NHMPA 7/12/22 Monthly Meeting Minutes

7pm via Zoom

Members Present: Dave Kemp, Andrew Chisholm, Alisha Powell, Nathan Adams, Darrell Fisk, Charles Hunt, Doug Byam, Kelly Byam, Dale Smith

Members Absent: Chris Olsen

Meeting called to order at 7:12pm by Andrew Chisholm

1. Felker Award Update: Dale Smith: He shares that he has been running the Felker program this year. They had 16 entries, mostly from the lower part of the state. We will need to work to encourage people in the northern part of the state to participate. Dale is wondering about ordering the plaque from the place in concord, Seymour Trophy. Andy agrees that would make sense. The bill should be sent to Stephanie Kelly or Christa, at Morning Ag Clips. They will probably call Andy for confirmation on the plaque. The first place winner is Dannicia LeBlanc from Fremont. She is one of 9 children and did an art project using her siblings hand prints to make a maple tree. She also put together a really nice cookbook. Second place will be Tess LaValliere, who dida really nice report on how to make maple syrup. Third place was Anders Hannu from New Ipswich. Dale would like to invite them to the summer meeting to formally give the awards. Dale felt that everything went very smoothly working with Morning Ag Clips on the award. He is wondering if we can send a postcard to the people who submitted an entry but didn’t win to thank them for their submission and encourage them to submit again in the future. Kelly can look into getting the postcards made up and can work with Kelly to get these sent out this year.
2. Summer Meeting Update: Andy shares that Glenn Goodrich will be doing the talk at the summer meeting. He also agreed to come for the annual winter meeting as well. He is a great speaker and we are pleased to have booked him for this. He is leaving a lot of time open for questions and comments as well. After Patch Orchards, we will tour a tubing installation at Harding Hill Farm with Will Streeter’s colleague from CDL as well. We will be getting pizzas, and we are keeping the ticket price relatively low at $10 each.
3. Budget Update: Andy was hoping to have the budget update for this meeting, but doesn’t have the June update yet. As of the end of March, we were operating pretty close to the budget that had been allocated. Andy was pleased to see that we were operating on just a minimal loss so far for the year.
4. Container Update: Andy did the order for the containers for 2023. The container subcommittee had met, but then afterward, Andy didn’t get any feedback from them; ultimately, he ended up having to put an order in based on the data they had discussed. Andy knows that the order is pretty aggressive, but the idea is that we will have some containers in stock as needed. It is very similar to the order from this past year. It was around 2097 cases. We are pretty well caught up right now compared to earlier in the year; just a little behind on a few cases of quarts. We have been hearing from the distributors that they have containers in stock and are getting caught up on their orders.

Andy also shares again that he traveled to Washington DC to represent NHMPA, he was able to meet with Senators and Reps from NH down there, including Congressman Pappas. It was a great experience to be down there, and the first time that we are aware of that NHMPA has had a presence down there.

1. Fair Update: Bud Taylor has been heading this up and doing a great job. We have paid for Hopkinton Fair, as well as the Big E. Cheshire Fair is going to take place as well. Bud is working on coordinating products such as cotton candy, nuts, maple cream, syrup and candy for the fairs.

Darrell notes that Bud may be pricing a little low on the retail prices, and Andy noticed the same. Andy had discussed this with Bud as well, and Bud stated that he had just set these as sort of a starting point, and that the finalized prices we end up using will likely be higher. Darrell was also wondering about what the budget will be for a “break even” point down at Eastern States; Darrell thinks the costs will probably be around 45K, so that we will need to bring in significantly more than that to make the budget work. Andy agrees with those numbers and is projecting that revenue will be close to $80K; Darrell still thinks that this may be very generous of an estimate. Andy feels that we will be happy with $60-$65K. Darrell worries that we won’t be having samples, which would hurt sales. Darrell says that in the past when we sampled cream, much more was sold. Andy agrees that sampling increases the sales numbers significantly. Andy also notes he is going to bring his RV to Deerfield and the Big E so that he can provide a place for volunteers to stay. Andy says that the great sales at Deerfield Fair last year had a lot to do with the samples that were given out. Kelly wonders if sampling times could be scheduled to alleviate some of the workload. Darrell has been involved at the Big E many times in the past; the slow times are the slow times, and the busy times are the busy times. Scheduling tasting times really isn’t an option. The flow of people through the buildings just happens based on the attendance of the fair at the time. Discussion regarind whether or not Massachusetts regulations apply in certain situations; Officially, the NH building at the Big E is considered NH property; we don’t have to charge sales tax or deal with any other Massachusetts restrictions.

1. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes/Upcoming Meeting Dates
2. 6/13/22 Board Meeting Mins: Minutes to be approved from the last meeting; motion to accept made by Darrell, Seconded by Kelly, All in favor, none opposed.

Misc: Darrell is wondering about prices on containers and whether we are going to keep prices the same going forward. We have had a few price increases on the containers. The discount that we get for placing the order offsets most of the increases we have seen so far.

Darrell asks when the next Gathering Tank will be coming out; Andy shares that there was a planned skip for July, but there will be one coming out soon. Darrell thinks we should put a reminder that any candy sold should be marked properly; a friend of his saw some maple candy for sale in a NH box, but without proper labeling.

Darrell also noted that in Bud’s update, he was concerned that it seemed that Bud was worried about getting enough syrup for fairs; Darrell believes that we should definitely get seal of quality syrup for sales at the fairs, and we shouldn’t waver. Any producers who are reaching out to Bud to try to sell syrup at fairs, should apply and get certified prior to the fair. At this point, there should be enough time to get people signed up if they want to be in the Seal of Quality program. The candy that we sell may not be made from Seal of Quality syrup, since the candy isn’t certified as part of SOQ.

Andy shares that the public notice will be coming out in the next week so that the board of directors can provide syrup for the association. Andy is planning on not providing syrup for the fairs at this time so that he can avoid any potential conflict of interest.

1. NAMSC: Penny per container program- Dave describes that the NAMSC uses this tool to raise money for their research funds. NH had gotten on the bandwagon right at the start; Hank Peterson was on board with it from the start. The way it works is, the NHMPA and other assocations donate one penny for every container sold back to NAMSC; that then becomes their research fund and helps to fund a lot of the studies that are being done in maple research. Unfortunately, in 2019/2020 when covid pandemic was starting to hit, Dave and Sue Folsom with the board at that time decided to suspend paying it due to the financial uncertainties associated with the pandemic and loss of revenue for the association at that time. At this time, we are reconsidering it and will need to bring this before the board for a vote to re-initiate this. Andy does recall that as well as he had just joined the board at that time. He seems to recall that at that time, there were concerns that the funds weren’t being used as intended, and we felt that maybe there would be other avenues to use the money in a better way. Dave is able to give the background information that Vermont had made that assertion because they had made a large donation to the program, and it was just put in the bank rather than spent on current research for legacy purposes which they didn’t agree with. Dave shares that VT has rejoined the NAMSC this year, after a five year hiatus. Kelly asks about what is being returned to us as far as information; what is the advantage for producers? Dave states that many of the research projects in the Maple Digest have been funded by these monies. Dave also notes that Steve Roberge is working on a research project regarding maple production in the state of NH; Dave actually spoke with him recently as well and is hoping to support him.

Darrell makes a motion to rejoin the Penny per container program; seconded by Doug Byam. All in favor, none opposed.

Next meeting planned for Tuesday, August 2.

Motion to adjourn by Darrell

Seconded by John

Meeting Adjourned @ 8:16pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alisha A. Powell, Secretary