**Call to order** at 9:27 am. by Vice President Kemp.

**President’s Report**:

**Maple Month** – The object was to direct potential customers to the website to contact producers for visitations, and there was very little promotion money. It was different from how it was done in the past to have the entire month open rather than just a weekend. This allowed people to have visitors within Covid guidelines. The Association hopes it was successful for everyone.

**Association Publicist**: January 8 the Board was advised by Brenda Noiseux that she had taken another job, but she had developed a marketing plan for the year already. At the Board meeting on February 16 to bring MAC on board, the Association learned MAC is also working with IMSI. Brenda worked with MAC to help them get up to speed quickly.

Andy Chisholm is NHMPA rep to Commissioner Jasper’s **Ag in the Classroom** committee.

**Carlisle Award** – The Board decided, to help maintain normalcy, they would adopt a one-year rule change because there were no fairs, and the winner of the award does not need to be present to be eligible to receive award this year. We will find out later at this meeting who the winner is.

The **Board of Directors** has added two members Alicia Powell – daughter of John Adams – and Charlie Hunt, who both have taken on one-year terms. There are still three open positions on the Board. Please consider getting involved – there is a lot that the Association wants to accomplish, and we need a full Board to do it.

**Summer Meeting** will not be at Bisson’s Sugar House and has to be relocated. Lucien and Muriel have donated 20 copies of their book as a token of their support to the organization. Please help determine a new location for the meeting.

**Deerfield Fair** is on for 2021 as is the **Big E**. Will there be enough patrons to make the Fairs profitable? Can sugarmakers sell to the public and make a profit?

The **Maple Museum** is truly a diamond in the rough – could be the Association’s crown jewel but it needs a complete Board of Directors. Being on the Board is a necessary but not time-consuming position and is of lasting value to the Association.

**Treasurer’s Report**: Sue Folsom reported the Board worked hard to be careful with expenditures due to lost revenues from cancelled fairs. The Board is hoping the Association will gain back that lost income. The account at TD Bank has $140,316.54. Membership is up, 358 members versus 326 in 2020. Sue detailed how dues money is distributed: $5 to Maple Museum, $4 to Maple Digest, $4 to NAMSC dues, $6 to IMSI dues. That leaves $21 to run the Association. This amount equals $7,518 (2020 actual was $7,200), which is just shy of the budgeted projection for only the yearly Association management. So the income from NHMPA jugs and fairs is the main source of income we have to support our promotion, meetings, website and educational programs and awards.

**Committee reports**:

**Container Committee**: from Bill Cheney via Dave Kemp: The committee thinks the sugar makers are prepping for a lot of syrup to be sold or just don’t want to be caught short on containers. Orders are up 20-110%. There are 2,115 cases of containers on order with Bacon Jug. Dealers did run into problems late last year getting some sizes of containers. Covid caused manufacturers to shut down, causing a backlog of the materials needed to create the resin for containers.

The first molding of containers did not start until April 6 of this year. At this point, the committee is not sure when the containers will be delivered. Order-taking started April 28 in order to get on the manufacturer’s production schedule. This is one month earlier than when the order is usually sent in.

Bacon has raised their prices on containers, but their last increase was 4 years ago. Also, there will be a slight increase in the cost of shipping containers. Those making candy should check with dealers about candy boxes if needed.

The screen has been updated to comply with an FDA requirement on nutrition and caloric intake – this will cause a slight delay but should not be considerable. Bacon should begin printing quart orders soon. The Association has done everything it can do to make sure dealers don’t run out this year.

Question from the floor: Does anyone else have concerns about twist-top seal not breaking? Can we bring that to Bacon? Dave said maybe Bacon can check with their vendor to make sure the top is shearing off the way it’s supposed to.

Question from the floor: Are there cream containers available? Dave said not at this time. Bacon will not sell a blank jug to anyone. Sugar Hill does the blow-molding for Bacon, and they are about a year behind. Sue said there are some containers available in reserve. Question from the floor: Should the Association have a label made and members could buy the labels and label a blank container? Chris Heath said they will not sell blank containers. Darryl said there are blank cream containers available on the market from another vendor.

**Fairs Committee**: Darryl Fisk said Gail McWilliam Jellie sent him a notice that the Big E is on, and Governor Baker lifted all sanctions. It was going to be open at 40% capacity but now will be at 100%. If the Association decides to go to the Big E, the Association will buy syrup the same as for Deerfield – we will have to determine if we are going to go and what we will buy.

**Ag in the Classroom**: Debbi Cox – NH Ag in the Classroom works with K-12 classrooms throughout the state trying to get ag info to the students. Currently there are 13 lessons, videos, and other maple resources available online.

NHAITC’s crowning activity is the Tucker Mountain Challenge, which used to be part of Felker Award. This is the classroom version. In 2021, there were 800 students actively taking part from 11 schools/groups. In 2020, there were 1500 students from 14 schools/groups. Debbi discussed the requirements to compete – the application, sample submission, and maple-related assignments and projects. AITC has offered maple equipment grants; Bruce Treat from Treat’s Sugarhouse fully funded the program on his own in 2020 and 2021. Many schools already have a maple program in place and use the equipment grant to expand their capabilities. Debbi explained the scoring process and categories as well as community outcomes, including relationships built between schools and local sugarmakers or schools and local businesses. Many schools are adding sugarhouses on their campuses so AITC is helping the schools work out the logistics. Debbi shared this year’s winners, which were determined by the taste-testing of the highest-scoring samples. Question from the floor: Can Debbi offer any suggestions for how to get volunteers into classroom to read to students? Debbi and others in the group suggested trying home schools or libraries if getting into public schools is not possible.

**Old Business – none**

**New Business**

**Budget**: Sue presented the budget for 2021. She called it a little conservative but said it should keep the Association in balance without too much in the way of losses. Some Fair numbers are conservative. Motion by Darryl Fisk with a second by Kelly Byam to approve the budget as presented; carried.

**Election of Board of Directors**: Dave presented the current slate of directors: Dave Kemp 2 years, Darrell Fisk 2 years; Andrew Chisholm 1 year; Sue Folsom 2 years, Alicia Powell 1 year, and Charlie Hunt 1 year. Motion by Kelly Byam with a second by Doug Byam to accept the slate as presented; carried. Dave said there are still three open positions; he requested nominations from the floor. Doug Byam volunteered, Andrew Mattiace volunteered, and Bud Taylor volunteered. Motion by Barbara Lassonde with a second by Kelly Byam to accept the self-nominations; carried.

**Bylaws revision:** Sue discussed proposed revisions to the Association’s bylaws – these are revisions the Board agreed to back in 2019 but that did not get brought forward at the 2020 meeting. Current bylaws were provided for comparison. The main change was a better definition of the mission statement and goals. The changes also include authority of the Board to remove members, including Board members, who do not act in the best interest of the Association and/or the industry. Motion by Darryl Fisk with a second by Doug Byam to move the revision forward; motion carried.

**Suspend NHMPA meeting 10:17 am. Motion by Don Lassonde with a second by Barb Lassonde to suspend.**

**New Hampshire Maple Museum Annual Meeting**

**Call to Order** 10:17 am by Dave Kemp.

**Treasurer’s Report**: Sue reported on cash flow from the museum. Not a lot of activity, but Sue reviewed each transaction. $18078.26 remaining to end the year.

**Board of Directors**: The membership needs to elect a Board of Directors to include President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer. Dave Scanlon spoke about Charlie Stewart and his donation of the museum and all of the pieces in the collection. There is now a partnership with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests – they house the collection right next to their own maple experience. Dave S. said the BOD does not require a lot of heavy lifting and responsibility. The goal is to keep the collection intact, restore something if it can be restored, and work with the Forest Society on what should be in the collection. The Museum is a 501(c)3 that requires annual filing of 990 and other related documentation. The Board will elect its own officers. Volunteers from the floor to serve on the Board were: Sue Folsom, Mike Moore, Richard Menge, Brian Folsom, Mark Thompson, and Doug Byam. Motion by Bruce Townsend with a second by Kelly Byam to accept the slate; carried.

**Adjourn:** Motion by Mike Moore with a second by Doug Byam to adjourn the meeting. Dave Kemp adjourned the meeting of the Maple Museum at 10:34 am.

**Reconvene:** Dave Kemp reconvened the Annual Meeting of the NH Maple Producers Association at 10:34 am.

**NHMPA Annual Meeting Guest speaker:** Dave introduced Kate Ziehm of Morning Ag Clips.

Kate thanked everyone for having them at the meeting. She introduced herself and Stephanie and then discussed the MAC business, which is located in Eastern NY between Saratoga and Bennington VT. Kate is from New Hampshire and is happy to be “home.” She discussed her maple roots as well as her work on The Maple News and how the Morning Ag Clips came into being. Kate discussed consistency and persistence in messaging and sharing content with IMSI for the benefit of NHMPA. Kate took questions from the floor about the work that MAC will be doing for the Association.

**Open discussion**:

Darryl Fisk asked about the **Association’s tax status** as a 501(c)6 and considering the possibility of changing to a 501(c)3.

Mel Torsey said today’s meeting is one of the **most pleasant meetings** he has been to in a long time. There is less contention. It’s great to have a full slate of officers for the Association and the Museum. He thanked Dave and Sue for all of their hard work and to everyone who showed up for the meeting. Maple is so important to everyone here. Dave said he would like to thank the Board and Sue for all of their dedication over the last year as well. The idea is to make meetings enjoyable because maple is enjoyable.

Bud Taylor is **a veterans’ advocate** to help vets struggling with PTSD. He has done job training to help them because of the peace and comfort that sugaring brings. He would like to put combat-wounded vets into other members’ sugar shacks.

Peter Gregg from The Maple News asked about **how the season went, how sugar makers handled pricing, and related information** for a story for The Maple News. Dave writes the crop report for New Hampshire for IMSI, and he is connected to people in all parts of the state to be able to make his report. It is very rare that all parts of the state have the same report, but they did this year. He said there was very little golden syrup made this year and only 60% of last year’s crop overall. What was produced initially was a dark color with excellent flavor. People who tapped early didn’t get much of an advantage. Then the weather got warm and then cold again. Almost everyone reporting had almost the same report this year across the entire maple belt. Bud said Covid caused people to stay out of grocery stores, and imports from Canada were reduced because the border was closed. Demand for NH maple is overwhelming, but how does the Association get the product out there? What about getting a maple partnership with ski slopes?

Barbara Lassonde asked about the **brochure** that used to go out to the rest areas. Sue said the Association put in an application for a Specialty Crop Block Grant program and included funds for printing and distribution of that brochure. The plan would be for a maple trail format to the brochure, which could also be incorporated to the website since consumers are using more tech.

Ben Fisk said the **price of syrup** is up because the cost of lumber is up, meaning the cost of pallets is up. Gas and transportation costs are up. Syrup made after Easter has an off-flavor regardless of where you are in the state. They were selling one gallon for $60 and went up to $75. Labor cost is up – they used to be able to pay an employee $9 an hour, and now it is difficult to hire someone for less than $12 an hour. It was $22 a quart last year and now is $35.

Mel Torsey said on Easter he had a full tank and had to collect two or three days in a row. He made the best dark syrup he has made.

How many people can remember selling syrup for $4 a gallon? Lots of laughs.

Kelly Byam talked about how people balk at the cost of syrup without requiring the **amount of effort** that goes into production. It can be an eye-opener to realistically look at your inputs and determine what the true cost is and then figure out how much you need to ask for the selling price. Charlie Hunt said he hates to do his bookwork and find out he’s losing money. He said his father told him, “if you survive the season, you’re a winner.” Kate said it’s so important to look at the younger generation to see what you are going to hand them to make sure it’s something worth passing down.

**Lunch**

**Keynote speaker: David Moore, UNH Extension, Producing Syrup from Trees other than Maples**

Dave K. said there will be a short meeting for the Board of Directors following the completion of the Annual Meeting.

**Carlisle Award presentation:** Dave said there was a change this year because there were no fairs for qualifying, but we ended up with 12 entries. Dave distributed the score sheets to entrants who were in attendance. Dave announced the top four winners: 4th place: Charlie Hunt. 3rd place: Rusty and Aggie Colby. 2nd place: John and Jen Scarinza. Carlisle Award winner: Steven Osborn.

**Door prizes**

**Adjourn**: Motion by Bruce Townsend with a second by Sue Folsom to adjourn; carried. Vice President Kemp adjourned the meeting at 1:38 p.m.

Submitted by: S. Kelly