

MINUTES

**LOUISIANA SWEET POTATO COMMISSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2009
10:00 AM
L.S.U AGCENTER – AVOYELLES PARISH OFFICE
8592 HIGHWAY 1
MANSURA, LA 71350**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Larry Fontenot called the meeting to order at 10:00 am

ROLL CALL

Mr. René P. Simon called the roll. A quorum was declared.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Fields
Nelson Bordelon
Randy Deshotel
Mark Fields
Larry Fontenot
Lee Jones
Venoy Kinnaird
Kelsey McKoin
Ryan Quebedeaux
Larry Thibodeaux

MEMBERS ABSENT

Commissioner Mike Strain
James Deshotel
Kenneth Thornhill

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION made by Randy Deshotel and second by Kelsey McKoin to approve the minutes from the April 23, 2009 meeting. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial reports from May 31, 2009 were read by René P. Simon.

MOTION by Ryan Quebedeaux, second by Lee Jones to approve the report. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

Mr. Simon then presented the legislative auditor's report from FY 06-07 and FY 07-08. There was one minor finding, but it was a \$0 net effect to the commission's net assets. This occurred July 1, 2006. Members questioned whether a private CPA should

do the audit or if it has to be the Legislative Auditor. Mr. Simon will question the LDAF staff to seek an answer.

Mr. Simon then presented the proposed budget for 2009-2010. The budget is based on 13,500 acres of production, which would give advertising tax revenue of \$180,000 and advertising expense based on \$110,000. The board added \$500.00 for in-state travel for members, \$150.00 under miscellaneous for building rental and to change the LSU Experiment Station to the LSU AgCenter. Action was deferred until after Diane Allen and Associates report.

REPORT BY AL MC DUFF, DIANE ALLEN and ASSOCIATES ON THE ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION BUDGET

Mr. Al McDuff with Diane Allen and Associates (DAA) turned the floor over to Nancy Steiner to review the proposed advertising budget. DAA presented 2 budgets. One of the budgets was for \$90,000, and the other one was for \$110,000. The budget were alike except the more expensive one will include Family's Features series in which Louisiana Sweet Potatoes will possibly pare with Cook's Ham to provide economical, easy to prepare meals. .

Mr. McDuff and Ms. Steiner then handed out information on Holly Clegg's activities from April through August 2009 as well as information on the 2009 Canned Sweet Potato Recipe Contest The results of the *Louisiana Cookin's* Sweet Rewards recipe contest were announced as well as a display was shown of the winners.

MOTION made by Mark Fields and second by Lee Jones to accept the \$110,000.00 Diane Allen and Associates Plan. The plan will pay Diane Allen \$49,438.75 for the work preformed by the agency and also some vendor work. The Commission will pay the remainder directly to vendors. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

MOTION made by Ryan Quebedeaux second by Lee Jones to accept the proposed budget with the changes noted earlier. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.

UPDATE ON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR ADVERTISING AGENCIES

René Simon gave an update on the process. Over 50 packets had been requested and sent to prospective agencies with 5 submitting proposals. Although this was all done properly, it has been decided to suspend the process because an error had occurred in distribution of one RFP packet. One was not sent to a prospective agency in a timely manner (before the close of due date) and the agency sent an email to Mr. Simon to complain about the process. After consultation with Commissioner Strain, Tabitha Gray, Executive Counsel to the Commissioner, and Wanda Ward, LDAF staff in charge of RFP's and contracts, it was decided to terminate the project. Mr. Simon apologized for the error and any problems it may have caused.

Mr. Simon and Mrs. Ward then discussed issuing a one year contract with Diane Allen, and although no vote was needed because of above action to approve DAA budget. Mr. Simon and Mrs. Ward wanted to inform the Commission of the laws governing issuance of contracts.

Mr. Simon will consult the Commission at its January meeting to decide if it wishes to proceed with a year-to-year contract with Diane Allen or go through the RFP process again.

APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

René P. Simon has not been approved as the Executive Director of the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission. This is needed mainly because of auditing purposes so the Commission is not found to be in violation when Mr. Simon acts on its behalf.

MOTION made by Randy Deshotel and second by Kelsey McKoin to accept René P. Simon as the Executive Director of the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members gave an update on the crop in their areas. Most reports were promising, with a few noted exceptions. Harvest will begin around September 1.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Plans were made to meet on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at a place to be determined at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION made by Venoy Kinnaird and second by Lee Jones to adjourn. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote.