

LIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES APRIL 19, 2016

DON'S SEAFOOD, AIRLINE HWY.

BATON ROUGE, LA

The Meeting began at 10:07 A.M. with President, Wes Gauthier welcoming everyone and asking them to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Voting Board Members present were: Wes Gauthier, Jack Hopper, Wayne Orton, Ardis Tooke, Mary Mizell and Christopher Friedman. Non-voting Members present were Bill Prudhomme and Severn C. Doughty, Sr. Guest present was Barry Blumberg. Four voting Members present constituted a quorum and six were present.

Wes asked the Board to review the minutes of the last Meeting and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. Jack Hopper moved, seconded by Wayne Orton to accept the minutes. Motion passed.

Wes asked Severn to present the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2016 Financial Report. Severn stated that he was very pleased with the income as it was \$23,008.25. The expenditures were \$11,221.07 leaving \$11,787.18 in revenues over expenses. There being no questions, Jack Hopper moved, seconded by Wayne Orton to accept the financial report as presented. Motion passed.

Wes asked Severn to report on the Membership. Severn indicated that if we looked at the years, 2015, 2016, 2017 we had 172 Memberships. However, if we only looked at the years 2016, 2017 or the current new Members or renewing Memberships for 2016, we had 118.

2

Wes, asked Severn to give the Newsletter Report. Severn said that he needed more advertising for the newsletter and asked everyone to contact those who may be interested.

We asked Bill Prudhomme to give the website stats. Bill stated that for January 2016 we had 3,244 page views and 1,284 visitors. In February we had 2,651 page views and 1,296 visitors. We dropped a bit in March as we only had 1,891 page views and 1,093 visitors. Top downloads for January were Road to Immigration, Deadly Virus Killing Rosebushes and LDAF district map. For February the top downloads were Deadly Virus Killing Rosebushes, Road to Immigration and LDAF Horticulture Law. And lastly, the March downloads were Road to Immigration, LDAF Horticulture Law and Deadly Virus Killing Rosebushes. Some discussion ensued after the report and the Board asked Severn to send Bill the Excel Membership list so he could send email blasts out on timely topics like upcoming classes offered.

We asked Barry Blumberg to give a Blumberg Insurance report. Barry stated that the new Merkel Insurance Program was going well and they had insured several companies a week since January. He stated that he would provide a short press release to Severn so that LIA could do an email blast to the Membership explaining it and so we could insert a press release in the renewing and new-member packets.

We asked Severn to report on the Education & Research Director activities. Severn stated that he had received an email from Dr. Gallagher which stated;

3

“Severn, I just received the ‘Louisiana Irrigator’ (Newsletter) and was humbled and a bit overwhelmed by the front page article. Thank you for the tribute! I will truly miss the LIA and all of the fine individuals with whom I’ve come to be associated. Best of luck with the continuing efforts of this fine organization! I’m sure that your guidance will assure a positive and secure future for the LIA.

With that said, I do unfortunately need to let you know that I will be unable to attend the April 19<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. Our final move is coming up very soon and we still have a great deal to do in way of preparations. Closing our Ruston home took place this week, so we are now officially renting from the new owners. Please

extend my sincere gratitude and best wishes to those in attendance at the Meeting. Sincerely, Peter Gallagher”

Wes moved on to Old Business and asked Severn to discuss the March Basics Class, Profit & Loss Statement and the Evaluation. Severn indicated that the revenues were \$8,345.64 and the expenditures were \$3,605.24 leaving \$4,740.40 in revenues over expenses. Severn further stated that this Basics Class was the largest ever. Jack Hopper moved, seconded by Chris Friedman to accept the report. Motion carried.

The evaluations revealed the following; 11 of those who responded said they were not members whereas 4 said they were. Sixteen of 39 participants, mostly those there for recertification, filled out the evaluation. As evidenced in past evaluations and in this one too, only 2 indicated that they would like to see LIA provide scholarships.

4

Eight of the 16 said they visit the website and some indicated that they go there to see what classes were offered and 2 stated that they went to News. Six indicated that they found it harder to operate a business, whereas 2 said they found it easier. Overall, 8 indicated that they really liked the training and 11 stated that they really liked the instructor. There was one that appeared disgruntled. According to this participant, the course was too thorough, rushed, did not like the lunch – “Food was terrible” and the location was bad – “Have one in New Orleans.”

In addition one stated that LIA needed to change up the content of the Basics Classes. It needs to be pointed out, emphatically, that the Basics Class will not be changed! The Basics Class was developed and IS intended to prepare one who is not licensed to take the Landscape Irrigation Contractors License Exam. It is not intended to be taken by those who already have their license! LDAF and LIA ONLY ALLOW people to take the first day of the Basics Classes so they can have an opportunity to recertify. LIA provides two recertification training opportunities a year for those who already have their license - one in January and one in October. LIA strongly recommends that registrants READ the entire registration form for details.

Wes asked Severn to discuss, 'July is Smart Irrigation Month in Louisiana'. Severn stated that Ansel contacted him on March 16, 2016 stating that Gov. John Bell Edwards signed the proclamation that morning. A big thanks to Ansel for following up on acquiring the proclamation for the third year in a row. Plans will now be made for LDAF to formally provide LIA with the Proclamation.

5

Wes asked Severn to discuss Julia Ann Dickerson's resignation as Administrative Assistant. He stated that he received a letter from her stating that effective March 13, 2016 she will officially resign due to an over burden on taxes – she's retired and receiving social security and with the amount LIA paid her, she has to pay more taxes. Severn stated that he contacted Wes and said he will pick up Julia's duties at the same rate LIA paid her, \$16.00/hr. and that he would invoice LIA the first week of the month. Wayne Orton moved, seconded by Ardis Tooke to approve the arrangement that Severn perform the Administrative Assistant's duties at \$16.00/hr. until Severn can identify another person to assume the duties. Motion carried.

Wes asked Severn if he transferred money from checking into savings. Severn stated that on March 14, 2016, he transferred \$1,200.00 from checking into savings according to the Board approved motion of transferring \$1,200.00 at the last meeting. The Board also asked Severn to check into other means of savings such as C.D.'s. Severn stated that a 6 month C.D. would yield 0.01% interest and at special promotional times 0.1%. Money market options were unavailable to us.

Wes asked Severn about Mike Goree being appointed Director of Education. Severn stated that he had spoken with Mike and asked him if he would accept the position. He said he would. Severn then asked Mike if he would accept being the person, in addition to Severn, to have signature authority over the checking and savings accounts for LIA. He agreed to that too. Consequently, Chris Friedman moved, seconded by Ardis Tooke to approve Mike Goree being appointed as Director of Education and in addition to Severn, having signature authority over the Capital One Checking and Savings accounts. Motion passed.

Severn further stated that Mike Goree recommended that the LIA Board should consider meeting to develop a long range strategic plan. The Board discussed the concept briefly and wanted to study it. They would have to set time aside and they asked Severn if he could prepare an agenda. He said he could and he would.

Wes brought up the three year membership concept, discussed at the last meeting. There was considerable discussion on the topic and finally, Wayne Orton moved, seconded by Wes Gauthier to include a 3-year membership category consisting of a value of three, \$100.00 member dues for each of three years plus one, \$120.00 recertification class included for a total value of \$420.00 all for the discounted price of \$375.00. So in summary for \$375.00 plus tax, one would receive LIA Membership for three years plus one, \$120.00 recertification training. Motion carried.

Mary Mizell brought up a good point by stating that perhaps LIA should consider exhibiting at various local trade shows to increase memberships; ex. The SELNA Trade Show in conjunction with the LSU Hammond Research Station Field Day and the Ag Expo in Monroe, LA each year. Should the Board approve it, then funding for a display would have to be approved. This could be a possible agenda item for the July Board meeting.

Wes stated that he had spoken to Severn about honoring Mike Goree with a Mike Goree Distinguished Service Award and asked the Board if they would consider approving it. Severn said that Mike was like the 'Founding Father' of LIA and since LIA has no means to award those who exhibit exemplary service to LIA, he felt that it would be most befitting to name the award in Mike's honor.

Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Jack Hopper to name the highest award given by LIA, 'The Mike Goree Distinguished Service Award'. Motion carried. Severn stated that he would provide a criterion for one to be selected to receive this award and he would design the plaque.

We asked Severn about the LIA credit card compromise. Severn stated that on August 19, 2015 a Robert Estrada used the LIA address and credit card number to purchase \$287.85 worth of books and have them shipped to a Shella Estrada with a Tampa, FL address. When Severn noticed on the next VISA bill the fraudulent charge, he called the credit card company to report it. Apparently, the person who took his call missed the point entirely and that took several months for them to contact him to tell him that they could not resolve the charge and LIA would have to pay. Being unacceptable Severn called them again and spoke with someone else who instantly changed the LIA credit card and resolved the charge. LIA did not have to pay the charge.

We asked if there were any more business and Wayne Orton stated that with the new governor, he thought non-profits would have to pay sales tax on what they sell, ex. dues, books, etc. In fact he was correct. Severn checked into the law and found that LIA will have to pay 5% sales tax on dues, books, shirts, hats, etc. starting April 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>. After that from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2018, LIA will have to pay 3%. On April 22, 2016 Severn registered LIA with the Louisiana Department of Revenue through the Louisiana Taxpayer Access Portal (LaTap) and LIA received the confirmation number of 0171244160.

8

Consequently, Severn will have to change: 1) printed and website membership application forms, 2) Ask Bill Prudhomme to change the Paypal amounts and the advertised amounts on the website for books (IA Publications), T-shirts, shirts and hats (LIA Store) and the PayPal buttons, 3) change the registration fees on the certification registration forms for both Basics Classes and Recertification Classes and on the PayPal buttons for both, 4) change advertising rates on hard copy and on the website for both Advertise web and Advertise print.

There being no more business, Wayne Orton moved, seconded by Chris Friedman to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried and the meeting concluded at 12:20 P.M.

