**ILLINOIS CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of a Meeting**

**Held November 22, 2020**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Corn Growers Association was held virtually on November 22, 2020.

Directors present were:

Bill Leigh Randy DeSutter

Sarah Hastings Ted Mottaz

Mike Homerding Dave Rylander

Marty Marr Garrett Hawkins

Kate Danner Keith Sanders

Matt Rush Joe Murphy

Mark Bunselmeyer Don Guinnip

Terry Smith Steve Fourez

Also present were:

Rodney Weinzierl Lindsay Mitchell

Kayla Veeder Dave Loos

Ashley Deal Collin Watters

Laura Gentry Travis Deppe

Jim Tarmann Dan Obert

Suzie Rogers Ellen Rahn

Jason Bunting

The Board meeting was called to order by President, Bill Leigh at 2:00pm.

SECRETARYS REPORT

Keith Sanders presented the minutes of the August Executive Committee meeting.

**It was moved by Keith Sanders and seconded by Ted Mottaz**

**THAT the minutes of the August 19, 2020 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Illinois Corn Growers Association be approved and placed on file.**

**The motion carried.**

Keith Sanders presented the minutes of the August full board meeting.

**It was moved by Keith Sanders and seconded by Randy DeSutter**

**THAT the minutes of the August 19-20, 2020 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Corn Growers Association be approved and placed on file.**

**The motion carried.**

Keith Sanders presented the minutes of the October virtual vote of the Industrial Committee.

**It was moved by Ted Mottaz and seconded by Marty Marr**

**THAT the minutes of the October 29, 2020 virtual vote of the Illinois Corn Growers Association be approved and placed on file.**

**The motion carried.**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Matt Rush reported that the committee completed a review of expenses and vouchers.

TREASURERS REPORT

Matt Rush reviewed an excerpt from the draft FY20 audit. The final FY20 audit will be sent out when it is complete.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Bill Leigh reported for the committee.

***Results of District Elections***

Ballots for the 2020 ICGA election were sent out in late October with the annual meeting notice. The following candidates are running for election: District 1-Ellen Rahn; District 5-Jason Bunting; District 8-Mike Shane; District 11-Keith Sanders; District 14-Garrett Hawkins. These candidates will be confirmed at the ICGA annual meeting.

***Election of At-Large Directors***

Kate Danner and Dave Rylander declared their intent to run for at-large positions prior to the September 1, 2020 deadline. This election will be held at the ICGA annual meeting on Tuesday.

***Corn Congress***

Randy DeSutter informed the committee that ICGA leadership will appoint NCGA delegates following the ICGA annual meeting. We have not seen any information on the winter Corn Congress meeting at this point.

We plan to have our policy breakout meetings in December and will attempt to coordinate the full policy meeting with the January joint board meetings with the Illinois Corn Marketing Board.

We are considering a joint meeting with Illinois Soybeans during the dates that were previously scheduled for Commodity Classic.

***NCGA Corn Board Applications***

NCGA Corn Board applications will be due in January. Applications should be submitted to NCGA.

***Reorganization Meeting***

Kayla will send out the Nominating Committee slate of officers for next year for an email vote. The committee discussed the schedule for the upcoming board meeting and for the virtual ICGA annual meeting next week.

***Executive Director Performance Review***

The 2020 Executive Director performance review will be deployed on November 30. Newport Group will analyze the results and present to the committee in January.

***Proposed Committee Name Changes***

The committee discussed the strategic planning process and began discussions about updating the names of the Industrial and Exports committees.

***Logo***

The committee previewed updated logo options. Lindsay Mitchell will officially present these and review them during the full board meeting.

***Political Appointments***

The new Administration will be working on agency appointments soon. We should begin thinking through who would represent our issues well.

**It was moved by Randy DeSutter and seconded by Marty Marr**

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

**The motion carried.**

EXPORTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Mike Homerding 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. Lock closures began on the Illinois River in July and concluded in October. All locks reopened as scheduled and the Peoria lock opened a week early. WRDA may have progress during the lame duck session due to its bi-partisan nature.

Jim Tarmann shared a document about the Waterways Council’s capital development strategy. The handout outlined plans for waterway infrastructure.

The committee discussed current contracts with Gov Plus and Liz Brown-Reeves Consulting Inc.These are our lobbyists in Springfield and approval for their funding will be spread out amongst several goals within our budget.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT ICGA Commit 11,000 to Gov Plus and Liz Brown Reeves to continue their lobbying work in Springfield. (Goal 1. C. 2.)**

**The motion carried.**

It’s in the queue for 2023 to start implementing things to start keeping the Asian carp out of the great lakes. The fish and wildlife service shocked the water and found no Asian carp above the current electrical barriers.

Bill Leigh gave an update on the NCGA Risk Management and Transportation Action Team. The committee discussed the Built to Last Video which featured Rodney Weinzierl and the importance of the lock and dam system.

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

Mexico and South Korean business leaders toured Lou Lamareaux’s farm virtually. Shortly after this meeting South Korea announced a significant purchase of U.S. Corn citing our quality of corn which influenced their decision.

There are two upcoming US Grains Council meetings. The fist is in February in Georgia, but is likely to be virtual. The second is in the summer and will be held in Calgary. We intend to use designated funds for travel to these meetings.

*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 reviewed work ILDG has done throughout the year including expanding livestock facilities and dealing with local legislation to allow buildings and barns to be built. The open houses this year were mostly put on pause.

**It was moved the committee   
  
THAT ICGA Commit 60,000 to the Illinois Livestock Development Group for their base funding to continue their work to develop livestock in Illinois. This funding goes towards hiring consultants and other business needs of the organization within their budget. (Goal 3. C.)**

**The motion carried.**

**It was moved by the committee  
  
THAT ICGA Commit 11,000 to Gov Plus and Liz Brown Reeves to continue their lobbying work in Springfield. (Goal 3. D.)**

**The motion carried.**

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

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT ICGA Commit 11,000 to Gov Plus Liz Brown Reeves. (Goal 4. 1.C. 3.)**

**The motion carried.**

Travis Deppe discussed the neonicitinoid products and a few bills that were introduced in limiting their usage, emphasizing that they were only introduced but still need to keep an eye on them. Randy DeSutter mentioned Soybean and Cotton are suing EPA for the use of Dicamba.

*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.*

Travis Deppe talked about updates from Megan Dwyer and the FFA work and the nitrate testing project. We will again be sending out the nitrate testing strips and donating to local FFA chapters next year. Dan created a small insert so the strips won’t be lost in the mail for next year.

Travis mentioned the Fall covers for Spring savings where farmers can get a discount and a credit for using cover crops. Sign up begins on December 15. Last year all 50,000 acres allowed in this program were spoken for and it’s very competitive.   
  
PCM was able to submit their grant approval and received money for RCCP that helps with PCM and they received the renewal one year in advance. No other group has been approved one year in advance so this is quite an achievement.

Soybeans will be a partner in PCM where they’ll match funding for PCM if they approve funding at their next upcoming meeting. This will allow for new PCM regions.

Laura Gentry talked about the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy and about having new engineers as partners and it makes her a bit concerned about the practices they want to pursue.

We received the Field to Market Collaborator of the Year award for their work with PCM. This award is a big deal because it showcases the great work our organization is doing as well as open pathways into legislative offices and talking points.

**It was moved by Mike Homderding and seconded by Keith Sanders**

**THAT we approve the Exports Committee report with a total budget impact of $93,000 and place it on file.**

**The motion carried.**

INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Marty Marr reported for the committee.

Collin Watters presented an update on the strategic planning process and the committee began discussing potential goals for the committee.

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

We are expecting significantly less demand for ethanol for the rest of this year but expect a rebound in 2021. We are waiting on USEPA to release RVO numbers for 2021.

Dave Loos informed the committee about a potential legal issue that may further complicate corn ethanol’s position after 2022 under the RFS. After 2022, advanced biofuel volumes must be the same percentage of the statutorily required total renewable fuel volume as in 2022, so under the statute nearly 60% of total renewable fuel must qualify as “advanced” after 2022. CAA 211(o)(B)(iii). This is not how the RFS has worked out in practice. Due to cellulosic biofuel waivers, only about 25% of total renewable fuel was advanced in 2020.

The LUC workshop at ILUC was on November 18

Dave Loos discussed the governor’s Clean Energy Transportation Initiative.

SB 1407 probably won’t be called in this session. Jacqueline Muhammad continues to work with the black caucus on this issue.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $16,500 to GovPlus for lobbying services in FY21.**

**The motion carried.**

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $16,500 to Liz Brown-Reeves for lobbying services for FY21.**

**The motion carried.**

*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.*

Dave Loos gave an update on our efforts to get a state sales tax incentive on E15.

Dave also gave an update on some proposed E15 infrastructure legislation. The language is as follows:

*“In order to promote consumer choice at retail gasoline stations and remove barriers to consumer access to E15, the legislature amends the Gasoline Storage Act, 430 ILCS 15, as follows:*

*Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, and to the fullest extent allowable under the law, all underground storage tanks and related components, piping, motor fuel dispensing equipment (including nozzles, hoses, fittings), and other equipment utilized in the storage, distribution, or dispensing of gasoline products (collectively, “Motor Vehicle Fuel Storage and Dispensing Equipment”) that is currently permitted for storage and dispensing of gasoline-ethanol blends containing ten (10) percent ethanol (“E10”) shall, by operation of law, be permitted to store and dispense gasoline-ethanol blends containing fifteen (15) percent ethanol (“E15”). No application, regulatory approval, or any other regulatory action by the Office of the State Fire Marshal or any other state or local authority is necessary to effectuate this permit update. For any new or replacement Motor Vehicle Fuel Storage and Dispensing Equipment, documentation demonstrating compatibility of such equipment with E10 shall be sufficient to approve a permit that allows storage and dispending of E15 as well as E10. The Office of the State Fire Marshal (and any other state or local authority with jurisdiction over such equipment) shall not have the authority to prohibit storage or dispensing of E15 or deny a permit to a motor fuel dispensing facility on the grounds that the Motor Vehicle Fuel Storage and Dispensing Equipment is not compatible for use with E15 if is approved or permitted to use with E10.”*

We continue to work on FFV credits, establishing a minimum octane standard, eliminating the regulatory barriers to higher blends of ethanol related to CO2 penalties, r-factor, etc. on Washington, DC.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT ICGA commit up to $120,000 to support work on establishing a high-octane low carbon fuel standard while eliminating regulatory barriers to higher blends of ethanol. (Goal 2C)**

**The motion carried.**

Dave Loos gave an update on our recent meetings with USEPA. They have gone very well and we’re hopeful that EPA will make progress on FFV credits, the CO2 penalty, and the r-factor before the current administration leaves.

Dave gave an update on the USDA HBIP program. Illinois had successful applications for 305 dispensers at 37 stations.

Rod Weinzierl gave an update on the status of our high-octane low carbon legislation and our strategy under the new Administration.

Dave gave an update on the biotech incentive program to incentivize companies to research and develop products made from corn starch in Illinois.

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

**THAT the report of the Industrial Committee be approved and placed on file with a total budget impact of $153,000.**

**The motion carried.**

GRASSROOTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Ted Mottaz 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 gave an update on Illinois Farm Families. The recent docuseries videos had a combined 27.8 million impressions.

Lindsay gave an update on the NCGA Corn Reputation project.

Dan Obert designed the 2020 annual report. It is set to go to print at the end of the month when we have final financial information. We’d like to run an ad in a couple newspapers to coincide with the annual report which will be delivered to all members’ mailboxes in December.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $5,000 towards print ads in AgriNews and Farm Week to coincide with the timing of the ICGA annual report.**

**The motion carried.**

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

Peoria County Corn Growers Association has remained active throughout Covid-19 and has requested funds to reimburse some of their annual expenses.

**It was recommended by the committee**

**THAT we commit $1356.72 to reimburse Peoria County Corn Growers Association for annual expenses.**

The committee discussed the FFA Leadership Program. Since we weren’t able to go to DC this year, and we did a membership drive incentivizing a $25 donation to the FFA for every 3-yr membership, we will be cutting them a check for $6000 from designated funds, which is carry-over from what we didn’t use last year.

This year we’re doing a virtual drawdown PAC fundraiser. There is a drawing planned for the end of January. Our goal is to sell 200 tickets at $200 each. Major donors include Beck’s, John Deere, Case, and others. Top Prizes include a lawn tractor and trailer, shotgun & trail camera, patio furniture, 50 hours on a Case tractor, toolboxes with tools, generator, and pressure washer.

The Phone2Action text activation system has been an excellent activation tool and the annual renewal fee is due. We’re up to nearly 2,000 advocates since we began utilizing this system. This easy-to-use platform keeps us up-to-speed with other ag organizations and truly connects us with our members at a grassroots level.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $5,500 to pay the annual Phone2Action service fee.**

**The motion carried.**

The annual contract fees for both Rich Clemons and Liz Brown Reeves are due for their lobbying work in Springfield. We kept them busier than usual ahead of the election, setting up virtual state legislator fundraisers and they just recorded an audio update election overview with us this week.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $5,040 to GOV Plus and $5,040 to Liz Brown-Reeves Consulting, for a total of $10,080, to pay annual state contract lobbyist fees.**

**The motion carried.**

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

We currently have 3,900 active members. At year-end 2020, we were up 123 members from 2019 year-end. Last March, we did the “FFA membership mailing” which went to 32,000 recipients. This yielded 265 new/re-joined members. In September we did a drive targeting people who lapsed in the last calendar year, incentivized with an RTIC water bottle for rejoining. So far 44 of 150 recipients have rejoined. A postcard to all members will be hitting mailboxes around Thanksgiving offering a gift membership. We want to get over 4,000 members again. We are planning to do another FFA donation incentive membership drive in 2021 and that will require $30,000 for postage and supplies.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $30,000 to cover the expenses of the annual 2021 membership drive.**

**The motion carried.**

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

The nutrient loss reduction and water quality team has been extremely busy working on grant reports, funding proposals, expanding PCM, and collaborating with multiple businesses and organizations throughout the state.

Several programs and organizations we belong to have annual dues and sponsorships coming up:

**It was recommended by the committee**

**THAT we commit $1000 for CBMP dues.**

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit a total of $8,500 for annual dues and/or sponsorship opportunities for the following organizations: $1,000 for Ag Drainage Management Coalition dues; $1,500 for CTIC dues; $3,000 for Ag Nutrient Policy Council dues; $2,000 for a promotional campaign surrounding research done for the Council; $1,000 for a sponsorship at the Conservation Cropping Seminar. 4.1.E/F/L/M**

**The motion carried.**

We are considering a new project taking a closer look at nutrient management plans and potential future needs given the continued pressure to ensure nutrient stewardship is being achieved. Ted Funk will be doing this work.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $3000 for contract work with Ted Funk on a nutrient management plan.**

**The motion carried.**

The Cover Crop Companion Tool is the interactive tool intended to be used by farmers, cover crop seed dealers, ag retailers, etc to help prevent cover crop injury due to herbicide carryover and will allow them to see best planting dates and cover crop species based off of location, cash crop, weather data and herbicide program. With the help of Jay Vroom, DCLRS, we have made substantial progress with Growmark to put pressure on chemical manufactures to step up and want to take ownership of this app, but it’s still looking for a home.

**It was recommended by the committee**

**THAT we commit $2,000 to continue development and implementation of the cover crop companion tool.**

We should congratulate the PCM team for receiving Field to Market’s Collaboration of the Year Award! As part of the recognition, Field to Market created a video and press release and IL Corn is promoting it on social media. This honor is largely part of Randy Stauffer’s tireless efforts in Field to Market and PCM.

The cover crop postcard coupon that went out to all members in June offering up to $200 off cover crop seed from specific cover crop seed dealer partners. This promotion ends 12/31/20. To date 106 coupons have been redeemed, impacting over 26,000 acres.

Eric Snodgrass is a reputable and attention-grabbing speaker. His weather webinars are well received by farmer audiences. We’re hoping to continue educating our farmer members as well as the public about the impact of a changing climate on agriculture.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $2,500 to host educational webinars by Eric Snodgrass.**

**The motion carried.**

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

Due to the Fair Tax Amendment failing to pass, there has been some talk about making up for the state budget deficit by implementing sales tax on inputs or increasing real estate taxes. ILFB was one of the most outspoken objectors to the tax and that might make it difficult for other ag groups (like us) to appear unbiased. In order to combat the negative repercussions of the Fair Tax Amendment failing, we’d like to do some very strategic economic analysis and/or campaigns to suggest other ways which would be more friendly to agriculture.

**It was moved by the committee**

**THAT we commit $10,000 to work with U of I Ag Econ Dept to assess some different tax strategies that the General Assembly might consider.**

**The motion carried.**

**It was moved by Ted Mottaz and seconded by Marty Marr**

**THAT the report of the Grassroots Committee with a total budget impact of $78,936.72 be approved and placed on file.**

**The motion carried.**

**It was moved by Ted Mottaz and seconded by Matt Rush**

**THAT the meeting be adjourned.**

**The motion carried.**

The board voted on the 2021 slate of officers following the 2020 ICGA Annual Meeting.

**It was moved by the Nominating Committee**

**THAT we appoint the following slate of directors for 2020-2021:**

**President: Randy DeSutter**

**Vice President: Marty Marr**

**Secretary: Kate Danner**

**Treasurer: Sarah Hastings**

**Assistant Treasurer: Mark Bunselmeyer**

**Industrial Chair: Terry Smith**

**Vice Industrial Chair: Keith Sanders**

**Exports Chair: Dave Rylander**

**Vice Exports Chair: Matt Rush**

**Grassroots Chair: Bill Leigh**

**Vice Grassroots Chair: Garrett Hawkins**

Mike Homerding: Yes

Ellen Rahn: Yes

Randy DeSutter: Yes

Bill Leigh: Yes

Jason Bunting: Yes

Sarah Hastings: Yes

Mark Bunselmeyer: Yes

Mike Shane: Absent for Vote

Terry Smith: Yes

Marty Marr: Yes

Keith Sanders: Yes

Don Guinnip: Absent for Vote

Matt Rush: Yes

Garrett Hawkins: Yes

Joe Murphy: Yes

Dave Rylander: Yes

Kate Danner: Yes

**The motion carried.**

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Keith Sanders, Secretary