

LIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES FEBRUARY 8, 2016
PREJEAN'S RESTAURANT
LAFAYETTE, LA
11:00 A.M.

The meeting began at 11:10 A.M. with President, Wes Gauthier welcoming everyone and asking them to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Voting Members present were: Ardis Tooke, Christopher Friedman, Curt Bowman, Wayne Orton and Wes Gauthier. Non-voting members present were Dr. Peter Gallagher, Dr. Stacia Davis and Severn C. Doughty, Sr. Guests present were Ansel Rankins and Tina Peltier. Four voting Members present constituted a quorum and five were present.

Wes asked the Board to review the minutes of the last meeting and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. Christopher Friedman moved, seconded by Wayne Orton, to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Wes then asked the Board to review the Minutes of the Annual Meeting and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Curt Bowman, to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Wes asked Severn to present the 2015 year end financial report. Severn asked the Board to review the statement and if they had any questions to please ask. Severn went on and stated that the total budgeted income for the year was \$40,115.00 and the actual income was \$40,461.64. Like wise total budgeted expenses for 2015 was \$40,115.00 but the total actual expenditures were only \$37,397.23 which left \$3,064.41 in revenues over expenditures. Wes asked about the office expense line item and wondered if we were to expect large expenditures like was experienced in 2014? Severn stated that no, he would not need to expend \$2,863.37 this year as he expected to average out the expenses over the next several years. The same will be done with the purchase of training books. There being no more questions, Wayne Orton moved, seconded by Curt Bowman, to accept the financial statement as presented. Motion passed.

Wes asked Chris to provide the Membership report. Chris stated that he felt that LIA needed to emphasize more to potential members of the benefits of membership. He felt that by doing so, it would encourage more memberships. This brought about a lively discussion on encouraging membership and the Board felt it was something that should be done. Severn then presented a report on total memberships as of February 6, 2015. There were 11 new Members at the \$100.00 rate, 1 @ the \$180.00 rate and 1 @ the \$25.00 rate for a total of 13 new Memberships. So far there were 21 renewal Memberships at the \$100.00 rate, 2 @ the \$25.00 and 7 @ the \$180.00 rate for a total of 30 renewals. Total for the year was 43.

We asked Severn to discuss the Newsletter. Severn stated that we needed more advertising. Several Board Members indicated that possibly they could advertise. Overall, the Board thought the newsletter looked good and had come a long way since 2007.

We asked Severn to provide the website stats. Severn stated that the October 2015 visits were 1218 and the page views were 2268. For November the visits were 1428 and the page views were 2341 and finally the December visits were 1396 and the page views were 2039. Over the three month period the top 'looked at' areas of the website were Road to Immigration article, Horticulture Commission-Horticulture Law, Latest Landscape Design Trends, Deadly Virus Killing Rosebushes and Tax-Law Update.

We asked Severn to introduce the LDAF Staff. Severn stated the he was very pleased to announce that Ansel Rankins was promoted to Director of Horticulture and Quarantine Programs with LDAF and that Tina Peltier was promoted to Assistant Director. Tina then presented the LDAF update. She stated that the number of exams administrated in 2016 were 32, the number of licenses issued were 11 and the pass rate was 78%. After the November 2015 Basics class the exam pass rate was 100%. She indicated that LDAF had hired a new inspector in Baton Rouge, LA and the next Horticulture Commission Meeting would be March 24, 2016 at the LDAF office in Baton Rouge, LA and would begin at 9:30 A.M.

We asked Dr. Gallagher to give an update on Education and Research Directorship. Dr. Gallagher announced that he would resign his post as Director of Education and Research effective May 2016. He will be leaving to go back home to Wisconsin to be closer to his family. He indicated that he had really enjoyed working with LIA for many years and will miss all of us. He did indicate that he would teach the March Basics Class but after that he would devote his time to packing and traveling to Wisconsin.

We moved on to New Business and asked Severn to discuss the Annual Meeting Profit & Loss statement and evaluation. Severn indicated that LIA received 20 new membership and renewals and we received \$10,763.09 in revenues. Total expenditures were \$2,537.28 which amounted to \$8,225.28 in revenues over expenses.

Only a third of the participants filled out an evaluation form but from what was received, much criticism was directed toward the chaos during the Annual Meeting Luncheon and the room being too cramped during the training. The disruption was totally unexpected by the Board but we took total responsibility for the mishap and apologize to the Membership. As a result we will have our Annual Meeting at a different location in 2016.

Wes asked Severn to report on the Profit & Loss statement and evaluations for the November 2015 Basics Class. Severn stated that LIA received three dues payments and received \$5,246.40 in revenues. Total expenditures were \$2,755.57 leaving \$2,490.83 in revenues over expenses.

Most everyone who filled out the evaluation (15 out of 25) stated that the food was good, the location was good in Denham Springs, LA and in spite of some criticism of the course and the instructor, there was a 100% exam pass rate!

Wes asked Severn to report on the Profit & Loss statement and evaluations for the January 2016 Recertification training in Ruston, LA. Severn indicated that LIA received 14 new and renewing memberships and received \$7,655.57 in revenues. Total expenditures were \$594.92; thanks very much to Irrigation Mart for sponsoring the lunches. Consequently, revenues over expenses amounted to \$7,060.65.

A little less than a third of the participants filled out the evaluation forms (11 out of 25) but of those who did, most were happy with the meals and most were happy with the location. There was some criticism about LDAF raising the license fees but not enforcing non-licensed irrigators from practicing. One asked why LIA took over CEU's????? while LDAF (?) raised costs (of licenses ?) with little benefit. Nebulous, uninformed comment!

Wes asked Dr. Gallagher if he was going to rewrite the, 'July 2016 is Smart Irrigation Month in Louisiana', draft Proclamation for Gov. John Bell Edwards to sign. Dr. Gallagher stated that he would and asked if Ansel could 'walk it through' to the governors' office. Ansel said he would try.

Wes stated that Severn had shirts, T-shirts and hats for sale. As a result three logoed shirts were sold at \$49.00 each and one T-shirt sold at \$8.00.

Wes asked Severn to discuss the calendar of LIA activities for 2016. Severn handed out the calendar and stated that LIA had all scheduled activities listed for 2016 including the location of the Annual Meeting to be held at Duke's Seafood Restaurant in Denham Springs, LA on October 20, 2016.

Wes moved on to Old Business and asked Severn about the nominees for the Horticulture Commission. Severn stated that LDAF was seeking nominees to serve on the Horticulture Commission representing Landscape Irrigation Contractors as Jack Hopper's term had expired. They stated that Jack was eligible to be renominated if the Board so desired but that the Board had to submit three names in order of preference.

Wes asked the Board for nominees. Severn stated that when he received LDAF's inquiry about the nominees, he contacted Jack Hopper to see if he was interested in serving another term. Jack, emphatically stated that yes, he was interested. Wes indicated that he also was interested and another Board Member suggested John R. Kavanaugh as a possible candidate. Chris Friedman called John to see if he would be interested and he stated he would. Wes indicated that we needed a motion to vote on the three nominees and in what order. Wayne Orton moved, seconded by Chris Friedman, to accept Jack Hopper, first choice, Wes Gauthier, second choice and John R. Kavanaugh, third choice to serve on the Horticulture Commission representing Landscape Irrigation Contractors. Currently, Jack Hopper was experiencing some medical issues and in the event he was unable to attend the Horticulture Commission meetings for the immediate future, LIA requested that Wes Gauthier serve in Jack Hopper's stead until he was able to serve. Motion passed.

Wes asked the Board if we should take some monies from checking and place it into savings. A lively discussion ensued and afterwards Wayne Orton moved, seconded by Curt Bowman, to initially transfer \$1,200 from checking into savings and then investigate money market, CD's and compare the interest rate with savings to later see if we wanted to diversify our investments. Motion passed.

Wes then asked the Board if they thought a three year membership with one recertification class included would bring in more memberships. Again, another lively discussion ensued from asking for a three year membership costing \$350.00 to \$370.00. No decision was reached and it was felt that this topic needed to be brought up as an agenda item at the next Board Meeting. All agreed.

Wes asked Severn to discuss the topic, could or should LIA establish a certification program separate from the one required by LDAF. Severn asked Wes to help him tally the results of the questionnaire given out at the January 2015 recert class, the March 2015 Basics class, the 2015 Annual Meeting recert class and the January 2016 recert class. The total for the question, "Would you be interested in participating in a certification program sponsored by LIA and separate from the LDAF recertification requirement?", was 21 yes's and 14 no's. In the 2015 recert class it may not have been clear to the participants that this certification was separate and apart from the LDAF certification requirement. Consequently, the tally could possibly have been about 50% yes's and 50% no's. With so many descending votes, the Board decided not to pursue the certification program at this time.

In early November 2015 House Bill 3918 and Senate Bill 2225 was proposed by Rep. Boustany and Senator Cassidy and others. While the bills were slightly different, both bills addressed the key issues that employers continue to face with H-2B. Both bills would exempt returning workers from the 66,000 annual cap, streamline the H-2B process, provide for a fair wage formula, allow for the use of private wage surveys and address the problems stemming from the new H-2B regulations. The House bill goes further in that it would essentially remove the DOL from the H-2B process. The Senate bill includes provisions not in the House bill that would require greatly increased coordination between the Dept. of State and Homeland Security in terms of the cap count, as well as improving public transparency about the cap numbers. Severn sent letters of support to the congressman mentioned above to pass both bills.

In mid-December President Obama signed into law the Omnibus Spending Bill which included the previously mentioned House bill 3918 and the Senate bill 2225 into law. These provisions will expire September 30, 2016.

Wes asked Severn to explain that LIA submitted their 2015 income tax filing. Severn stated that he sent the financials for 2015 to Lee Gray, CPA for them to file our 2015 income tax electronically and to send the 1099's to Dr. Gallagher, Julia Ann Dickerson and to Severn. IRS had been sent a hard copy of the tax filing as well.

Wes asked Severn about the Secretary of State annual report. Severn stated that he sent the report along with the \$10.00 filing fee to the Secretary and we have complied with their request and were current for 2016.

Wes asked Severn about the LDAF Continuing Education Provider Agreement. Severn asked Tina Peltier to read the agreement so the Board would know what LIA's responsibilities were. She did so and afterwards a discussion ensued. The Board as a whole expressed concern over the fact that not all providers have complied with the agreement over the past several years. Ansel stated that since LDAF had been able to hire more inspectors, he will make certain that LDAF approved recertification training would be monitored by LDAF inspectors in the future.

Wes said that it was time to evaluate Severn's performance and asked Severn to leave the room. Each Board Member was provided an evaluation form and a list of his duties and responsibilities. When Severn returned, Wes indicated that the Board found Severn's performance exemplary and told him that he was to expect a 5% raise. Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Curt Bowman, to provide Severn a 5% raise each year as long as the budget would permit. Motion passed. Wes signed Severn's contracts and handed them back for him to file.

There being no more Business, Ardis moved, seconded by Curt to adjourn at 2:35 P.M.