

**Draft Minutes**  
**Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association Board Meeting**  
**October 5th, 2020**  
**9:30 am – Noon**

By Zoom

meeting id 983 61931246 pw: 517560

telephone call in #: 647-374-4685

call in at 9:20

Attendance:

Executive:

Brian Bainborough	President
Frank Heerkens	First VP : Eastern
Ray Bonenberg	Treasurer: Ottawa Valley and District
Stephen Needham	Second VP: Quinte and District

Directors:

Judy Hughes	Algoma
Dave Matthews	Algonquin and District
Michael Levitan	Algonquin and District
Jules Rochon	Eastern
Bob Snider	Haliburton - Kawartha
Clancey Lavender	Haliburton - Kawartha
Gail Cranston	Grey-Bruce
Michelle Sage	Grey-Bruce
Leann Thompson	Lanark and District
Randall Goodfellow	Lanark and District
Mark Youmans	Quinte and District
Peter Lorrigan	Simcoe and District
Bill Vandenberg	Southwestern
Phil Thomas	Waterloo Wellington
Ron Grubb	Waterloo Wellington

John Williams                      Executive Director

All locals represented, quorum

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of Agenda

**Motion (2020-10-01)**

**Moved to accept agenda as presented.**

**Moved: Ray Bonenberg    Second: Jules Rochon                      Carried**

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
4. Code of Conduct and Robert's Rules
5. Local updates
  - a. one representative from each local to give a 2 min. max. update on important issues and events in their local.
  - b. Eastern - Frank

- i. Held a tasting/judging workshop. Followed local health units directives
  - ii. communication by email and website to membership
  - iii. Info. Day is in jeopardy. Scheduled for end of November. Will make a decision at the end of October.
- c. Simcoe
  - i. no activity, starting to think about Info Days
- d. Algonquin and District
  - i. Recent call about a series of educational videos to be produced with funding from RAIN
  - ii. considering what to do for Info Days
- e. Lanark and District
  - i. Planned a workshop at Thompson's on thinning, but have decided not to go ahead. Will try next fall.
  - ii. considering what to do for Info Days
- f. Algoma
  - i. Meeting in Sept. and planned an Info. Day even if it doesn't run. Third Sat in January.
  - ii. Trying to raise the profile of the local as many local producers don't know it exists. Some discussion on fall workshop.
  - iii. Working with RAIN on a workshop in the winter, but may not go due to COVID.
- g. Quinte
  - i. Not much activity, had a call two months ago and an executive call recently.
- h. Grey-Bruce
  - i. Some discussion on activities, but not sure what can happen due to COVID. Planning to hold the Info Day in person or virtually.
- i. Ottawa Valley
  - i. Questions about Info Day and where to host it. Local Legion may close
- j. Southwestern
  - i. Waiting to see what can happen due to COVID. Some uptick in the London area causing problems. Pancake houses are very worried about the next season.
- k. Waterloo-Wellington

- i. tried a Zoom meeting, not very successful. Had a meeting in Kevin Snyder's barn which went better. Discussion on marketing and looking at increasing membership as many local producers aren't members.
  - I. Haliburton-Kawartha
    - i. Trying to figure out Info Days.
    - ii. Planning to have Maple Weekend, last year's participants are interested in participating in 2021.
- 6. Minutes of Board meeting July 17th, 2020

**Motion (2020-10-02)**

**Moved to accept Minutes of Board Meeting - July 17th, 2020**

**Moved: Ray Bonenberg    Second: Jules Rochon                      Carried**

- 7. Business arising from the minutes
  - a. Pancake House issue, contact with a group from Quebec to work together through Jules. Brian has been in touch OMAFRA asking for help. Steve has spoken with many of the eastern houses. John surveyed our pancake house members for information. Action item OMSPA will write a letter in support of the group forming from Quebec, ON and NB. They will lobby federally for some action.
  - b. Summer tour check list carry forward will transfer to Randal
  - c. French version of cookbook underway. Cover displayed in French, discussion over the change of Pure Maple Syrup to French in the Sweet Ontario Logo on the cover. This is not covered in our trade mark. Leann asked if this causes problems where there are other French or bilingual uses like Maple Weekend promotions and the Jug program. Something to think about for the future and will take this on a case by case basis. Ron commented that keeping our brand intact for international sales would be important. Frank felt this wouldn't be an issue as this will be targeted on Francophone areas in Ontario, Quebec and possibly in the US.

**Motion (2020-10-03)**

**Moved to accept the cover of the French recipe book with the modified Sweet Ontario Logo**

**Moved: Frank Heerkens    Second: Randal Goodfellow                      Carried**

- d. Printing of Alphabet book has been completed. Working on pricing, marketing and distribution.
- e. Manual for board members. Carry forward.
- f. Store t-shirts and polos. Orders received and order has been submitted to the vendor. Shirts expected by the end of the month. 24 t-shirts and 13 polos ordered.
- g. Shipping discount for members. Frank. Carry forward
- h. Simple Single page website available to locals. John and Ray. Carry forward.
- i. Ecommerce webinar videos made available through a blog post in the omspa.ca members section.
- j. Arrange venue with Zoom capabilities. on hold.
- k. Establish committee for Fall colours event. Carry forward for an event in 2021. Strong interest in the locals for this. Steve N. suggested that the Maple Weekend group take this on as they know how to do this. Leann agreed as setting up another committee would be difficult. Judy supported this.

#### 8. President's Report

- a. See attached report. Follow up on Michelle Sage's problem
- b. Brian reported that CDL will only carry their new rectangular jug.
- c. Jules asked if crop insurance would potentially cover an inability to market syrup. Randal stated these insurances only cover production not marketing losses.
- d. Some discussion on the Payment advance against produced crop. Really only valuable for large producers.
- e. Randal commented that the risks of holding the 2021 Summer Tour were just to high. They needed to make a decision to get deposits back. Dave Matthews asked if they were postponing or passing.
- f. Michelle brought up an issue they are having with MPAC not recognizing their operation as agricultural. So they haven't been able get the agricultural tax reduction. However, they should be able to get a Managed Forest reduced rate.

#### 9. Executive Directors Report

- a. See attached report

#### 10. Financial - John, Ray

- a. Current situation,
- b. Budget 2021 - Ray, see attached budget planning form for chairs
  - i. Committees will use this form to make and justify requests for 2021

- ii. The executive and financial group will make the base operations budget and then consider the committee requests with the leftover funds.
- iii. Strategic priorities may be considered for the upcoming year in the process. For example the board may decided on a marketing push.
- iv. Draft budget to be presented at the December board meeting in a spreadsheet and narrative format for discussion and approval.
- v. We would like to add an accountability structure or review of spending to make sure the execution matches the plan.
- vi. Committees will be discussing their requests in October and November.
- vii. Sometimes we have to be nimble and modify the budget when opportunities or challenges arise.
- viii. John to send a Word version of the budget form to the Committee Chairs.

11. Grant Update - John 1:19

- a. COVID Response
- b. OMAFRA grant 2019 for Judging tasting workshops (\$7K) plus the NAMSC USD \$5,000. Both of these grants have concluded and the reports have been written and accepted.
- c. RED grant (Rural Economic Development grant of up to \$9K with matching funds from us) has concluded as well. Amy Hogue has written and submitted the report for this. Most of this was used in 2019 to produce content for our marketing programs.
- d. Currently waiting on 2020 grant from OMAFRA that will cover the cost of some educational videos that Ray has started work on. The money has been promised but we haven't seen the paperwork yet.
- e. CEF (Canadian Experiences Fund, FedDev S. ON) - Bulk of Maple Weekend promotion and general digital market funds have come from this grant. Much of the marketing program was put on hold when Maple Weekend 2020 was cancelled. The marketing vendors and CEF have allowed us to reorganize this spending to focus most of it in late 2020 and early 2021 to support Ontario Maple and Maple Weekend 2021. We have also been able to use some of these funds to support Sweet Ontario Maple with social media marketing through the summer and on member support services like help applying for the ecommerce grants and webinars on ecommerce.
- f. CEF budget through end of 2020, see attached.

**Motion (2020-10-04)**

## **Moved to accept CEF Budget**

**Moved: Leann Thompson Second: Ray Bonenberg**

**Carried**

### 12. NAMSC/IMSI - Brian/Ray

- a. see attached report from Brian. Vermont still not part of NAMSC and they are the largest producer member in the states. Still some talk about division of funds and responsibilities between IMSI and NAMSC.
- b. IMSI has notified NAMSC that they won't be participating in the Fall International meeting after 2021. They don't feel it is a good approach for their members. There is a need to keep the meetings in a more central zone. Ray says IMSI's relationship is "cordial" with NAMSC but that is it. Not very effective. There is a lack of leadership in NAMSC. All the decision making rests with several people.
- c. IMSI did a review in 2018, looking at what they do, are changes needed. NAMSC has never done this. Randal asked why don't we withhold fees and/or withdraw. Ray explained some of the history. We did withdraw for 2 years after an unannounced fee increase, but we went back after two years to see if change could be made. There is still some good work being done: a new website with maple research papers listed, and some education work. There is potential to do so much more though. Randal asked if Ray would table a motion to withdrawal from NAMSC but he said we would need to do some work to educate board members. Brian stepped in and suggested we need another two years back at the table at NAMSC. He suggested that we put them on notice that our board is asking questions and we may review our membership in a couple of years. They need a chance to correct things. Randal asked if we need a resolution. Brian said that could be done a year from now if there is no movement. Minnesota is currently leading a push for changes, let's support them.
- d. Canadian Maple Industry Advisory Committee (Canadian Round Table) - Nutrition labels, etc. About \$2 million is spent by this committee annually.
  - i. Ray presented the study "Understanding Factors Influencing Maple Syrup Selection In-store" by Callosum. Asked for comments from the board on the Canadian nutrition label serving size. The U.S., is pushing to reduce the serving size to cut down on the number of calories. The problem is this reduces the levels of nutrients. The study shows that in Quebec and the rest of Canada, the amount of sugar in maple syrup is known and is not a significant factor in purchases. Currently, the serving size in Canada is 60 ml. Should we reduce to 30 or even 15 ml? If we ask to reduce serving size, we have to prove there is a reason for the 30 ml serving

size. It would require a fair amount of work to do this. Comment that this is a shell game for marketers. The US wants to make changes to match honey. Brian added that the US is worried most about calories. In Canada we understand the calories. Agreement by the board that we should align with Quebec in this case which probably means we keep the 60 ml serving size. No comments against that suggestion. Ray stated he was available to take further comments by contacting him.

**Motion (2020-10-05)**

**Moved to confirm Randall Goodfellow as Governance Chair, and Jules Rochon as Co-chair of Communications in charge of Website**

**Moved: Steve Needham    Second: Bob Snider    Carried**

13. COVID effects on Info Days, Summer Tour and other events

- a. Discussion, board feels we are not likely to be out from under COVID by next summer.
- b. Most locals feel there is too much risk to hold Info. Days. Finding a venue is also a problem. Speakers and company attendance are a problem too.
- c. Info Days: discussion on a program put together by provincial. Something similar to the OWA's fall, online conference. the Conservation Authorities are doing something similar. Could be over several days or nights. Three or four technical speakers could be brought in. Locals would still have to organize their own AGMs. Some talk of recording several webinar sessions and then each local uses the videos in their own zoom AGM calls. Final suggestion was to run three technical sessions across the province that all can attend. Then run the local AGMs individually. Phil was concerned about how many people have internet access. Brian commented that Waterloo Wellington will have the hardest time with this, but what could be done is small local gatherings at a location with space and good internet. Steve Needham commented that perhaps the locals could contribute some funds so we can get top notch speakers. There was agreement from the board to have the Exec. plan this for January.

Brian stated that the rest of the agenda is well covered in the board reports so we will skip from the Foodland report to the end. He asked for any important remaining business.

John asked about discussion Summer Tour in 2021, is it postponed? Who will do the next one? It was decided to look further at this during the December Board Meeting.

Frank confirmed some members of the membership committee.

December 7th was confirmed as the next board meeting, held by zoom.

Motion to adjourn by Dave Matthews at approx. 12:30 pm.

Discussion of items 14 and 15 referred to board reports as we were short on time.

14. Foodland Report JW

15. Committee Reports

- a. Marketing and Promotion - Steve
- b. Communications/Website - Ray
  - i. Forest sector Strategy.
  - ii. confirm Jules
- c. Membership - Frank
- d. Research and Tech Transfer - Phil
- e. Quality Assurance - Brian
- f. Governance - Confirm Randall

17. New Business

18. Adjourn - Next Meeting: Monday, December 7th, 2020: by Zoom ? Budget meeting.

Action Items:

1. OMSPA will write a letter in support of the group forming from Quebec, ON and NB. They will lobby federally.
2. Summer tour check list carry forward will transfer to Randal
3. Increased Ads for Mainline - John and Ray
4. M & P to work on marketing of Alphabet book.
5. Governance manual for OMSPA board - Randal
6. Shipping discount for members. Frank. Carry forward
7. Simple Single page website available to locals. John and Jules
8. M & P to discuss the Fall Event and look at having this done by the Maple Weekend group.
9. MPAC issues particularly Michelle Sage's situation. Also, Jules wants to know how this will play into crop insurance. Brian, John..
10. Further Discussion on NAMSC situation.
11. More discussion on future summer tours to be had at the December Board meeting.