

Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission
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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Columbia Gorge Community College, Bldg 1, Rm 1.334
400 E. Scenic Dr., The Dalles, OR 97058
Tuesday, August 2, 2016, 10:30 A.M.

Call to Order/Introductions

Dan Crouse, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:56 a.m. with the following Commissioners consisting of a quorum, including Dan, present: Stacey Cooper, Andrea Galloway, Steve Sandau, Jim Markman, Ryan Bond and Tim Ramsey.

Megan Thompson and Sue Root, Oregon Cherry Growers, Bryce Molesworth and John Carter, Research Committee members and Dana Branson, OSCC Administrator were also present.

The minutes of the regular meeting and budget hearing held on May 31, 2016 were emailed in advance and available at the meeting. *Jim Markman moved and Ryan Bond seconded to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

The financial statements for May, June and July were emailed in advance and available at the meeting. Year-end financial reports were submitted as required to the state and the July report was discussed. *Ryan Bond moved and Stacey Cooper seconded to accept the financial reports for all three months as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.*

Administrator's Activity Report

The Cherry Research Review dates this year are November 9 and 10 in Wenatchee this year. Dana will be putting a list of people planning to attend together for reservations soon. The Request for (research) Proposals (RFP) went out and pre-proposals are due August 25. Commissioners will be contacted to rate them. By September 22 researchers will be notified if they're invited to presented their full proposal at the Research Review.

The annual Agri-Business Council (ABC) membership is up for renewal. The base rate is \$150. *Tim Ramsey moved and Andrea Galloway seconded to approve the membership fee. The motion carried unanimously.*

Dana learned that to be covered by the volunteer insurance program offered by the state the Commission has to formally approve the payment of a billing that would result from a claim. There is no fee until a claim is made. After discussion Dana was asked to find out what the exposure is and more about how the program works.

The OSCC received a billing for legal review of a Financial Assistance Agreement by the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) that was more than expected. This agreement was written last year for the University of California and the only things that changed were the dates and the amount of the grant. The attorney reviewing the agreement was on temporary assignment to cover maternity leave for the attorney that drafted it. Kris Anderson talked to DOJ and a dispute of the charges has been registered. The result of the dispute has not been received yet.

Seneca Foods sent in assessments on 68.55 tons of brine fruit from the 2015 season in mid-June. They explained that originally the fruit was not going to be used, but after looking at it again they decided it was useable. At that point they sent in the assessments. Technically the assessments are past due. *Jim Markman moved and Andrea seconded to waive interest and penalty. The motion carried with Tim Ramsey abstaining.*

A crop and cash estimate for 2016 was handed out. It included input from all the largest handlers. Total tonnage assessments were paid on last year was 32,880. The estimate for 2016 is 59,297 tons. Since the meeting some revisions have been received and that estimate was revised down to 54,214 tons, still around a 40% increase over last year.

There was no response to the offer in the spring newsletter of entering a drawing for tickets to the Denim & Diamonds fund raising event Friday, November 18. Commissioners Ryan Bond and Les Stephens had previously agreed to two tickets each. One pair of tickets was given by drawing at a Friday morning Orchard Manager's meeting. At today's meeting Chairman Dan Crouse and his wife said they would attend since there was no one else interested. Dana will work on finding two more people to attend.

The accounting firm, Merina & Company, was in the OSCC office July 13. Dana has provided all requested documents and reports before and since the visit. The final audit results were not available yet at the time of this meeting. No issues have been identified to Dana at this point.

Chairman's Report

Commissioners and grower representatives discussed their view of the 2016 cherry season they experienced during the Roundtable discussion.

The crop was larger than average in most areas and held up through more than one rain event. The temperatures stayed cool during and after the rain and though packout percentages were lower than normal the cherries had good flavor and quality. The season started out with very high temperatures and it looked like everything would come on at once, but with the cool down the fruit slowed down. The season felt very long. Eastern Oregon growers had a variety of bad weather, including some hail. But the fruit size was so good they were able to go ahead and pick. Andrea reported that after this season several growers are removing their cherries – over 200 acres are already gone. There are no brine cherries left in the area. The biggest factor affecting the decision to remove trees was reported as Global Gap requirements. There was lots of OSHA activity in The Dalles orchards this year – usually related to worker housing.

Washington had problems with pollination and wind. There was a lot of large size fruit up there also with good quality. Mildew and labor were not a problem this year. There were some problems with stem retention because the fruit clusters were so large and tight. There was also more California fruit this year. And for a change late season cherry demand rebounded, where early cherries didn't do as well.

Administrator evaluation forms were handed out. Dan will collect the completed ones or they can be sent in.

Research Committee Report

John Carter and Bryce Molesworth, Research Committee members, were appointed to visit the cherry breeding program test plots this growing season and report back. The lighter Washington crop showed in the test plots as well. He thought the blocks looked well maintained. There are some Chelan timing (early) varieties that look good. Bryce said the horticulture is so much better than in the past. Both men agreed the new person hired for that job is a good match.

OSU Research & Extension Report

Brian Tuck had a schedule conflict for today's meeting. There was discussion about the OSU management coming to discuss MCAREC staffing. They agreed to keep programs going and said there is money for next year's operation. Some counties collect a tax to fund Extension and research stations. At this time Hood River County does not. Future funding is an ongoing issue.

The priority is to replace the entomologist and horticulturalist (Peter & Todd). The pathologist and soil scientist are less likely to be filled. The time frame for making an offer to a new scientist is at best around cherry season of 2017. It's more likely an offer wouldn't be made until sometime in 2018. There's a possibility of an 'Emergency Replacement' for the entomologist position, but we'd have to make a good case. John suggested working with Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers and the Pear Bureau to develop a recommendation for an emergency replacement to OSU. Ryan Bond and Stacey Cooper will be the OSCC representatives to meet with the other groups.

The meeting recessed at 12:45 for lunch and reconvened at 1:17.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Andrea Galloway is working with a group in Cove to host a Cherry Fair August 20. The area used to be the largest cherry producer in the U.S. The event has been held for over 100 years. There are various levels of sponsorship. *Ryan Bond moved and Stacey Cooper seconded to donate \$100 to help sponsor the Cherry Fair. The motion carried unanimously.*

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be October 11, 2016 starting at 10:00 a.m. The location will be announced with the meeting notice two weeks prior to the meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.