

OMPSA Board of Directors Meeting
Ontario Maple Syrup Producers' Association
July 13, 2022
4:30 to 6:00 pm
Belleville Ramada, Enterprise Room
Approved at Oct. 3 Board Meeting

Attendance

In person:

Executive:

Frank Heerkens

Ray Bonenberg

Randal Goodfellow

Brian Bainborough

President: Eastern

Treasurer: Ottawa Valley and District

Second VP: Lanark & District

Past President: Algoma

Directors:

Bill Hubbert

Bob Snider

Stephen Needham

Jack McFadden

Bill Vandenberg

Phil Thomas

Al Murray

Jenny Liu

Algonquin & District

Haliburton - Kawartha

Quinte & District

Simcoe & District

Southwestern

Waterloo Wellington

Waterloo Wellington

OMAFRA, non-voting guest

John Williams

Executive Director

On Zoom:

Jules Rochon

Michael Levitan

Peter Lorriman

Mark Youmans

First VP : Eastern

Algonquin & District

Simcoe & District

Quinte & District

1. Call to Order, Conflicts of interest, Approval of Agenda.

Add Climate Related under Other Business from Paul Renaud

Motion (2022-07-01)

Moved to accept agenda as modified.

Moved: Ray Bonenberg Second: Jack McFadden passed

2. Approval of the Minutes of Board meeting May 2, 2022

Motion (2022-07-02)

Moved to accept the minutes as presented.

Moved: Randall Second: Bill Vandenberg passed

3. Business arising from the minutes, action items

- Store shirt order and Foodland Logo usage still pending.
- Syrup for Breakfast from the farm. Jugs have been ordered from Ampak and they will be shipped shortly to Waterloo Wellington where Kevin will organize bottling for the two events. Frank asked what the value of the donation by Ampak is. John stated about \$2K last year. Frank suggested a letter or certificate of appreciation.
- Insurance: Brian noted that he is just waiting to hear back from Service Canada that Algoma's Incorporation has been rescinded.
- AGM prep complete
- Letter sent to the OFA requesting membership. Randall can speak to this later.
- Packaging jug committee will be struck with a meeting in June to examine options but again, Derecho has caused some problems with this.
- Prep for hybrid board meetings and streaming the AGM is a work in progress.
- Production survey and also a storm survey went out *see ED report..
- 2021 Financials are now wrapped up.
- It was noted due to time constraints there would not be local updates today.

4. Presidents Report - Frank Heerkens

Jugs:

Frank said D&G has no jugs as of July and will not have any until January next year. I know it's not my business to run corporations, with my business and our business, to ensure that our membership have jugs that they can sell to customers and tell them that they belong to an organization that produces high quality, syrup, that they have to stay away from other jugs. We can't do that if our partners will not provide us with what they need. And I think one of the problems is that, if I go around the room, I would really like to know how much syrup we are making. Retail sales in Ontario have gone up dramatically in the last two years. I don't think the current packaging industry has kept up with the increased level of production.

Brian stated that the same supply issues are happening in the states. We are the only association that receives jug money. We may need to look at our own label that can be applied to blank jugs. Many large producers have gone to private labels and that is affecting our numbers.

Frank proposed putting together a committee to discuss some of these issues with the manufacturers. We are looking at ways of creating revenue, supply issues and any other items that come out of the committee and bring it back to the Board.

Brian stated our revenue stream turned out very well this year. We budgeted 18,000 and we are just shy of 20,000.

Brian noted that supply chain issues and that he has been the liaison with the jugs people for some time. His view is that we do not need a committee. Frank thinks efficiencies can be found with additional revenue. Especially if we ask our partners what the possibilities are.

Bob Snider noted that there are two issues being discussed here; one to generate revenue and two, how to fix supply problems. He also said we are not making a commitment to the jug suppliers.. The working group will require the development of a mandate and terms of reference with a timeline.

Ray said there are other objectives like marketing for the jug program.

Michael Levitan commented that there might be possible revenue having a label produced.

Randal moved that we strike a Packaging Working Group, identify the leader and members and create the terms of reference by July 31st with a draft mandate to be circulated to the Board.

Motion (2022-07-03)

Moved to accept the motion as presented.

Moved: Randall Goodfellow Second: Phil Thomas passed

5. Executive Director report

See Executive Director report attached as Appendix A.

Question from Phil Thomas about the Buddy Sap project contribution to Mitacs. It isn't showing up in the financial report. John will follow up on this.

Jenny commented on the Derecho Storm issue stating that the DRAO response is determined by another ministry and OMAFRA does not have much input into the process. Jules mentioned that he has concerns about how through the ground surveys by the MHMA were and that the widespread impact of the storm is difficult to fit into the structure of the DRAO which is based on activating help in discrete areas, not across the province.

Jack McFadden mentioned that the OWA's membership system prorates how much you owe for the rest of your first year, then gets you into the annual rotation.

6. Governance RG

- a. Update Sector Development - presentation on Strategic Planning at the AGM tomorrow. Reports and webinars are up on the omspa.ca website and people have been reading and watching them. Currently working on Phase 2 and 3.

Delayed our future scenario discussions in June due to a variety of factors and plan to complete it in September.

b. Payments to Locals - Financial Statements

i. Preparing a template for use by the locals.

c. OFA partnership

We passed a resolution to join the OFA and this is now complete. We are now officially a commodity group member of the OFA meeting. They have given to us a staff person that is our liaison person, Danielle Charmin. (Collins) She is very good very, strong person in the areas of economic development, background analysis of rural development so that fits really well to our business, which is agricultural and elements of tourism and elements of this and that so that's great. They've also assigned us a board member. Their board has 12 zones. Her name is Jen Dolman. She lives in the Renfrew area, and has responsibilities for four counties local Federation's. She is also on the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, which is the one that advises the Minister of Agriculture, what research to have universities do on the Ministries behalf.

7. Financials 2021

Financials have been delayed at the accountants but are basically ready now. Brian stated we are just sorting out one final issue regarding the Buddy Sap Donations. We took that money in under the premise that we were going to spend it on one project, so it needs to be accounted for and taken out and can't be taken into profit for revenues. This year, it's easy to find it as it is earmarked for a project and it will be set aside for that. Adjustment of the numbers to be completed by tomorrow. So we have less than a \$10,000 deficit when we budgeted, about 12 or \$14,000. In summary, with the year of COVID going on, we've managed what we need it to be. Everything is pretty much in line, store revenues down but people weren't getting out so they didn't need stuff. Ray will make the motion to accept the financials at the AGM and Brian will second.

8. AGM

Frank will run the AGM. Frank will be nominated as President. Randall will stand as first vice and Phil Thomas will take one year term. Frank has asked to stay on for another year. Frank and Brian suggest they be one year terms. Brian will run the election. Randal said that technically, we can only elect for 2 year terms. Those elected can resign after one year and another election can be held at the 2023 AGM. Randal will present the Year in Review in Jules absence. Brian will make the motion to reappoint our accountant.

9. Storm update from Jules if available by Zoom - covered earlier

10. RTTC - Phil stated he will circulate a worthwhile climate change survey to the board. It's being done by Lakehead University.

11. NAMSC - Brian Bainborough: International Convention is still on with a tentative agenda set. Ontario will have 3 speakers: Dr. DeRosa on the buddy sap project, Jenny Liu and Brian Bainborough. If Jenny Liu can get approval to travel from OMAFRA. Several QA tasting workshops will be run this fall.
12. IMSI - Ray Bonenberg: June 9th AGM in Burlington Vermont. Many new reps present. Environment committee struck to look at Climate change and other related issues. Paul Renaud will be involved. Ray predicted that syrup sales will be slowing after the peak during the last two years. There will be some growth in the 5% range, but we won't be seeing 20% per year. Brian noted that Ray was awarded the Lynn Reynolds Leadership award and congratulated him. Steve Needham noted that Ray's work helped us dodge the new labeling on added sugar. Frank said we need to mention this in our communications. This is what our association does behind the scenes. Brian noted that our relationship with the PPAQ in Quebec helped with this file.
 - a. Ray noted that the IMSI will be working with Paul Renaud on the Environment Committee. Ray will chair this committee for the IMSI. The timing is right to move forward with this issue and we need to setup a working group to support this.
13. M & P - Leann Thompson absent, see report below. Some questions about the new email newsletter and how we will subscribers. John explained that the main approach is through social media posting.
14. Other Business - none
15. Adjournment: Next Meeting Monday October 3 in Algoma

Action Items:

1. Jugs Working Committee - John/Randall
2. Mitacs donation not appearing in the financial report - John
3. Shirt order for the store
4. Foodland logo usage for all members
5. AMPAK appreciation letter or certificate FH, JW
6. Algoma insurance BB
7. Financial template for Local reports RG, JW

See reports below.

Executive Directors Report - Jul 13, 2022 Board Meeting

Financial

- The Royal Bank Account and Paypal Accounts have been reconciled to the end of June
- See the OMSPA 2022 Financial Reporting to June 30th for details including cash position
- We are in a typical position for this time of year. Cash position is a bit lower, but we did payout \$17.5K in recipe book reprinting costs
- Regarding budget deficit management, believe we are safe with current situation and can proceed to October board meeting without significant changes.

Grants

- Grass Roots Sector Development is well underway with three progress reports submitted. The fourth one is about to be submitted. The first phase is complete. We have paid out \$35K and now have all \$35K in hand. The second phase has been delayed until September.
- Grass Roots Marketing (\$20K total, 50% share) First report submitted mid May, with a small payback \$1400 to cover our early activities. This will augment our \$10K M&P budget with extra funds to allow more general promotion and funds for promo of Maple Weekend and Fall in Love with Maple.

Store

- Sales have been slow since the season end.

Derecho Storm response

- Working collaboratively with OWA and Boise Est to inform politicians and provincial govt. Staff of the situation. Jules Rochon of Eastern is playing a big role. He has significant damage himself.
- Storm survey prepared and sent to members. See latest draft report. 24 good responses
- Assessment:
 - we have a small number of producers with catastrophic damage, and a large number with smaller but significant damage.
 - The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is assessing damage for the activation of disaster relief (DRAO). Difficulty is the spread of the event right across the province. They are used to activating disaster relief in more discreet areas.
 - Had a Zoom meeting with manager of the DRAO program

- Decision rests in the Minister's hands.

OMSPA Survey

- Smaller numbers of members reporting this year, but typical for pre-COVID years. Have about 85 responses in hand now.
- 2019 we had 78 responses. In 2021, 157 responses
- Everyone very busy with life again with lack of restrictions
- Will have new admin enter paper surveys and hand over to Angela Wheeler for the analysis.

Membership

- A few renewals trickling in still
- 576 new and renewed for 2022

Admin Assistant

- Working on contract for the new hire. Will start next week.
- Advertised on Indeed and received over 100 resumes
- John did screening interviews with 7.
- Ray, Frank and John did two final interviews.
- Suzanne Williams will hand membership duties over

OMSPA M & P Report July 2022

Newsletter Launch

OMSPA launched its first seasonal newsletter the last week of June 2022. Here is some data and analysis of the inaugural launch:

- Sent to 726 recipients with 443 opens from the initial email.
- Total opens was 785, which is higher because people forwarded the email to their contacts (which is great!).
- Total clicks was 119
- Most clicked link was the rhubarb lemonade recipe, with 42% link clicks.

This newsletter was not shared on social media, but we will be sharing the next one. Initially I wasn't sure how that would go or how well received the newsletter would be, but I think it will make a difference and offer more shareability for members on their own platforms.

Between now and the next newsletter release (early September) there will be a push on social media for newsletter sign-ups.

The newsletter distribution correlated with a spike in website visits at the time it was distributed.

Website Analytics

Between April 5 and July 6 there were 18,210 page views on the Ontariomaps.com website. Maintaining social media all year long is making a difference in terms of maintaining social media engagement and also visitation to the website. The third most visited page is Where to Buy Maple Syrup.

As part of the newsletter launch, the website was restructured to allow us to more easily share recipes on social media (and in the newsletter). This is a big change and will make a big difference in terms of website visits and getting people onto the Ontariomaps site to find producers and maple syrup near them.

Recipes and Website Changes

At the same time as the website launch we also created a recipe video where we made maple flavoured cupcakes. This was also shared on social media and youtube and the recipe was shared in the newsletter. The plan is to continue this with original maple recipes as video tends to do well on social. This was the first video and we learned a lot from its production that we will incorporate into the next one. I anticipate this will do really well on social media, in coordination with the newsletter.

Social Media Stats

Between April 5 and July 6, 2022 there are the following statistics:

- Facebook Page Reach: 10,420 (decrease of 94.2% due to end of Maple Weekend campaign)
- Instagram Reach: 493 (decrease of 77.6% due to end of Maple Weekend campaign)
- Post Reach 5,900
- Engagement 484