currently vacant due to the inability to identify anyone to serve in that capacity. The Board was in favor of keeping Board membership the same and Dr. Charlie Hutchison, currently serving in the ex-officio position as resident coordinator of the LSU Ag Experiment Station at Hammond, stated that he would be glad to continue serving on the Board in that position.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

No further comments were made. A motion made by Mark Liuzza and second by Dawn Beloso to adjourn. The motion carried.