

**LIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES 5:00 P.M., OCTOBER 14, 2015
DON'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
BATON ROUGE, LA**

The meeting began at 5:36 P. M. with Jack Hopper welcoming everyone and asking them to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Voting Members present were: Chris Friedman, Wes Gauthier, John R. Kavanaugh, Jack Hopper and Wanda Tiblier. Non-voting Board Members present were: Dr. Peter Gallagher, Dr. Stacia Davis and Severn C. Doughty, Sr. Guests present were Ansel Rankins, Bill Prudhomme, Andy Blumberg and Barry Blumberg. Four voting Members present constituted a quorum and five were present.

Jack asked Ansel Rankins to give the LDAF report. Ansel stated that there were 383 Louisiana Landscape Irrigation contractors currently and 13 more from out of state. So far this year 50 individuals took the license exam for a pass rate of 60%. After the March and June Basics Classes (20 individuals) the overall pass rate was 80%.

Concerning enforcement actions, at the March 12th Horticulture Commission Meeting, there were 3 cases, 9 violations and \$2,250.00 in fines assessed. At the June 25th meeting there were 9 cases, 22 violations and \$10,500.00 in fines assessed. At the September 24th meeting there were 4 cases, 7 violations and \$1,250.00 in fines assessed. Totals for the year so far were 16 cases, 38 violations and \$14,000.00 in fines assessed. The next Horticulture Commission Meeting will be held on December 10, 2015 and all of the meetings were open to the public. The commission meeting minutes may be found at wwwprd.doa.louisiana.gov/boardsandcommissions. There were 3 new inspector hires recently for the Alexandria District, 2 for the Monroe District, 1 in New Orleans, 2 in Opelousas and 2 in Shreveport for a total of 47 inspectors statewide.

Ansel went on to discuss the Legislative changes. HB 291 (Act 202) increased fees and civil penalties relative to the regulation of Horticulture. It raised the maximum civil penalty amounts for each violation assessed through the adjudicatory hearing process for First (\$250 to \$500); Second (\$500 to \$1,000); and Third (\$1,000 to \$1,500) appearances. HB 269 (Act 198) adds authority for the department, boards and commissions issuing licenses to deny, revoke or not renew such privileges, if the applicant owes any monies.

Finally, Ansel discussed Exam and License/permit changes. After October 20, 2015 fees to take or re-take all Horticulture licensing exams, except Landscape Architect exam, will change from \$50.00 to the new fee of \$114.00.

After December 20, 2015 license fees will increase from \$75.00 to \$100.00 and 2016 renewal applications will not be mailed out or processed until after December 20th, allowing for change in fees. In closing, Ansel, stated that all increased fees cover LADF expenses and reduces the reliance on state funds.

Jack asked Andy and Barry Blumberg to give an update on insurance coverage for LIA Members. Andy was excited to offer a new and expanded coverage program. Blumberg and Associates, Inc. had partnered with Markel Insurance Company to offer Green Industry businesses better and more competitive insurance to include Property Coverage – such as small tools, equipment, sign coverage, plus Business Income Insurance during a period of restoration for revenues it would have received had there been no loss.

Liability coverages to include General Liability which protect against unforeseen claims and lawsuits; Professional Liability for employees was included with General Liability at no additional cost – customized enhancements some of which included; contractual liability, premises liability, medical payments, fire, legal liability, herbicide/pesticide application and much more.

Excess Liability is coverage that covers losses that may exceed ones policy limits or catastrophic losses. Andy said the coverage was available right now with a 48 hour turnaround for quotes and one can call him at 1-225-767-1442 for complete details. Blumberg and Associates, Inc. is and has been endorsed by the Louisiana Irrigation Association.

Jack asked that the Board review the Minutes of the last Meeting and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. John R. Kavanaugh moved, seconded by Wanda Tiblier, that they be accepted. Motion carried.

Jack asked Severn to present the financial report. Severn stated that the 3rd Quarter revenues were \$3,836.96 and the 3rd Quarter expenditures were \$6,012.90 which left \$2,175.94 in the red. Severn said that only about a third of the Annual Meeting registrations were included in the 3rd Quarter revenues which caused much of the deficit. Total funds at the end of the Quarter were, \$21,941.55. There being a few questions, Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Chris Friedman, to accept the financial statement as presented. Motion passed.

Jack asked Severn to report on the Membership. Severn indicated that as of October 13, 2015 we had 141 members and he expected that it would rise significantly after the Annual Meeting.

Jack asked Severn to report on the newsletter. Severn stated that he had included all of the recommendations that were made at the last Board Meeting except the calendar. There just wasn't enough room in the 3rd Quarter newsletter but it will be included in the 4th Quarter. The Board complemented Ansel on his contributions to the last newsletter and everyone thought reporting on the Horticulture Commission meetings was great.

Jack asked Dr. Gallagher to report on his activities. Dr. Gallagher stated that his article was published on the front page of the newsletter regarding offering \$100.00 educational scholarships to college students and he stated that he contacted each of the department heads of Louisiana colleges to acquaint them with it. Dr. Gallagher indicated that he and Severn were to address the training topics and dates for 2016 so Severn can get those dates on the website. Wes indicated that a great new topic would be Two Wire Systems. Wes, Dr. Davis and Dr. Gallagher stated that they would work on it for the January Recertification Class and Severn stated he could do his again then too in the afternoon.

Jack asked Bill Prudhomme, our webmaster, to report on the LIA website. Bill stated that using stats from the new server, August, September and ½ of October, the daily Page Views were 42, 57 and 64 respectively; and the daily Visits were 28, 31 and 35, respectively. When he discussed the top 10 page views everyone asked why the LDAF map was first. Wes, suggested that it was because of the way it was arranged on the site. He suggested to make it more user friendly. Severn stated that he had several problems with Paypal and not receiving registrations and Paypal payments together. Bill said he would fix all the problems and asked if there were more.

The Board asked if he could put the list of members on the site but Severn stated that we needed to asked the membership first before we do that. It was asked of Severn to put wording like, “As a member would you object to having your name and contact information listed on the website; _____ Yes: _____ No” on the renewal notices and membership applications. Severn said he would.

Jack moved on to Old Business and asked Severn to discuss the results of the Board Vitality Index. Severn stated that at the July Board Meeting and at the request of Jack Hopper, the Board Members went through an exercise called the Board Vitality Index. It's a self-assessment of the Board's functionality and efficiency as to 13 areas of concern which included: board agendas, meeting minutes, mission, vision and values, governing documents, quorum, orientation of new board members, conflict of interest, nominations and succession, risk management, strategic outcomes, finances and budget, committees and board-staff relations.

Each Board Member was asked independently to grade each of the above mentioned areas of concern from 5, best score; to 1, worst score. Then each Board Member was given a score sheet and they began to fill it out. Severn collected each Members' scores and later compiled them to see how they scored each section and then compared it with his score since he filled it out as well.

Once compiled the Board Members' average score was 61.83 out of a total possible score of 65 and Severn's total score was 58, both in the 'A' range. It was a very enlightening exercise and each Board Member had to navigate through a criteria of points in each area of concern. For example in the last area of concern, Board-Staff Relations, it read, “Directors are aware of the duties of the Executive Director and act as a *supportive partner*. *Lines of communication and authority* are depicted in an organizational chart. Directors maintain a *collegial professional relationship with staff* but do not critique or manage staff that fall under the supervision of the Executive Director.”

Jack asked John R. Kavanaugh for a report from the Nominating Committee. John stated that the committee investigated each of the proposed candidates and asked them individually if they were willing to serve. All of the following candidates indicated that they would.

President, Wes Gauthier
 Vice-President, Christopher Friedman
 Past-President, Jack Hopper
 Director 2015-2016, Wayne Orton
 Director 2015-2016, Curt Bowman
 Director 2016-2017, Mary B. Mizell
 Director 2016-2017, Ardis Tooke

After some discussion about each candidate, Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Wanda Tiblier to accept the candidates as presented. Motion passed.

Jack asked Severn about the chronological order of training. Severn handed each Board Member an updated copy as of June, 2015 and stated that we kept this list so Dr. Gallagher and he could plan up coming training to where when one was recertified, he won't receive the same educational material when he recertified in another three years. The Board asked when the 2016 training was to be set. Severn indicated that he and Dr. Gallagher were to get together in November and have dates, location and training titles established to put on the website for all of 2016 as well as registration forms up on the web too.

Jack asked Dr. Gallagher if he would work on getting another Proclamation prepared for the new governor to sign next year stating, “July Is Smart Irrigation Month in Louisiana”. Dr. Gallagher stated that he would work on it.

Jack then moved on to New Business and asked Severn about the extra copies of the newsletters. Severn stated that he brought extra copies so Board Members could give them to distributors to hand out to potential new members.

Jack asked if there was any more business and Severn stated that he had one last agenda item. Severn received a call from an Irrigation Contractor working in Lake Charles, LA and he was wondering why distributors were selling to non-licensed contractors. He further wondered why they couldn't sell both wholesale to licensed contractors and retail to everyone else. Severn said he would ask the Board what they thought about it. Some lively discussion evolved and Chris with Irrigation Mart stated that they in fact sell both wholesale and retail. The Board then indicated that other distributors may not be in favor of selling both wholesale and retail but they did not know.

There being no more business, Chris Friedman moved, seconded by Wanda Tiblier, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed and the meeting concluded at 8:05 P.M.