

**Minutes, LIA Board of Directors Meeting
February 9, 2017, 10:00 A.M.
Dukes Seafood, 33920 Hwy. 16
Denham Springs, LA**

The meeting began at 10:20 A.M. With President, Chris Friedman welcoming everyone and asking them to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Voting Board Members present were Chris Friedman, Dan Johnson, Drew Andrews, Robert Miller, Wes Gauthier and Ardis Tooke. Non-voting Members present were Bill Prudhomme, Mike Goree, Dr. Stacia Davis and Severn C. Doughty, Sr. Guests present were Tina Peltier, Ansel Rankins and Philip Seacrist. Four voting Members present constituted a quorum and six were present.

Chris asked the Board to review the minutes of the last meeting and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Dan Johnson, to accept the minutes. Motion carried.

Chris asked the Board to review the Addendum to the October 19th Board Meeting minutes and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Wes Gauthier, to accept the addendum minutes. Motion carried.

Chris indicated that an additional agenda item was to be added to the agenda which was the Annual Meeting minutes. He asked the Board to review the minutes and if acceptable, move that they be accepted. Ansel Rankins stated that there was an error in the minutes and instead of Commissioner Strain stating that LDAF was faced with a \$300,000 deficit it should read Louisiana was faced with a \$300,000 deficit. Severn made the correction and Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Dan Johnson, to accept the corrected minutes. Motion carried.

Chris asked Severn to give the 2016 year end financial report. Severn went through the report in some detail so as to acquaint the new Board Members with the budget and actuals. Bottom line the 2016 income budget was \$40,265.00 and the actual income was \$44,599.11 which was \$4,334.11 in excess of the budget. Total expenses were \$37,618.53 which left \$6,980.58 in revenues over expenses ($\$44,599.11 - \$37,618.53 = \$6,980.58$). Few questions were asked so Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Ardis Tooke, to accept the financial report as presented. Motion passed.

After the Board Meeting a 2017 budget meeting was held with the Board in attendance. Total revenues amounted to \$41,540.00 and total expenditures amounted to \$41,540.00. Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Wes Gauthier, to accept the 2017 budget as proposed. Motion carried.

Chris asked Severn about the Membership Report. Severn stated that as of January 15, 2017 we had 157 Members.

Chris asked Severn about the Newsletter. Severn stated that we still needed more advertising. Bill Prudhomme asked again why we don't send newsletters out electronically to Members. Severn said he did by sending Bill an electronic copy after the newsletter was prepared and it was posted to the Member's only section of the web. Others questioned was it necessary to print a copy to each Member. Also another means to reduce spending was to send out renewal notices electronically. Chris stated that he thought this discussion might best be handled by forming a committee to explore electronic renewals and electronically circulated newsletters. He then asked for volunteers. Wes, stated that he would chair the committee and Bill, Dan and Chris volunteered to serve. The report will be presented at the next Board Meeting.

Chris asked Bill Prudhomme to present the website stats. Bill stated that the Monthly visits for October were 1203, for November, 1349 and for December, 1129. The Page Views for October were 2304, for November, 2669 and for December, 2937. Interestingly, there were fewer visits in December but they took more time to look at more pages. The top page views for October were the home page, certification and events. The top page views for November were the home page, pdf downloads and certification. The same was true for December as was seen in November.

Chris asked for the LDAF update. Tina stated that the number of licenses issued in 2016 were 460, the number of exams administered were 60 and the pass rate was 65%. Thirty nine applicants passed the exam and of those 37 new licenses were issued. A new insurance regulation went into effect in October which stated that failure to maintain the required insurance may constitute a violation.

At the November Commission meeting, the Commission voted to raise the minimum insurance requirements for irrigation contractors, utility arborists and arborists. The new proposed minimum for personal injuries will go from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and from \$50,000 to \$200,000 for property damage. LDAF has started the process of approving the new requirements.

Chris moved on to Old Business and asked Severn to provide the Profit & Loss statements and the evaluations for the Annual Meeting, the November Basics Class and the January Recertification Class held in Ruston, LA (added to the agenda). Severn stated that for the Annual Meeting's Profit & Loss we received \$8,524.22 in revenues and expenses totaled \$3,283.82 leaving \$5,283.82 in revenues over expenditures.

We had 35 returned evaluations of the 51 persons in attendance and of the 35 we had 21 respondents who said they were members and 11 said they were non-members. As we have seen in most evaluations, the majority of respondents stated that they have not been restricted by local regulatory issues; most stated that they did not participate in the H2B guest worker program; and most stated that they did not have a personal relationship with their state or congressional representative. When asked if they visit the LIA website, about half said they did and that was a typical response in previous evaluations. Most respondents stated that they found it more difficult to operate a profitable business over the past 10 years. Overall most stated that they liked the instructor and content and they mostly liked the food and location. This was true for the evaluations surveyed in November Basics class and the January recertification class held in Ruston, LA (added to the agenda).

The Profit & Loss statement and the evaluations for the November Basics Class were as follows. Revenues totaled \$3,558.90 and expenses totaled \$2,363.68 leaving \$1,195.22 in revenues over expenditures. We had 11 returned evaluations of the 20 in attendance and of the 11 respondents only six said they were members and 5 said they were not members. Overall the other responses were about the same as was stated previously.

Added to the agenda was the Profit & Loss statement and evaluations for the January Recertification class held in Ruston, LA. Revenues totaled \$4,971.88 and expenses totaled \$756.02 leaving \$4,215.86 in revenues over expenditures. We had 17 returned evaluations of the 26 in attendance and of the 17 respondents only 11 said they were members and 6 said they were non-members. As stated previously the other responses were about the same.

Chris asked for a motion to accept the Profit & Loss Statements. Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Ardis Tooke, to approve the Profit & Loss Statements previously discussed. Motion carried.

Chris asked Severn about sales taxes paid to the state. Severn stated that LIA has paid \$376.63 in state sales taxes in 2016 and that doesn't include the extra monies expended in having to pay for 2 extra printings of Membership Application forms with updated sales tax information added.

Chris then moved on to New Business and asked Severn to hand out the 2017 Calendar of training dates and locations. He did so.

Chris then asked Severn to pass around the Administrative Assistants Invoices, 6 & 7. Severn did so and stated that Invoice 6 was for \$416.00 and Invoice 7 was for \$152.00 all itemized as to which duties were performed. Severn further stated that after he prepared each invoice, he sent a copy to President, Chris Friedman for approval. After approval Severn then cut the check. Chris asked for a motion to accept the payments for Administrative Assistant duties. Ardis Tooke moved, seconded by Wes Gauthier, to approve the payments for Administrative Assistant duties. Motion carried.

Chris asked the Board about Mike Goree's suggestion to undertake a Strategic Plan. Much discussion ensued and finally Chris suggested that we create a Strategic Planning Committee to investigate the following: 1A) The Mission Statement – does it need revising? 1B) create a brand to advertise LIA; 2A) Create goals and list them; 2B) Create policy that LIA should follow; 3) Review and Revise Member Benefits; 4) Review Articles of Incorporation – Are they adequate? 5) Review By-Laws – Are they adequate? 6) Investigate current training classes – Are they adequate? 7) Create a list of potential speakers ie. Bill Branch, Mitch LeBas, Jay Robbins, Chris Friedman, Dr. Stacia Davis, others and topics they may be able to present; 8) Propose topics and content (write, develop and/or edit) new 4 hour and 8 hour training courses worthy of LDAF approval for recertification – possibly from other state irrigation associations or state agencies (Robert Miller had some information on courses he purchased from Texas); 9) Propose courses to provide to company employees that would benefit Landscape Irrigation Contractor companies so as to have better trained employees – most of what courses we have now would fit here; 10) Propose means to provide the public with educational programs and means to reach the public with educational materials; 11) Assess, determine and propose what research topics to pursue in the future that would be beneficial to Landscape Irrigation Contractors, Distributors and/or Manufacturers in concert with the LSU AgCenter and determine projects and costs; 12) Develop an advisory committee of professionals largely outside of LIA to determine a long range plan for LIA – members could include Distributors, Manufactures, IA representatives, LSU AgCenter Professionals, Mitch LeBas with Backflow Prevention Services, LDAF representatives, various parish officials who regulate Landscape Irrigation Professionals with regard to backflow prevention or irrigation systems. And finally, Customers who rely on Landscape Irrigation Contractors to install or service landscape irrigation systems and consultants from out of state who work in the Landscape Irrigation industry. There may be others.

Chris asked Mike Goree to chair the committee and then asked for volunteers. Those who volunteered included Dr. Stacia Davis, Dan Johnson and Chris Friedman.

Chris asked Severn to hand out to the Board the Criteria and Description of LIA Awards previously voted upon and approved by the Board. There was some discussion and finally Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Dan Johnson, to nominate a now undisclosed person to be revealed at the Annual Meeting for the Professional of the Year Award for 2017. Motion carried.

Chris asked Severn about Dr. Mike Strain attending the 2017 Annual Meeting. Severn stated that he sent Dr. Strain a letter on December 7, 2016 inviting him to attend but haven't heard from him. Severn assumed he will attend and Ansel will check into it.

Chris asked Severn to explain the letter to Congress. Severn stated that with his affiliation as a member of Nursery & Landscape Association Executives of North America for the past 10 years and with his affiliation with AmericanHort (previously American Nursery & Landscape Association), Craig Regelbrugge, a lobbyist with AmericanHort, contacted nursery and landscape executives when he or others write letters to congress and seeks our support as sign-on participants or asks us to send signed letters of support of industry labor issues or other important industry issues. Craig asked us on October 31, 2016 to send a letter to both The House of Representatives and The Senate which stated: To the United States Senate and House of Representatives: The business community has long advocated for Congress to address the many problems posed by our defective immigration system. Our Nation's immigration laws fall far short when it comes to promoting economic growth, job creation, respect for the rule of law, and meeting our homeland security needs. It is long past time for Congress to act and institute meaningful reforms that restructure the U.S. immigration system to increase security and promote our economic well-being. This letter makes clear our collective commitment to immigration reform. It is time for the Congress to act. Sincerely, Severn C. Doughty, Sr., Ph.D., on behalf of LIA.

In addition to the forty some Nursery Executives, the National Association of Manufacturers and other entities also signed on to the letter. This letter was also added to the LIA website on/or about October 31, 2016.

Chris asked Severn about the Secretary of State Annual Report. Severn stated that he filled out the annual report and sent it in along with the \$10.00 filing fee. So we are up to date for 2017.

Chris asked Severn about the contractors 1099's and filing with IRS, income tax paperwork. Severn stated that he sent all contractors, Dr. Peter Gallagher, Mike Goree and himself, the stated income on the 1099 for their income tax filing before the deadline January 31, 2017 and Lee Gray, CPA, prepared and filed our LIA income tax electronically. Severn then mailed the hard copy to IRS in early February. So we are up to date with 2016 income tax filing.

Tina Peltier, Assistant Director of the Horticulture Commission asked Chris if she could add an agenda item. She asked if LIA would sign the LDAF Continuing Education Provider Agreement for 2017. Severn took the form, dated it and signed it.

Chris then asked Severn to discuss his duties and responsibilities as Executive Secretary and Treasurer. For a complete copy Severn can provide it to anyone who asks. Severn read the three page document to the Board so they would fully understand what duties Severn performs as Executive Secretary.

Chris then asked Severn for the evaluation form so the Board could evaluate his performance for 2016. Chris then asked Severn to leave the room so the Board could make the evaluation, discuss it and decide if a monetary raise was warranted. Chris asked Severn to return and the Board stated that Severn's evaluation was excellent and the Board approved a 5% raise effective immediately. Severn thanked the Board and said he thoroughly enjoyed working with them and LIA and had no plans of leaving the Board unless the Board so desired.

Chris then signed the contracts between the Education Director, Mike Goree and LIA for 2017, the Consulting Agreement Between LIA and Independent Contractor, Severn C. Doughty, Sr. for 2017, the contract between LIA and Severn C. Doughty, Sr. for 2017 and the Lease of Office Space between LIA and Severn C. Doughty, Sr. for 2017.

There being no more business, Wes Gauthier moved, seconded by Ardis Tooke to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried and the meeting concluded 1:30 P.M. It was followed by the 2017 Budget Meeting and the New Board Member Training Meeting which lasted till about 3:00 P.M.