

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2017
LOUISIANA STRAWBERRY MARKETING BOARD MEETING
47076 NORTH MORRISON BOULEVARD
HAMMOND, LA

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman William Fletcher called the meeting to order at 5:33 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 Mrs. Riecke.

MEMBERS PRESENT

DAWN BELOSO
EDDIE FAUST
WILLIAM FLETCHER
DR. CHARLIE HUTCHISON
KEVIN LIUZZA
HEATHER ROBERTSON
REBECCA RIECKE (COMMISSIONER MIKE STRAIN DVM'S DESIGNEE)

MEMBERS ABSENT

DAVID ATKINS
MARK LIUZZA
ERIC MORROW

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. Fletcher opened the floor for nominations for chairman.

Eddie Faust nominated and Heather Robertson seconded William Fletcher for chairman.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Heather Robertson to close the nominations for chairman. The motion carried unanimously, and William Fletcher was elected chairman by acclamation.

Mr. Fletcher opened the floor for nominations for vice-chairman.

William Fletcher nominated and Heather Robertson seconded Kevin Liuzza for vice-chairman.

A motion made by Heather Robertson and seconded by Eddie Faust to close the nominations for vice-chairman. The motion carried unanimously, and Kevin Liuzza was elected chairman by acclamation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion made by Dawn Beloso and seconded by Heather Robertson to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2017, meeting. The motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mrs. Riecke read the fiscal year 2017 and July 2017 financial reports, copies of which were distributed to each member.

A motion made by Heather Robertson and seconded by Eddie Faust to approve the fiscal year 2017 and July 2017 financial reports. The motion carried.

FY 2018 PROPOSED BUDGET

Mrs. Riecke explained the fiscal year 2018 proposed budget with the estimated income being \$30,000.00 in strawberry assessments. She reviewed the budget categories for expenses which include \$28,580.00 for advertising, \$920.00 for the legislative egg breakfast tent rental and \$500.00 for the Louisiana FFA Association – State Proficiency Award for a total of \$30,000.00.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Heather Robertson to approve the fiscal year 2018 proposed budget. The motion carried.

GARRISON ADVERTISING REPORT

Gerald Garrison of Garrison Advertising presented the advertising report with a handout being distributed to each member. He explained the 2016/2017 guiding strategy. Mr. Garrison reviewed the budgetary breakdown for the 2016/2017 campaign YTD consisting of 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 - \$1,240.00 with a variance of \$230.00) for a total of \$27,500.00 budgeted, \$26,155.27 YTD spent with a variance of \$1,344.73. He updated board members on advertising efforts including Louisiana Radio Network, billboards, banner flags and other promotional items. Mr. Garrison reviewed the website performance, explaining that website activity follows availability of our strawberries and marketing promotion periods.

Mr. Fletcher asked Mr. Garrison what he would suggest doing with remaining advertising money, and Mr. Garrison recommended putting up another billboard. He said that the price depends on the location and suggested that it be in South Louisiana due to the bulk of sales and farms being in that area. Mr. Faust stated that most of the budget is for billboards and asked if there was any data to show that consumers are buying Louisiana berries as opposed to those from another state or Mexico. Mr. Garrison explained that there is no way to have specific data on the effectiveness of the advertising, but the billboards stress picking Louisiana strawberries and the radio ads focus on the freshness and superiority of Louisiana berries. He advised board members that outdoor advertising is a good investment, with many boards being left up longer than the time period that was paid for. Mrs. Robertson stated that she believes the advertising is working based on her interactions with customers at the farmers' market who insist on purchasing Louisiana strawberries.

Mrs. Riecke inquired about television advertising with our budget. Mr. Garrison said that if advertising dollars are split up, we do not get anything in return. He explained that we have to hit consumers three or four times with advertising before they buy a product. Kevin Liuzza said that many stores have Louisiana berries mixed in with California berries and the labels are very small so it is difficult for many consumers to tell the difference. Mr. Garrison informed the board that the website traffic mirrors advertising so there is a correlation between when the billboards go up and when more consumers visit the website. He said advertising is hard to measure and the board could consider other mediums of advertising, but recommended continuing with our current advertising plan that concentrates mainly on billboards.

ADVERTISING CONTRACT

Mrs. Riecke informed board members that the contract with Garrison Advertising ends December 31, 2017. She stated that if the board wants to continue their current advertising with Garrison Advertising, they would need a new contract that could be for a period of up to three years, and she would need authorization to approve the details of the contract. Mrs. Riecke stated that the amount budgeted for advertising in the current fiscal year is \$28,580.00. Mr. Faust recommended contracting for a period shorter than three years so the board can reevaluate the performance of the agency. Mr. Fletcher inquired about the circumstances in which the board would have to issue a request for proposals for the advertising contract, and Mrs. Riecke stated that this would only be required if the amount were \$50,000.00 or more per year. Mr. Garrison informed board members that his agency rates would remain the same. Mr. Fletcher recommended contracting for more than one year since the board is pleased with the creative design which is on recently ordered promotional items and ads.

A motion made by Eddie Faust and seconded by Heather Robertson to enter into a contract with Garrison Advertising for consulting services to administer the board's advertising, promotion and public relations program beginning January 1, 2018, for a period of two years and an amount not to exceed \$28,580.00 per year. The motion carried.

Mr. Garrison asked if the contract could be amended if the advertising budget increased, and Mrs. Riecke confirmed that it could. Mrs. Riecke stated that assessments have been steady over the past few years and she does not expect a substantial fluctuation, but a contract

amendment could be done if the board receives Specialty Crop Block Grant funding in the future. Mr. Fletcher informed the board that they would need to vote to authorize Mrs. Riecke to approve the details of the contract on behalf of the board. Mrs. Riecke stated that she would work with Wanda Ward in LDAF's contracts division, and the Commissioner would sign the contract on behalf of the board.

A motion made by Eddie Faust and seconded by Heather Robertson to authorize Director Rebecca Riecke to approve the details of the contract with Garrison Advertising on behalf of the board. The motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Riecke updated the board on recent events in which the board participated including the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival, legislative egg breakfasts and Southside Junior High Louisiana Day for 8th graders in which she distributed promotional items and spoke to students. She informed board members that FFA sent a thank you letter to them for their continued support.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

No further comments were made. A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Heather Robertson to adjourn. The motion carried.