

# OMSPA Board of Directors Meeting

July 19, 2023, 4:20 pm to 6:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting

## Attendance:

Frank Heerkens

Brian Bainborough

Ray Bonenberg

Leann Thompson

Steve Needham\*

Bill Vandenberg

Bill Hubbert

Steve Smith

Jack McFadden\*

Peter Lorriman

John Williams

Michael Levitan\*

Kyle Gilbertson

Mark Youmans\*

Al Murray\*

Jules Rochon

Randall Goodfellow

Chad Jakeman\*

Bob Snider

Phil Thomas

Dave Branson

Amy Shaidle

\*attended on-line via Zoom

1. Call to order, conflicts of interest if any, Approval of agenda - 4  
The meeting was called to order at 4:22 pm.  
There were no conflicts of interest identified.  
Add Centre Acer to Applied Applied Research & Training. and Summer Tour report to the beginning. Governance: continuation of the board going up to the locals.

*Moved to accept the agenda with the additions by Bill Hubbert and seconded by Brian Bainborough .*

2. Summer Tour - Dave Branson  
300 people total in attendance on at least one day. 250 signed up for the technical sessions. Dave is pleased with the registration numbers and happy with having many of the processes up online. The weather forecast is looking good. Currently there are 175 registered for the banquet. Many of the technical sessions will be recorded and placed online.

Frank introduced Amy Shaidle from Southwestern to the board. It is her first meeting as a board representative.

3. Approval of May 15th meeting minutes - 2  
No errors or omissions were noted.
4. Business arising from the minutes, action items - 10
  - a) Maple sector development plan up on the website - done.
  - b) Award criteria circulated to board - done.
  - c) Algoma insurance - meeting held, but carry forward

d) International Plowing Match (IPM): Jack McFadden reported that Simcoe & District has decided not proceed with a booth. Decided to channel their energy into a fall workshop

e) Action item on where and when board meetings to be held was moved to governance.

*Motion to accept the board minutes from the May 15th meeting by Randal Goodfellow, Seconded by Brian Bainborough. None against.*

5. President's Report - Frank Heerkens

Frank commented that the board group he has worked with for the last three year has been excellent. He thanked those that participated in the Strategic Plan process

6. Executive Director's Report - John Williams

See report.

John apologized for arriving late to the board meeting.

- Collecting final Production surveys, numbers are a bit low
- Membership at 600
- Financials for 2022 show nearly \$9000 net gain
- Ray Bonenberg explained that this is a Notice to Reader, not a full audit
- Discussion on how financials will be presented at the AGM. Ray as treasurer will present. Clarification by Brian Bainborough and John as required.
- Ray will make the motion for financials,
- Brian will make the motion for our financial reviewer for 2023- Grant, Thorton

7. Governance - Bob Snider

- Bob presented a draft Board Calendar, see attached
  - he asked for comments
- ONCA - Ontario Not for profit Corporation Act mentioned
  - we must be compliant by October 2024
- Brian Bainborough as past president presented the slate for next years slate
  - Randal Goodfellow as president
  - Bob Snider as Vice president
  - disagreement over Steve Needham or Phil Thomas serving as second vice president. To be discussed after the meeting.

8. Government & Industry Relations - Randal Goodfellow - see report

- meetings with the minister and deputy minister
- have been in discussions with OMAFRA on a program to get more trees into production.
- working on several other options for funding in the Maple Sector but these are confidential at the moment
- OFA will help us with looking at maple crop insurance
- working on payment for environmental services by maple producers
- the strategic plan has been very helpful while shopping for support and funds

## 9. Marketing, Branding & Promotions - Leann Thompson

- Larger donation made to the Royal this year. We will be allowed a representative at the awards luncheon. Several volunteers have stepped forward to attend.
- After a survey of members Sept. 30th to October 8th were chosen as dates for Fall in Love with Maple - FILM. Deadline to commit as a participant is in early August.
- Farm & Foodcare's Breakfast from the farm has changed this year. No need for syrup at the first two events, but it may be needed at the third in October.
- Grow Ontario Grant
  - Worked with George Brook to submit an application for this, focused on money for a study on developing a multi year marketing plan.
  - It's a 50/50 grant. We are looking at a \$90k project. We would plan to look for other funding to help with our share of the \$90k.
  - This project fits in with next steps for the marketing pillar in the Strat Plan
  - This would start in early 2024 if we get the funding
  - Randal commented that OMAFRA is supportive of us applying for this grant.
- Frank thanked Leann for all her work and mentioned that the local reps on the events working group need to attend the meetings

## 10. OMAFRA update - Sophie Krowlikowski

- replacement for Jenny Liu
- looking forward to meeting everyone in person.
- Jenny is due to have her baby shortly.

## 11. Member Services - Steve Needham

- Membership currently at 600 plus
- Jug program is showing around \$25K
- Discussion on Honourary Members.

*Motion make Gary Ivens and Cecil Cass of Eastern Honourary members by Jules Rochon, seconded by Ray Bonenberg . No objections.*

## 12. Applied Research & Training - Phil Thomas

- a. IMSI- RB
  - See written report below
  - Buddy sap project progressing well. Dr. Maria DeRosa is planning to have working test strips at the Eastern fall AGM
  - Application in for the NAMSC research grant
  - Struct a working group on Training which includes OWA to help fulfill the committee's Strat Plan objectives.

## Centre Acer - Ray Bonenberg

- Ray and Brian attended the 25th anniversary of Centre Acer
- new program to broaden the membership of Centre Acer
- potential cost of \$2500 per year
- Want to look further into what the benefits would be.
- partnerships like this are often very helpful
- IMSI and NAMSC interested too.

- consider for budget 2024
- Randal commented that Working with groups like Centre Acer will help our training and research goals
- Ask is for permission to enter into discussions with Centre Acer. Ray will contact the head of Centre Acer to open discussions and report back.

#### 13. Quality Assurance - Brian Bainborough

- Judging Workshop in Algoma in Sept. 7th
  - will use our current format
  - the program setup by IMSI/NAMSC, UVM, U of Maine is too expensive right now

#### 14. Communications - Ray Bonenberg

- discussion on a make over of the Mainline
- need to get some members on board to help with this

#### 15. IMSI - Ray Bonenberg

- Recently had their AGM with a board meeting
- much discussion about climate change and the environment
- Paul Renaud and Dr. Tim Rademacher reached agreement on how to proceed with work on climate change
- Standard of Identity on Maple work still continues after 4 years. Still several years to go. Protects us from fake maple if it is passed.

#### 16. NAMSC - Brian Bainborough

- planning underway for the for the International meeting to be held in the Sault, October 22 to 24, 2026
- many outside groups are providing support like RAIN, Tourism Sault
- An RFP has been put out to hotels
- Winton Pitcoff is moving on from his job as ED of NAMSC to work as an agricultural commissioner.
- Theresa Barounn has been appointed as the new ED and the editor of the Maple Digest
- Brian expressed it is important for the EDs of the major maple organizations to talk and share ideas on the issues facing everyone.

#### 17. Other Business:

- Frank asked Bob Snider to clarify the next meeting. Bob confirmed October 3rd and in- person
- Ray questioned John about Foodland ON. How active are they? John said they hold regular meetings which he attends. They are sending a representative to the Summer Tour.
- Randal pointed out that, for the first time, we will have sessions on the management of locals and provincial organizations.
- Brian stated that the CEO of the Royal has resigned
- John said he will be handing out free reusable shopping bags at the tech sessions as part of the Grassroots marketing funding we got.
- Frank reminded committee chairs that they need to have their reports into John on time for them to reach board members.

Action items:

- Discussions with Centre Acer on membership- Ray and Brian
- Algoma insurance Brian
- Budget committee to consider donation to Int. Maple Museum for 2024

adjourned at 6:15 pm

Draft Agenda OMSPA Board of Directors Meeting  
July 19, 2023, 4 to 6 pm - Hybrid Meeting

1. Call to order, conflicts of interest if any, Approval of agenda - 4
2. Summer Tour
3. Approval of May 15th meeting minutes - 2
4. Business arising from the minutes, action items - 10
5. President's report - FH - 5
6. ED report. - JW - 5
7. Governance - BS
8. Government & Industry Relations - RG
9. Marketing, Branding & Promotions - LT
  - a. marketing funding proposal
10. OMAFRA update - Sophie?
11. Member Services - SN
  - a. approval of honorary memberships
12. Applied Research & Training - PT
  - a. Centre Acer
13. Quality Assurance - BB
14. Communications - RB
15. IMSI- RB
16. NAMSC - BB
17. Other Business - 5
18. Adjourn: Next Meeting Tuesday, Oct 3rd, 2023 by Zoom

Zoom Meeting Details

Registration: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlocOmoqTMoHNwm3wqagijohDLrs9PitJ78>

Zoom Link for meeting:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86570078268?tk=pgnyPzDRgmsRkQhS7TCHV8dfb0f0kt4ALH1WNOa862g.DQMAAAAUJ\\_qQPBYSHhTcDI1UVFHZWRZVj5dTVTVmFRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA&pwd=bzlwV29iNS9TL1JXalJ4WTE1V24vUT09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86570078268?tk=pgnyPzDRgmsRkQhS7TCHV8dfb0f0kt4ALH1WNOa862g.DQMAAAAUJ_qQPBYSHhTcDI1UVFHZWRZVj5dTVTVmFRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA&pwd=bzlwV29iNS9TL1JXalJ4WTE1V24vUT09)

Call in:

+1 647 374 4685 or +1 647 558 0588

Meeting ID: 865 7007 8268

Meeting Passcode: 634662

**Governance Committee Report**

**Current Activities**

The committee split its' current activities into two streams:

A) Engage with Local Boards to understand from their perspective:

- the role that locals should play support members in their geographic areas,
- the support OMSPA should give locals,
- issues locals have in terms of governance and the changes to the governance model seen as necessary.

As of mid July, discussions have been had with Waterloo-Wellington, Algonquin, Algoma, Ottawa, Quinte, Eastern, Simcoe and Grey-Bruce is pending.

B) Research best practices for not-for-profit Boards with a focus on:

- Board size,
- Board composition and election process,
- what bylaws and policies would improve efficiency and effectiveness,
- what changes could shield Locals from unmitigated risk and what impact does the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA) have OMSPA's constitution.

As of mid July, research of ONCA, best practices and discussions with the Ontario Woodlot Association (OWA) and Ontario Beekeepers Association (pending) are nearing an end.

### Next Steps

The next steps include summarizing the Local discussions, conversations with the OWA, research into best Governance practices and changes required by the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA). A Governance committee meeting is scheduled for mid August to begin the process of building consensus on a set of recommendations for changes to OMSPA's Governance structure & bylaws and policies to be developed. These recommendations will go to the Executive for input in the Fall and then to the Local leadership for comment.

Bob Snider  
Chair, Governance Committee

### Draft Board Calendar

#### Why a Board Calendar?

- It is a simple tool to help ensure that the Board of Directors makes time for its fiduciary, strategic and board development work and allow Executive members and Committee Chairs to plan and prepare timely reports. Agendas will be circulated before meetings. Regular Committee Chair reports will continue to form part of the agenda.

August, 2023	September, 2023	October, 2023
No scheduled meetings	<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> Sept 12, 2023 (zoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Standing Committee Chair Appointments</li></ul>	<b>Board Meeting and Local President Townhall</b> Oct 3, 2023 (in-person) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Mid Year Financial report</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasurer Appointment (2023/24)</li> <li>• Budget Discussion</li> <li>• Strategic Plan Review</li> </ul>
<b>November, 2023</b>	<b>December, 2023</b>	<b>January, 2024</b>
<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> Nov 7, 2023 (zoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing Committee Mandates for 2024</li> <li>• Committee Member Approval</li> </ul>	<b>Board Meeting</b> Dec 5, 2023(zoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget Approval</li> </ul>	<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> Jan 2, 2024 (zoom) <b>Information Days</b> (in-person) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local AGMs and Elections</li> </ul>
<b>February, 2024</b>	<b>March, 2024</b>	<b>April, 2024</b>
<b>Board Meeting</b> Feb 6, 2024 (zoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Orientation</li> <li>• Year End (preliminary) Financial report</li> <li>• Local Financial Reports</li> </ul>	<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> Mar 5, 2024 (zoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director and Liability Insurance review</li> </ul>	<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> April 16, 2024 (zoom)
<b>May, 2024</b>	<b>June, 2024</b>	<b>July, 2024</b>
<b>Board Meeting</b> May 7, 2024 (in-person optional)	<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> June 18, 2024 (zoom) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGM Preparation</li> <li>• Nominations Report</li> <li>• Audited Financial Report</li> <li>• Production Survey Report</li> </ul>	<b>Executive &amp; Chairs Meeting</b> July 9, 2024 (zoom) <b>Summer Tour and Annual General Meeting</b> <b>Board Meeting</b> (in-person) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasurer Appointment (2024/25)</li> </ul>

## Government and Industry Relations Standing Committee

**In general the focus of this Standing Committee's work is:**

- a) To help find the funding for the other Standing Committees to do their work;
- b) To help develop new funding programs with the government that will help individual producers and the sector as a whole;
- c) To work on regulatory issues that will benefit the Ontario Maple Sector.

**We are guided by the Maple Sector Development Priorities:**

1. Putting More **Maple Trees** into Production

2. Mitigating the **Risks of Climate Change**
3. Protecting and Developing the Ontario Maple Syrup **Brand**
4. Addressing the Looming **Human Resource** Challenges
5. Putting Ontario-focused **Research and Training Capacity** in Place
6. Ensuring **Quality** Product
7. Securing the **Sustainability of OMSPA**
8. Using Ontario Maple Sector **Data** for Effective Strategic Planning and Decision Making

#### **Recent Contact with Funding / Policy / Regulatory Entities:**

- There has been an in-person meeting with the Minister of OMAFRA's office and a separate in-person meeting with the Deputy Minister of OMAFRA's office on June 30 for a discussion of the 8 Sector Development Priorities listed above.
- Since that date there has been multiple meetings with OMAFRA on number 1 (under NDA) and a discussion on number 3, as well as preliminary work on number 8.
- Additionally the Minister's print message in the conference program, and the Minister's video message that will be shown at the AGM is a result of this subcommittee's work.
- There are other funding programs in various pipelines, not just OMAFRA that will benefit individual producers and the sector as a whole (also under NDA).
- Working with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture on Crop Insurance for Maple Syrup.
- Providing feedback on the importance of linking biodiversity to climate mitigation and the importance of incentives for landowners for encouraging the environmental services (biodiversity and climate-related) that they maintain.
- Work continues with OWA on Forest (Maple) Inventory on Private Land – Ray Bonenberg is the lead.

### **Applied Research and Training Committee (ARTC) Report**

July 14, 2023

Phil Thomas

#### **Buddy Sap Test Strip Research:**

As a reminder, the buddy sap detection technology relies on the use of small segments of artificial DNA material (aptamers) that will selectively bind to the unique chemical components of buddy sap. Currently the major focus of the research is optimizing the test strips for buddy sap. The testing system will be similar to the rapid testing COVID kits with a test strip and a testing solution. There are several parameters on the test strip that can be optimized including: the strip itself, the amount of anchor added to the strip, the amount of aptamer used, and the amount of gold nanoparticle used. One major challenge with strip preparation is batch-to-batch variations. The research team has managed to optimize the conditions such that batch-to-batch variations are minimal.

In parallel with the test strip optimization work the team at Carleton is continuing to fine tune the selection of aptamers.



The sap collected from OMSPA members during the 2023 season is being used this year to validate the testing system. The goal of the research team is to have mini-test kits prepared for hands-on sampling at Eastern's Info Day in November.

### **Damaged Tubing Project:**

Discussions are in progress to test a few carefully collected 2023 damaged tubing samples at Trent University's wildlife forensic DNA lab as a proof of concept. If successful we will put together a targeted collection plan for the 2024 season.

### **Training:**

The 2023-28 OMSPA Strategic Plan has expanded the scope of this committee to develop the training of members. A working group is now established, including participation from the Ontario Woodlot Association, to address the 2023 deliverables.

Foodland Ontario Meeting May 24, 2023 - online

Flowers Ontario Grassroots Growth project

Wrapping of delivery vehicles

- All members have at least one vehicle
- Cheaper than billboards and mobile
- Long lasting
- eye catching

Challenges

- Variety of different flowers grown so different designs needed each member
- Program equity, ensuring equal opportunity for all members.

Results

- Exceeded goals
- Benefits continue long after the program is over

Working with OMAFRA

- Easy to navigate application
- Quick review and approval
- Good support
- Helpful staff
- Easy to understand reporting
- Would definitely do it again.

Open Food Network - Grassroots Growth Project

Openfoodnetwork.ca - see resources

Open source non-profit software organization.

Software provides an ecommerce platform for online farmers markets and local food groups

Obstacle to digital marketing

- Lack of time 59%
- Not knowing what to post 41%

- Lack of tech skills 34%

#### Project Activities

- Online market place creation for clusters of local farms (hubs)
- Ecommerce tune ups
  - Completed 230
- digital marketing resources
- One on one guidance
- Found the first two the most popular, farmers wanted to outsource the work

44% increase in sales digitally

Most successful where the wholesale flower hubs with huge increases, food sales actually decreased 10%. COVID and continuing supply chain issues seem to have driven both.

#### Farms selling

## RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNE

1. Facilitate co-selling opportunities, and support capacity and best practices for multi-vendor hubs. Encourage wholesale opportunities along with direct-to-consumer markets.
2. Develop digital marketing in the context of an overarching marketing plan and business model.
3. Plan around farmers' obstacles and limitations, including lack of time and technical skills.
4. Offer training and guidance early in the transition to online sales.

# NEXT STEPS

- Our project shows there is a need to extend digital marketing programs beyond supporting individual farmers, toward training and mentoring supply chain coordinators and community food leaders.
- Member associations, food policy groups, communities, and governments can all support this process.
- Our next steps at OFN will be to research best practices for starting and running hubs, and work to establish new co-selling and wholesal



## Foodland ON Update

New awareness campaign running which is attracting many new users to online resources

SCAP - Grow Ontario initiative, cost share available

Local Food week - June 5th

#loveONfood

Many commodities still running sampling programs in grocery stores and through delivery programs

Ontario Beans looking for partnerships on recipes in particular.

Next meeting in September, online. Should have a review of latest consumer research.