**ILLINOIS CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of a Meeting**

**Held Wednesday January 20, 2021**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Corn Growers Association was held virtually on January 20, 2021.

 Directors present were:

 Bill Leigh Randy DeSutter

 Sarah Hastings Ted Mottaz

 Dave Rylander Jason Bunting

 Marty Marr Mike Shane

 Kate Danner Keith Sanders

 Matt Rush Joe Murphy

 Mark Bunselmeyer Don Guinnip

 Terry Smith Steve Koeller

 Also present were:

 Rodney Weinzierl Lindsay Mitchell

 Kayla Veeder Dave Loos

 Ashley Deal Collin Watters

 Laura Gentry Travis Deppe

 Jim Tarmann Dan Obert

 Lucas McPherson Jacqueline Muhammad

 Kenny Hartman

The Board meeting was called to order by President, Randy DeSutter at 1:00pm.

John Linder and Harold Wolle from the NCGA board joined the meeting virtually. They addressed questions around the possibility of meeting in person by the July session of Corn Congress, NCGA’s goals with the new administration, and NCGA’s vision for the future of ethanol. Harold Wolle informed the committee that NCGA will have an ask around the Soil Health Partnership program.

SECRETARYS REPORT

Kate Danner presented the minutes of the November Executive Committee meeting.

 **It was moved by Kate Danner and seconded by Sarah Hastings**

**THAT the minutes of the November 16, 2020 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Illinois Corn Growers Association be approved and placed on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

Kate Danner presented the minutes of the November full board meeting.

 **It was moved by Kate Danner and seconded by Bill Leigh**

**THAT the minutes of the November 22, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Corn Growers Association be approved and placed on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Sarah Hastings reported that the committee met and completed a review of expenses and vouchers.

TREASURERS REPORT

Sarah Hastings reported that the FY20 audit is complete. Steve Arendt, CPA with Striegel Knobloch & Company LLC reviewed the FY20 audit report.

 **It was moved by Marty Marr and seconded by Kate Danner**

 **THAT we place the FY20 audit on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

Sarah reported that we don’t have current financial statements due to Suzie’s departure and the onboarding of our new Accounting Manager, Lucas McPherson.

Lucas McPherson notified the board that we sent out the Conflict of Interest and Whistleblower policies via USPS and directors should return signed Conflict of Interest forms.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Rodney Weinzierl gave an Executive Director report. Rod reviewed the confirmation process for the new administration. Rod expects most of the appointments that the Biden administration has announced to move through the confirmation process relatively quickly. Rod reviewed his legislative outlook for the next few months.

Rod gave a Springfield legislative update, including his perspective on the future of SB1407.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Randy DeSutter reported for the committee.

***Business Services Committee Report***

The committee met to review the executive director performance evaluation report prepared by Newport Group.

***NCGA Priorities & Emerging Issues Meeting***

High octane low carbon legislation had a lot of support at the meeting. Infrastructure and trade were also at the top of the priority list.

***Corn Congress Virtual Meeting Update***

Resolutions are due to NCGA by February 11. The NCGA Resolutions Committee will review resolutions and send out an update on February 16. We will schedule a state caucus meeting the last week of February. Rod reviewed the schedule for Commodity Classic. We plan to schedule our Illinois policy meeting later this month, pending the next COVID-19 update.

***March DC Visit Update***

We will not be going to Washington, DC in March but we will work to set virtual meetings with our congressional delegation. It is important for us to continue to advocate for our priorities while we’re unable to be there in person.

***Wheat Association Sponsorship***

The Illinois Wheat Association does not have a checkoff program and the committee discussed sponsoring the association. They primarily operate as a committee out of Illinois Farm Bureau.

 **It was recommended by the committee**

**THAT we sponsor the Illinois Wheat Association for $1,000, with funds from the ICGA Grassroots Committee.**

***Farm Bill Task Force***

The Farm Bill Task Force will try to have a meeting before harvest this year and will work on farm bill strategies and report back to the board. This task force typically conducts a member survey and/or listening sessions on farm bill priorities throughout the state.

***ICGA 50th Anniversary***

The committee discussed options for celebrating ICGA’s 50th anniversary. The committee considered an additional IL Corn history book, a 50th anniversary event this summer, or a 50th anniversary pin to send out to ICGA members.

***NCGA PAC Report***

Marty Marr reviewed the latest NCGA CornPAC update and touched on the 2022 election cycle scorecard. The NCGA virtual CornPAC auction will be on Sunday, February 28.

***NCGA Action Team Reports***

Kate Danner gave an update on the Production Technology Access Action Team. Bill Leigh gave an update on the Risk Management Action Team. Marty Marr gave an update on the Member & Consumer Engagement Action Team. Terry Smith gave an update on the Market Development Action Team. Randy DeSutter gave an update on the Sustainable Ag Research Action Team.

 **It was moved by Sarah Hastings and seconded by Marty Marr**

**THAT we approve the Executive Committee Report and place it on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

EXPORTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Dave Rylander reported for the committee.

*Goal 1: Begin construction on one new lock on the Upper Mississippi by 2019.*

Jim Tarmann gave an update on WRDA. The Act was passed as part of the overall omnibus bill, and included all the funding we were looking for. The cost share changed from 50/50 to 65/35 which should speed up a lot of the projects on the books. Jim reviewed the Army Corp of engineers’ priority chart for projects on the river.

The Waterways Council is an organization based out of D.C. that the stakeholders of the barge tax on the river system belong to. Our annual dues are due soon.

 **It was recommended by the committee**

**THAT ICGA commit $1,500 to the Waterways Council.**

 **The motion carried.**

Jim Tarmann updated how the mitigations to keep the Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes are going. They have not found one in three to four years and have spent a lot of resources to get the carp out and keep them out. ICGA’s concern is the threat to not get funding for other locks and dams because all the resources are going towards this effort.

*Goal 2: Work to increase net exports of corn and corn co-products 6 percent by 2019.*

Collin Watters reported that we have made contacts with buyers in Japan, Korea Mexico and other countries in lieu of travelling and are making the best out of this situation. We don’t anticipate having any trade teams visiting soon. Collin discussed many countries, particularly in Asia, are not eager to visit the U.S. due to our COVID infection rates and he predicts this may have a long tail. However, we have virtual opportunities that we would not usually have. Mexico has proposed a ban on GMOs and we’re waiting for more details on this.

We have money set aside for the ICGA president and vice-president to attend US Grains Council board meetings but will have additional funds since the meeting is virtual this year. Mark Wilson from the Illinois Corn Marketing Board is considering running for office.

Terry Smith gave an update the NCGA Market Development Action Team.

*Goal 3: Increase the amount of Illinois corn fed to livestock domestically and increase the amount of meat exported internationally by 5% by 2019.*

Dan Obert touched on the advertisement campaign that the Illinois Livestock Development Group is working on.

Dan also informed the group that IL Beef has a new executive director, Josh St. Peters.

*Goal 4: Increase global consumer acceptance of science-based farming practices by 2020.*

The EPA released a new map about Dicamba and the new regulations that are allowed for downwind buffers and the Extend Bean. Dicamba is once again back in the courts but reregistration is likely.

*Goal 5: Baseline and quantify improvements in sustainability specifically addressing nutrient loss, carbon footprint, soil preservation, and water use efficiency to remain competitive in domestic and international markets.*

Megan Dwyer highlighted the water testing program that we run cooperatively with ICMB. We have pamphlets and water testing strips to send to members so they can test their own water for nitrogen and phosphorus. When people submit their data, they can choose an Illinois FFA chapter to donate $5 to. Last year we donated $635.

Dave Rylander reported on the NCGA Stewardship Action Team. The team discussed the Soil Health Partnership. There are concerns with the program going over budget around $580,000. NCGA is considering making a funding request to fill this gap.

Megan reported that there was a proposal from the US Farmers and Ranchers. The committee decided to hold off on funding until we have more information about the objectives of the project.

 **It was moved by Dave Rylander and seconded by Mark Bunselmeyer**

**THAT we approve the Exports Committee report with a total budget impact of $1,500 and place it on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Terry Smith reported for the committee.

Collin Watters presented an update on the strategic planning process and facilitated a discussion on updating committee goals.

*Goal 1: Increase corn used in ethanol production in Illinois from 600 million bushels to 750 million bushels by 2020.*

Dave Loos gave an update on the status federal issues related to ethanol. USEPA released an announcement on the proposed rule related to the RFS last week. USEPA did not grant additional small refinery exemptions. EPA extended the RFS compliance deadlines and made a final determination on the RFS anti-backsliding study. The study determined that the RFS is not causing backsliding in air quality, but the spring report still had negative things to say about ethanol.

USEPA also released a proposed rule around E15 labeling at the pump. The proposed rule would eliminate the “warning” look of E15 stickers and would make them look like other informational stickers on the pump.

Dave gave an overview of the California Low Carbon Fuel Standard. We are working on an E15 testing project that could help drive more E15 into the California market sooner. The committee also discussed the potential for a Midwest Low Carbon Fuel Standard. Such a standard would give us some short-term benefits, such as forcing E15 into the marketplace, but would simultaneously force more electric vehicles into the marketplace as well.

Jacqui Muhammad gave an update on her work with the governor’s office regarding his preferred pathway to cleaner fuels under his Clean Energy Transportation Initiative. Jacqui discussed the messaging around the health benefits of decreased aeromatics in various communities. She also touched on the economic impacts that the ethanol industry can bring to the Illinois economy.

Dave Loos gave the committee a brief update on Illinois SB1407. The lame duck session expired before a vote took place last week. We expect this legislation to be introduced again in the next session.

*Goal 2: Increase the percentage of ethanol in the Illinois fuel supply from 10 percent (450 million gallons) to 15 percent (675 million gallons) by the end of 2020.*

Jonathon Berry, Laura Ruppalt, and James Conde from Boyden Gray and Associates joined the meeting virtually to give the committee an update on their work in DC. Jonathon’s team works on trying to eliminate regulatory barriers related to higher blends of ethanol. They also assist us with legislative language on ethanol issues. They work closely with us on the Ag Auto Ethanol working group and are talking with the oil industry about protecting the future of liquid fuels. Jonathon gave an update on his expectations for ethanol issues under the Biden administration.

*Goal 4: Increase corn yield per acre to meet growing demand while reducing inputs per bushel.*

Megan Dwyer gave an update on Illinois’ new anhydrous training requirements.

*Goal 5: Grow and support the use of corn and corn co-products by the livestock industry in Illinois.*

Lindsay Mitchell and Marty Marr gave an update on the Illinois Livestock Development Group. Lindsay reported that Illinois Farm Bureau has been a difficult partner on this program.

 **It was moved by Terry Smith and seconded by Dave Rylander**

**THAT the report of the Industrial Committee be approved and placed on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

GRASSROOTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Bill Leigh reported for the committee.

*Goal 1: Provide short and concise information to leaders and members which enable them to improve the image of the family farm through at least three venues.*

Lindsay Mitchell shared an Illinois Farm Families update. IFF created several docuseries videos including a bioplastics video featuring Alexis Hartman, weather changes with Sarah Hastings, and other sustainability focused videos.

IL Corn created a publication utilizing the videos that were shot for IL Farm Families. This publication went out to our membership and the entire General Assembly.

Lindsay Mitchell and Jim Tarmann met with the Cornbelters Leadership team and were pleasantly surprised with the engagement last year. We are hoping to put IL Farm Families pieces and show our brand anthem video at the stadium next year. They have been streaming the games and our messaging is doing well, both in their online presence and expanded central Illinois presence. We are looking to transition Dan Obert to be more of the point person in working with Cornbelters.

*Goal 2: Increase the knowledge and involvement of 500 ICGA members.*

Collin Watters shared the GIS portal which we’ve updated in the last several months. It’s a multilayer map that shows things like membership, congressional districts, grain and feed associations, ethanol plants, grain elevators, etc which will help us identify needs in various areas as well as exhibit needs and opportunities to legislators. We are also hoping to update it with FSA and CFAP data once available. We use this on our fact sheets that we supply to legislators.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit up to $5000 to fund Heartland GIS. (Goal 2.1.E)**

 **The motion carried.**

We would like to set aside $10,000 to fund annual dues and membership fees with organizations we support and work with.

 **It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit up to $10,000 for sponsorships, membership dues, and donations. (Goal 2.1.F)**

 **The motion carried.**

We’re continuing to monitor the COVID situation in regards to taking the FFA leaders to Washington DC in July. We’re looking for optional fly-in dates to continue offering this valuable experience. $20,000 was previously allocated for last year’s trip that was not used. We used a portion of this: $3000, as a stipend/scholarship to help Bailey Parks-Moore, a past FFA trip attendee in her internship with Grassley’s office

The virtual PAC Drawdown drawing is starting 1/25/21. We have sold 133 out of 200 tickets to date with 6 days remaining to purchase.

 **It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit up to $5000 for shipping expenses related to PAC Drawdown prizes. (Goal 2.1.I.2)**

 **The motion carried.**

The committee discussed the 15-member PAC board’s travel related to our annual PAC meeting, district legislative visits, or on farm fundraiser reimbursement.

 **It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit up to $2500 for travel and legislative visit related expenses for the PAC Board Committee. (Goal 2.1.I.4.)**

 **The motion carried.**

*Goal 3: Increase ICGA’s state organization representation from membership by 2% per year.*

We currently have 3,900 active members. We discussed call to action performance: 570 connections made on our most recent WRDA call to action. The committee discussed ways to connect with members to seek out additional high-quality members. Ashley Deal will email/mail out district membership lists in late January.

*Goal 4: Reduce the use of nitrogen and phosphorous by 5 percent per bushel by 2019 using 2005 as a baseline.*

Travis Deppe shared that the RCPP grant was renewed. This was the original grant that started the PCM program with $5.35 million from NRCS fed funding. NRCS came in under budget in different areas and plans to allocate that $2.8 million to PCM. The Illinois Soybean Association has funded PCM at an equal level to Corn. The program is preparing to hire multiple new positions. This time next year we will be in 1/3 of the state of Illinois. Clay Bess was promoted to Operations Manager to allow Laura to work on the scientific requests. PCM is hiring new field staff to cover new territory. We are working on a platform called PCM Lte for farmers, retailers, and other connections. Growers/supply chain can lease the platform to utilize the data we’ve collected.

We received a $250 advertisement invoice from Illinois Association of Drainage Districts that needs to be paid.

**It was recommended by the committee**

**THAT we commit up to $250 for advertisement expense related to the Illinois Association of Drainage districts. (Goal 4.1.E)**

The STAR program has a progressive web app in development and hopes to be ready by July 1 for farmer use. There has been interest from other states to adopt the app.

There were 113 participants in the Cover Crop Coupon program. The program covered $28,000 acres. Cereal rye, oats, and radish were the top crops planted. 4/113 participants had never planted a cover crop before their participation in the program.

Eric Snodgrass did a webinar for us in early January and discussed broad scale climate change, why people are getting more concerned with climate change, and finally what we, as agriculture can do to be part of improving the solution.

*Goal 5: Improve the loss ratio of crop insurance for corn farmers in Illinois to at least a loss ratio of .8.*

We are starting to build a 2023 Farm Bill Task Force. We plan to do listening sessions across the state as in past years. We will build out 5-10 policy positions from the data collected to take to The Hill with us. We have talked with John Lumpe at Illinois Soybeans about consolidating efforts. Don Guinnip suggested inviting Martin Barbre to a future board meeting to hear his opinions about crop insurance/farm bill.

 **It was moved by Bill Leigh and seconded by Kate Danner**

**THAT the report of the Grassroots Committee with a total budget impact of $22,750 be approved and placed on file.**

 **The motion carried.**

 **It was moved by Marty Marr and seconded by Terry Smith**

**THAT we go into executive session to discuss Rodney Weinzierl’s annual performance review.**

 **The motion carried.**

 **It was moved by Marty Marr and seconded by Kate Danner**

 **THAT we exit executive session.**

 **The motion carried.**

 **It was moved by Terry Smith and seconded by Bill Leigh**

 **THAT the meeting be adjourned.**

 **The motion carried.**

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 Kate Danner, Secretary