

MINUTES
IN-PERSON MEETING OF THE
LOUISIANA STRAWBERRY MARKETING BOARD

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY
HAMMOND CONFERENCE ROOM
47076 NORTH MORRISON BOULEVARD
HAMMOND, LA 70401

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eric Morrow called the meeting to order at 5:39 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

DR. CHARLIE HUTCHISON
NATALIE FAUST JONES
KEVIN LIUZZA
MARK LIUZZA
ERIC MORROW
RHONDA POCHE
COMMISSIONER MIKE STRAIN, DVM (JOINED MEETING AFTER ROLL CALL)

MEMBERS ABSENT

TREY HARRIS
LOU ANN LEBLANC
SHELLEY MATHERNE
HEATHER ROBERTSON

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Eric Morrow opened the floor for nominations for chairman.

Kevin Liuzza nominated, and Natalie Faust Jones seconded Eric Morrow for chairman.

A motion was made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Mark Liuzza to close the nominations for chairman. With no further nominations coming forward, the motion carried, and Eric Morrow was elected chairman with a unanimous vote.

Eric Morrow opened the floor for nominations for vice-chairman.

Rhonda Poché nominated, and Mark Liuzza seconded Natalie Faust Jones for vice-chairman.

A motion was made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Mark Liuzza to close the nominations for vice-chairman. With no further nominations coming forward, the motion carried, and Natalie Faust Jones was elected vice-chairman with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Mark Liuzza to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023, meeting. The motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Ms. Riecke read the September through November 2023 financial reports, copies of which were distributed to each member.

A motion was made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Natalie Faust Jones to approve the September through November 2023 financial reports. The motion carried.

GARRISON ADVERTISING REPORT

Gerald Garrison of Garrison Advertising presented the advertising report, copies of which were distributed to each member. Mr. Garrison reviewed the budget breakdown for the 2024 campaign consisting of radio (budget - \$4,500.00); billboards (budget - \$21,300.00); and agency account support services (budget - \$2,850.00) for a total of \$28,650.00 budgeted. He explained that a portion of the funding budgeted for billboards would need to be used to print new vinyls since some of the ones used in the past stayed up for a long period of time and are no longer in good condition. Mr. Garrison reviewed the 2024 statewide radio campaign proposal including bonus spots and bonus outdoor digital billboards.

Mr. Garrison discussed the 2024 LAFA Certified Louisiana grant budget that includes social and web video (budget - \$7,000.00); promotional items (budget - \$2,000.00); and a magazine ad (budget - \$1,000.00) for a total of \$10,000.00 budgeted. He explained that all advertising done with these funds must have the Certified logo. Mr. Garrison updated the Board on some of the promotional items that will be purchased such as plastic cups and pencil sharpeners. He informed board members that the magazine ad will run in the March/April issue of Louisiana Cookin' magazine.

Mr. Garrison presented the 2024 Specialty Crop grant spring digital campaign budget consisting of connected television (budget - \$5,550.00); cross device pre-roll (budget - \$4,200.00); programmatic audio (budget - \$6,375.00); full device, mobile interstitials (budget -

\$4,800.00); value added – BT high impact and standard display (budget - \$0.00); and agency services and coordination (budget - \$3,353.00) for a total of \$24,278.00 budgeted. He reviewed the Specialty Crop grant digital campaign details by budget category.

Mr. Garrison showed photos of the proposed billboard creative which retained the same message of “Pick Louisiana Strawberries,” but displayed multiple strawberries instead of just one like the current billboard. Board members preferred the billboard creative which showed a hand holding multiple strawberries instead of the one that had a closeup image of strawberries. Mr. Garrison explained that four of six billboard panels will have to be reprinted due to damage from being up so long. Board members were in favor of printing four panels with the new creative and using the two remaining panels with the old creative for this season. Mr. Garrison stated that the new creative would be used this season for the bonus digital panels. Board members requested that the logos be removed and “LouisianaStrawberries.com” be centered and made larger at the bottom of the panel.

Mr. Garrison and Brad BonGiovanni of Rockit Science Agency discussed the proposed video approach and explained that stock video clips could be purchased that the Board’s message could be added to. Mr. Garrison played the current radio and TV spots and showed the current digital creative. Ms. Riecke requested feedback from the Board on the advertising. Mrs. Poché inquired if the end of the TV spot could be updated with the new creative that would be used on the billboard. Mr. BonGiovanni confirmed that they could update the tag at the end of the TV commercial to be representative of the billboards. Board members were in favor of keeping the current TV commercial and updating the end with the updated billboard creative. Mr. Garrison stated that the digital ads would all be updated with the new creative that will be used on the billboards. Mr. Kevin Liuzza stated that the Board needs to have a message encouraging consumers to ask for Louisiana strawberries when shopping as opposed to purchasing out-of-state strawberries. Board members were in favor of changing the wording of the creative to “Ask for Louisiana Strawberries” instead of “Pick Louisiana Strawberries.”

A motion was made by Mark Liuzza and seconded by Kevin Liuzza to approve Garrison Advertising’s 2024 marketing proposal and budget. The motion carried.

FY 2024 SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT

Ms. Riecke stated that the 2021 Specialty Crop Block Grant that the Board currently has ends June 30. She informed the Board that it can apply to receive funding from the 2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant, and that application is due March 15. Ms. Riecke explained that the project may be promotional or educational. She informed the Board that a resolution is needed for the board director to apply for Specialty Crop Block Grant funding and once the resolution is adopted, it will be submitted with the grant proposal.

A motion was made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Natalie Faust Jones to approve the director to apply for 2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant funding and submit a proposal that would enhance the Louisiana strawberry industry. The motion carried.

Ms. Riecke read a resolution which would allow her to apply for the 2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant on behalf of the Board.

A motion was made by Rhonda Poché and seconded by Natalie Faust Jones to adopt a resolution authorizing Director Rebecca Riecke to prepare and execute any proposals and contracts necessary to seek funding from LDAF through the 2024 Specialty Crop Block Grant for Louisiana strawberries and for that authority to continue until revocation from the Board. The motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Helen Ferguson with the LSU AgCenter informed the Board of the upcoming Agritourism Education Meeting on February 23 and the Watermelon Education Meeting next Tuesday for anyone who would like to attend. She also requested that they complete a short survey to get input about what she does in the upcoming year.

Commissioner Strain informed board members of a USDA grant for mid-cycle processing of products that will go live soon. He explained that funding up to a certain amount requires no match and larger projects for more funding require a 50/50 match. Commissioner Strain stated that this grant is federal money coming down to assist in adding value to their products and may apply to equipment. He explained that this \$4.5 million grant is through the Louisiana Agricultural Finance Authority and encouraged interested board members to apply quickly whenever it comes out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Riecke informed the Board that she set up a booth in October at the Farm to School Conference, handing out Jazzy coloring/activity books and playing the Jazzy videos to let educators know about the available resources the Board has for children.

Ms. Riecke stated that since board members were recently appointed, the Senate & Governmental Affairs Committee will be sending confirmation questionnaires directly to them to complete during the upcoming legislative session. Ms. Riecke advised board members to ensure their forms are submitted.

Ms. Riecke reminded board members to complete the annual ethics training by December 31 this year and that sexual harassment training would also need to be completed. She advised them that a Tier 2.1 financial disclosure report would need to be filed by May 15.

Brad BonGiovanni stated that they are part of a national movement called Food Waste Prevention Week in which several companies and organizations are partners. He said that it is free for the Board to become a partner, and it could be done online. Mr. BonGiovanni advised that after becoming a partner, social media assets, animated stickers, and other resources dealing with keeping food preserved become available. He stated that this opportunity is coming up in April. Ms. Riecke requested that Mr. BonGiovanni send more information about this campaign for the Board to consider.

ADJOURNMENT

No further comments were made.

A motion was made by Kevin Liuzza and seconded by Mark Liuzza to adjourn. The motion carried.