

MINUTES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018
LOUISIANA STRAWBERRY MARKETING BOARD MEETING
47076 NORTH MORRISON BOULEVARD
CONFERENCE ROOM
HAMMOND, LA

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman William Fletcher called the meeting to order at 6:06 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

WILLIAM FLETCHER
DR. CHARLIE HUTCHISON
KEVIN LIUZZA
STACEY MILLER
HEATHER ROBERTSON
COMMISSIONER MIKE STRAIN DVM

MEMBERS ABSENT

DAVID ATKINS
EDDIE FAUST
MARK LIUZZA
ERIC MORROW

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. Fletcher opened the floor for nominations for chairman.

Heather Robertson nominated William Fletcher for chairman.

A motion made by Commissioner Mike Strain and seconded by Stacey Miller to close the nominations for chairman. The motion carried, and William Fletcher was elected chairman with a unanimous vote.

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

William Fletcher nominated and Commissioner Mike Strain seconded Kevin Liuzza for vice-chairman.

A motion made by Commissioner Mike Strain to close the nominations for vice-chairman. With no further nominations coming forward, Kevin Liuzza was elected vice-chairman with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Heather Robertson to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2018, meeting. The motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Riecke read the fiscal year 2018 and July through August 2018 financial reports, copies of which were distributed to each member.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Heather Robertson to approve the fiscal year 2018 and July 2018 financial reports. The motion carried.

FY 2019 PROPOSED BUDGET

Ms. Riecke explained the fiscal year 2019 proposed budget with the estimated income being \$30,000.00 in strawberry assessments; \$30,000.00 in grant income from the Certified Louisiana Program Promotional Grant; and \$23,785.00 in grant income from the Specialty Crop Block Grant (year one) for a total of \$83,785.00. She reviewed the budget categories for expenses which include \$28,800.00 for advertising; \$30,000.00 for Certified Louisiana Program Promotional Grant expenses; \$700.00 for the legislative egg breakfasts table/chair rental; \$500.00 for the Louisiana FFA Association – State Proficiency Award; and \$23,785.00 for Specialty Crop Block Grant (year one) expenses for a total of \$83,785.00.

A motion made by Heather Robertson and seconded by Kevin Liuzza to approve the fiscal year 2019 proposed budget. The motion carried.

GARRISON ADVERTISING REPORT

Gerald Garrison of Garrison Advertising presented the advertising report with a handout distributed to each member. He reviewed the budgetary breakdown for the 2018 campaign consisting of radio (budget - \$4,030.00, YTD spent - \$3,558.16 with a variance of \$471.84); billboards (budget - \$22,000.00, YTD spent - \$23,351.70 with a variance of -\$1,351.70); and website monitoring, meetings, planning and other hourly support (budget - \$2,550.00, YTD spent - \$1,530.00 with a variance of \$1,020.00) for a total of \$28,580.00 budgeted, \$28,439.86 YTD spent with a variance of \$140.14.

Mr. Garrison explained the 2018 guiding strategy. He updated board members on advertising efforts including Louisiana Radio Network and billboards. Mr. Garrison informed the Board that many billboards stayed up for more than the total days contracted resulting in many overrides at no additional cost. Mr. Fletcher inquired if the billboard vinyls could be reused for next year. Mr. Garrison stated that the vinyls were reprinted this year, and he instructed Lamar Advertising to keep all of the panels. He stated that Ms. Riecke can store them so they can be used again next year and new vinyls will not have to be purchased. Mr. Garrison said that in the event a Lamar Advertising salesman does not keep a vinyl, they will reprint it at no cost to the Board. Commissioner Strain stated that the vinyls could have additional uses when they come down such as on the sides of semi-trailers or buildings. Mr. Garrison informed board members that Lamar Advertising gave them an additional digital panel in New Orleans for two weeks for free.

Commissioner Strain stated that he does a 12-minute monologue five days a week on Louisiana Radio Network, and he can give a message about Louisiana strawberries during peak season, directing listeners to the Board's website. Mr. Garrison said that WVLA has started a cooking show with Jay Ducote and could have Commissioner Strain on air for certain seasons such as strawberry. Commissioner Strain informed board members that the Department has started a series titled "Three 4 Fifteen" that features three different subject matters in five-minute segments and strawberries can be included. He said that there is now a studio at the office.

Mr. Garrison reviewed the 2018 website traffic analysis for louisianastrawberries.com, explaining that website activity follows availability of our strawberries and marketing promotion periods. He said that the unexplained spikes could be attributed to Commissioner Strain being on air promoting Louisiana Grown specialty crops at that time.

Mr. Garrison reviewed the 2018 strawberry LAFA grant budget, consisting of television (budget - \$27,000.00, YTD spent - \$26,813.42 with a variance of \$186.58) and agency fees (budget - \$3,000.00, YTD spent - \$3,085.00 with a variance of -\$85.00) for a total of \$30,000.00 budgeted, \$29,898.42 YTD spent with a variance of \$101.58.

Ms. Riecke informed the Board that the next meeting would be in January and asked for feedback as to the direction of the advertising. Board members were pleased with the current advertising consisting of radio advertising and billboards. Mrs. Miller, Chairman of the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival, stated that she would like to add a link to the Board's website on the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival website. Commissioner Strain said that the Department has been posting many things on Facebook, sometimes boosting the posts. Mr. Garrison recommended that the Board place digital ads on various sites that the target market visits.

Mr. Fletcher advised Mr. Garrison that the target start date for the billboards should be Valentine's Day unless we let him know otherwise if there is a delay due to the weather. Mr. Garrison said that he will consider putting the billboards up in February and buying four weeks since the billboards have been staying up for longer than the contract period and the first part of the year is not a busy season for outdoor advertising. Mrs. Robertson asked if the contract period could be extended, and Mr. Garrison said that it could if someone else does not buy it. Mr.

Garrison said that this year the Lafayette billboard was put back up after the contract period at no cost to the Board.

2018 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT

Ms. Riecke informed the Board that it was selected to receive 2018 Specialty Crop Block Grant funding in the amount of \$30,760.00 for a period of three years for the Louisiana Strawberry Industry Child and Adult Education program. She said that this program will educate children and adults about Louisiana strawberries including nutritional benefits, availability, storage and handling and ways to prepare. Ms. Riecke stated that a short educational video will be developed for children that LDAF could help produce along with an educational activity booklet that will be available to children at schools, aftercare, daycare, summer camps and other places where children can be reached. She said that a brochure with a tear-off survey will be developed for adults that will be available at farmers' markets, grocery store samplings and other events such as Ag Expo in West Monroe each year.

Ms. Riecke informed board members that a copy of the grant proposal submitted was included in their meeting packet. She reviewed the grant project budget consisting of contractual; (agency fees, educational activity booklet printing, educational material with tear-off survey printing, in-store strawberry sampling educational outreach and signage for \$19,510.00); other (Ag Expo exhibitor booths and educational video production with developed online downloadable survey) for \$8,325.00; supplies needed for sampling and/or cooking demonstrations for \$1,920.00; and travel for Ag Expo for \$1,005.00 for a total of \$30,760.00.

Ms. Riecke said that the Board would need to enter into a contract with LDAF to receive this grant funding and authorize her to approve the details of the contract and sign it on behalf of the Board. She informed board members that the contract with Garrison Advertising would need to be amended. Ms. Riecke stated that the Board is in a two-year contract with Garrison Advertising, and the amount for year two would need to be increased from \$28,580 to \$45,000.00 so the contractual work for the grant could be completed.

A motion made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Heather Robertson to enter into a contract with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry for the Board to receive a Specialty Crop Block Grant award in the amount of \$30,760.00. The motion carried.

A motion made by Heather Roberson and seconded by Kevin Liuzza to authorize Director Rebecca Riecke to approve the contract with LDAF and sign it on behalf of the Board. The motion carried.

A motion made by Heather Robertson and seconded by Stacey Miller to amend the contract with Garrison Advertising for consulting services by increasing the maximum not to exceed amount from \$68,580.00 to \$85,000.00 for a period of two years and the not to exceed amount from \$28,580 to \$45,000 for year two. The motion carried.

FY 18-19 CERTIFIED LA PROGRAM PROMOTIONAL GRANT

Ms. Riecke stated that the Board would be able to apply for FY18-19 Certified Louisiana Program Promotional Grant funding again this year in the amount of \$30,000.00. She explained that eligible expenses include radio or TV ads; web expenses; hats, t-shirts, clothing or giveaways; product labels, packaging, jars and boxes; trade shows; graphic design expenses; research and development; vehicle wraps; demos and sampling; and other eligible items.

Ms. Riecke asked board members for feedback on how the grant funding should be used. She recommended allocating some of the money to purchase promotional items that could be given to children and adults when attending events for the educational project. Board members were in favor of purchasing \$5,000.00 worth of promotional items. Commissioner Strain stated that it is important to buy promotional items that would get a second look and people will continue to use. Board members were in favor of running television ads again. Mr. Garrison also suggested allocating \$5,000.00 for digital advertising on websites visited by the target market, which would still leave \$20,000.00 for television advertising.

Commissioner Strain inquired about the metrics used to measure the success of the advertising. He suggested looking at the assessments collected and if they increase from year to year, we would know that the advertising is effective. Board members discussed the status of the strawberry industry in the state.

A motion made by Heather Roberson and seconded by Stacey Miller to approve the director to apply for FY 2018-2019 Certified Louisiana Program Promotional Grant funding for the following: television advertising - \$20,000.00; promotional items - \$5,000.00; and digital advertising - \$5,000.00. The motion carried.

DESIGNATION OF SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT (SAM) ENTITY ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Riecke explained that in order for the Board to receive federal funding such as the Specialty Crop Block Grant, it has to be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM). She stated that she has been updating the Board's information for the past few years, and there is a new requirement for a notarized letter designating the entity administrator for the Board. Ms. Riecke said that the Board would need to vote to designate her as the entity administrator for the System for Award Management so she can continue to update the information, and Mr. Fletcher would sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

A motion made by Commissioner Mike Strain and seconded by Kevin Liuzza to appoint Director Rebecca Riecke as the Board's entity administrator for the System for Award Management (SAM). The motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Riecke informed board members that she will attend the Bash on the Bayou event at LSU on Saturday representing LDAF and will distribute strawberry stickers and recipe cards.

Commissioner Strain thanked board members for their service. He said that the Board's help with the legislative egg breakfasts makes a big difference, reaching several legislators and staff. Commissioner Strain stated that LDAF's marketing is now housed under the Louisiana Agricultural Finance Authority. He said that in September 2017 LDAF was able to pay off the last of its debt through the Agricultural Finance Authority and is now taking funds earned through industrial development sites and putting them into marketing. Commissioner Strain informed the Board that LDAF will be pushing the Certified Louisiana program and also promoting the Market Bulletin. He said that he does voice overs promoting several different commodities.

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.