



**Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association
Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, November 8, 2021, 11 am
In Person at the Dripping Springs Ranch Park and Event Center –
1042 Event Center Drive, Dripping Springs, Texas 78620
Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/82559314796>
Audio Only: (346) 248-7799, 82559314796#**

I. Call to Order *Karen Bonarrigo*

The meeting was called to order at 11:16 a.m.

II. Roll Call of Board Members *Karen Bonarrigo*

13 Board Members present, three Board Members were not present but provided proxies, and two Board Members were not present. Quorum met.

III. Review and Approval of June 11, 2021 Board Minutes *Karen Bonarrigo*

The June 11, 2021 Board Minutes were distributed by email and posted on the TWGGA website. Julie Herbort made a motion to approve the minutes as distributed. Glenna Yates seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

Moment taken to pay respects to Dr. James Patrick (Pat) Brennan of Brennan Vineyards who passed away on November 3, 2021.

IV. Treasurer's Report *Julie Herbort*

Financial records for the Association covering the period through September 2021 along with financials separated by event were distributed by email and posted on the TWGGA website. The financials were reviewed in detail. Key highlights included:

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan for \$30,800 approved earlier in the year is now eligible to apply for forgiveness. Will process with Frost Bank later in the week.
- Filed for Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) in the amount of approximately \$5,600
- Income statements show 2019 through 2021 to continue to monitor non-COVID years as comparison
- Financials are in the black in 2021
- Grape Camp to be completed to included in the next round of financials
- Question was raised about eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)

Bill Day made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as distributed. Bob Landon seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

V. President's Report

Roxanne Myers

Roxanne Myers, President, described the focus over the year for TWGGA as analogous to a business with focus on what we can do, accomplish, pain points, and that the right leadership can lead the organization where it needs to go to accomplish more in the future. Fiscal health improved with additional opportunities to be explored through events, sponsorship packages, grants, and cost savings efforts including working with an association management company.

Association calls with other Texas wine and grape organizations continue monthly along with regular calls with other Texas alcohol associations (breweries, distilleries). Strong relationship maintained with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC), and opportunities remain to do more with Wine America from a federal perspective. Legislative Committee meetings held monthly to plan for 2022 events and offensive legislative strategy. VineRoots program currently being launched.

Grape Camp starting this week. Education Committee led by Meredith Eaton and Dr. Justin Scheiner developed robust schedule. Discussion was held about whether to combine Grape Camp and Annual Conference to which it was concluded to keep the events separate. Annual Conference planning underway and approximately 90% complete. Currently contracted with Strategic Association Management (SAM) on specific Annual Conference execution initiatives.

There is interest in standing up a Grower Advocacy Committee.

Board of Director meetings will go back to in-person in 2022 to assist in solidifying legislative agenda.

Bill Day made a motion to approve the President's Report. Glenna Yates seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

VI. Invited Guests

Dr. Amit Dhingra, Department Chair of the Department of Horticulture Sciences, Texas A&M University

Dr. Dhingra was introduced by Dr. Justin Scheiner, and the transition of the TAMU Horticulture Department from Dr. Lineberger after his retirement to Dr. Dhingra was described as a "perfect fit." Dr. Dhingra provided his professional history and plans for future research, programs, and initiatives that should provide positive impacts for the Texas wine and grape industry. He expressed desire to hear from all members of the industry as he gets settled in his new position.

Discussion was held about harvest yield reporting through crop insurance, USDA/NASS surveying, Silicon Valley Report, and other non-Texas state crush reporting requirements.

***Dr. Justin Scheiner, Assistant Professor and Extension Viticulture Specialist,
Department of Horticulture Sciences, Texas A&M University***

Dr. Scheiner presented a printed handout entitled “Partners for Progress – November 2021 Progress Report.” Key points included:

- Extensive research efforts statewide made to assess injury after Winter Storm Uri in February 2021. Survey conducted in March 2021 with follow up survey in September 2021 alongside of on-site visits to vineyards across the state.
- Late freezes in April 2021 were one of the latest spring freezes in North Texas. Most of High Plains vineyards were dormant at the time and experienced less damage. Highly damaged vineyards will require extensive vine rebuilding. North Texas will require the most rebuilding.
- Inconclusive varietal trends in the Texas High Plains but will continue to monitor. Texas Hill Country damage was site specific. Gulf Coast Blanc Du Bois specifically sustained extensive damage.
- Lower yields reduced need for shoot thinning
- 22 reports of herbicide drift were submitted which is less than in previous years. However, pending litigation is underway regarding this issue.
- Dr. Jim Kamas is conducting a study on the physiology of grapevines in cold hardiness due to herbicide drift.
- Dr. Pierre Helwi is conducting a study on cold hardiness of different grape varieties.
- Vine rebuilding and retraining sessions will be part of the educational lineup at 2022 events such as Grape Camp and the Annual Conference. AgriLife Extension will conduct in-person education as well as online options in 2022.
- Texas A&M hosting an inaugural Research Symposium in December 2021.

VII. Regional Meeting Reports

Region 1 – High Plains – Kirk Williams / Bill Day

Bill Day detailed the dicamba and herbicide drift issues over the years and requested that the Drift Committee be re-activated. Kirk Williams requested a letter from TWGGA to be submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding dicamba. Board was agreeable to letter to be drafted by Kyle Frazier and Roxanne Myers to be sent to the EPA and distributed with State Legislature. TWGGA previously submitted a letter publicly to support the pending lawsuit.

Kirk Williams distributed a handout entitled “Texas Grape Tons/A [acre] & Tons Produced.” Discussion was held regarding the issue that the number of new vineyard plantings are not pacing the same as the high rate of new wineries. Questioned whether the legislature could incentivize additional vineyard plantings.

Region 2 – North Texas – John Matthews / Meredith Eaton

John Matthews described efforts made to Region 2 members to encourage communication on issues and needs with TWGGA. Increased communication on issues provides vital feedback which is needed throughout the year and for legislative work, and John challenged the other Board members to increase engagement with their Region’s members.

Meredith Eaton reported that soliciting feedback from members on educational programs are ongoing.

Region 3 – Gulf Coast – Ryan Levy / James Kasparek / Tiffany Haak

James Kasparek reported that Region 3 is in a rebuilding phase after the freezes earlier in the year. Blanc Du Bois vineyards had extensive damage (trunk split, bud damage, crop loss) and will cause challenges when hand pruning and replanting. Older vines appear to have fared worse with the freeze. Interest in Walker varieties in the Region and preliminary results showed that they fared better with freeze events.

James noted that inviting non-TWGGA members to regional meetings might encourage them to get involved and join TWGGA.

Region 4 – West Texas – Kalyn Hodges / Dustin Walker

Kaylyn Hodges noted that there are a few non-members in the region to hopefully pull into TWGGA membership. Vineyard updates from El Paso, Dale City, and Davis Mountains indicates they escaped the worst of the bad weather impact felt in other places in the state. Harvest wrapped up mid-October in Davis Mountain and produced positive results and great quality. No dicamba issues reported.

Region 5 – Hill Country – Bret Perrnoud / Jason Englert

Jason Englert reported on supply chain issues that are affecting numerous members in Region 5. Not a lot of vineyard development in the region, but a lot of new wineries are entering the market. Harvest was good overall in the Hill Country even with lower yield. Site specific issues identified but overall quality remained good for the region.

Additional Board Members noted supply chain issues as well and recommended educational programs related to the subject during the Annual Conference. Consolidated group purchasing for chemicals and supplies also recommended on smaller scale within regions.

VIII. Committee Reports

a. Education and Conference Committee

Meredith Eaton reported that they are always looking for additional suggestions and feedback for future educational sessions. Goal is to build membership and provide value to TWGGA members. 35-40 participants in the current educational sessions planned so far. Currently 189 attendees for Grape Camp. Annual Conference will include additional ticketed event opportunities, WSET certification process, CEUs for vineyard tracks.

Lunch break started at approximately 12:39 pm. Meeting resumed at approximately 1:07 pm.

b. Legislative Committee

Kyle Frazier presented a printed booklet entitled “TWGGA Member VineRoots Action Packs” and handout entitled “Special Session Recap.” Key points included:

- Third Special Session of Texas Legislature concluded on October 20, 2021. Two issues from the session will impact our industry – 1) Redistricting, and 2) COVID relief money.
- Redistricting: Population increases over the past 10 years resulted in Texas picking up two more state representatives federally. State districts were redrawn which will impact which members will represent regions in the future. Redistricting tends to bring retirements and contested races which will impact the next election cycle. Some redistricting lines will be challenged legally and not resolved for years depending on the complexity of the issue raised.
- COVID relief money: TWGGA joined a joint coalition of hospitality industry members (Texas Restaurant association, breweries, hotels/motels) to request \$800 million of the \$16 billion allocated to Texas under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Granted \$180 million that will be allocated through the Governor's Tourism Office through a grant program. Criteria on how to apply and receive these grants is not public yet but will be distributed to members at time of release. Governor has not yet signed the bill at time of this Board Meeting. Funds must be allocated by 2024 and used all by 2026.
- Large portion of the ARPA funds allocated to Texas were used to replenish the Texas Unemployment Compensation trust fund to reestablish its solvency. This should be helpful for employers because it removes the need for unemployment taxes to be increased.
- Potential pressure for another Special Session, but not likely.
- Roxanne Myers reminded the Board that the Legislative Committee meets monthly and that the Committee is working on the legislative agenda and strategic objectives for 2022.
- Kyle Frazier described in detail the history of the VineRoots campaign and need to empower TWGGA members to be more involved in their local political processes. Grassroots efforts by TWGGA members to get to know their political candidates and representatives will increase ability to influence and impact positive change for the industry. VineRoots program was previously approved by the TWGGA Board.
- VineRoots Action Packs are meant to be easily digestible resources on how TWGGA members can increase their engagement in the political processes. Provides standard operating procedures and recommendations for TWGGA staff to use as well. John Matthews explained the intent on how the VineRoots Action Packs can be used by TWGGA members.
- Eventually might need VineRoots coordinator on staff within TWGGA to attend regional meetings and work with membership, but in the meantime Kyle Frazier and the current TWGGA staff will maintain those responsibilities.
- Legislative staff visits out of Austin to wineries in the Hill Country have started and will continue to host throughout the spring.

Bob Landon made motion to accept the drafted letter to the EPA to be signed by the TWGGA President. John Matthews seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

c. Grower Advocacy Committee

Roxanne Myers explained that Kirk Williams previously recommended that a grower advocacy group might be helpful. Recommendation was to evolve the previous Drift Committee into the Grower Advocacy Committee. Kirk Williams offered to chair the new committee.

Kirk Williams presented a printed handout entitled “Proposed Grower Advocacy Committee.” Key points included:

- Proposed structure would be maximum of 10 committee members with three TWGGA Board of Directors and two Texas A&M AgriLife extension personnel that would meet 2-3 times per year. Would be considered a standing committee.
- Discussion resulted in recommendations to include a winery/vineyard as part of the committee and change to nine or 11 committee members to assist with voting issues in the future.

Bill Day made a motion to approve the development of the Growers Advocacy Committee. Bob Landon seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

Break started at approximately 1:53 pm. Meeting resumed at approximately 2:16 pm.

IX. TWGGA Administrative and Membership Update

Sabrina Houser Amaya

a. Membership Dues Report

New dues structure will be implemented as of January 1, 2022. Additional member drives will take place in 2nd and 3rd Quarter 2022 after the Annual Conference.

b. Marketing Communication Plan

Roxanne Myers reviewed the need for a more comprehensive communications plan to better serve TWGGA members. Additional content generation, member distribution, and engagement is needed for the future. Discussions started with SAM on methods to improve TWGGA’s communications content plan and social media plan through the end of their contract. VineRoots campaign will require an adequate marketing plan to deploy successfully. Need for branding standards will be an upcoming task.

c. LSIWC Summary

Conducted 2021 Virtual Conference but will go back to in-person in 2022. Hosted in-person Lone Star International Wine Competition during October 2021 to line up with Texas Wine Month.

Entries were up 15% to 800 this year, and the competition had over 25 judges that participated in a more quantitative judging process this year. Largest number of Texas entries ever this year and had increased label competition entries. Eight Grand Star awards of which seven out of eight were Texas. Revenue was \$75,655 with a budget of \$62,000. Some miscellaneous expenses to still be paid which will be reflected in final year numbers.

After action report conducted last week to put together recommendations on how to continue to improve for the 2022 LSIWC. Space allocation for next year may require venue change to a conference center especially with a goal to increase at least 15% each year. Wine dinners that showcase the TWGGA members that won large awards was recommended as a future initiative.

d. Grape Camp Summary

Previously held at the Gillespie County Fairgrounds but moved this year to the Dripping Springs Ranch Park and Event Center. New venue allows for more spaces and features to utilize and increase vendor spots. Revenue is currently at \$57,584 with a budget of \$31,020. Programming led by the Education Committee is well done. Grayson College Foundation donated 200 *Grape Man of Texas* books and will be selling them during Grape Camp.

e. 2022 Annual Conference and Trade Show

The Annual Conference is scheduled for February 17-19, 2022 at the Embassy Suites in Denton. Details for conference are already confirmed with the hotel. Board approved hiring SAM to assume responsibility for key logistics, such as speakers, registration, session logistics, and social media. Current contract with SAM is \$36,000 for 6 months. Currently have 164 vendor booths and public registration will open on December 1, 2021. Already negotiated cost savings for current conference with the hotel through SAM.

Conversations about locations and bids to host the annual conference for 2025 through 2028 have started. The 2023 and 2024 conferences are already confirmed through previous year contracts.

X. Texas Wine Foundation

Glena Yates reported on the Texas Wine Foundation and its purpose of providing funds for scholarships and research. Current Texas Wine Foundation Board of Directors were reviewed. Goal is to meet before the end of the year to discuss fundraising opportunities. A donation button was added online and through vendors at Newsom Grape Day this year that raised money that went back to Texas Wine Foundation scholarships. Previously gave \$5,000 in scholarships in 2021.

XI. Old Business

Roxanne Myers reported that the Strategic Planning Committee was dissolved. Plan previously developed to define TWGGA's vision was incomplete but will provide good direction once have staff to execute.

XII. New Business

a. Board of Directors Election Timeline and Tasks

Board of Director nominations will go out soon. Glenna Yates will lead the Nomination Committee. Nominations will be due November 30, 2021 and will go out to vote mid-December. New Board of Directors will be announced and sworn in at the Annual Conference in February 2022.

b. TWGGA Staffing

Went into Executive Session at approximately 3:16 pm

XIII. Next Meetings

Board Meeting will be February 16, 2022 prior to the Annual Conference at the Embassy Suites in Denton, Texas

XIV. Motion to Adjourn

Bill Day made a motion to adjourn. Jason Englert seconded the motion. **Motion to adjourn passed at 4:05 pm**

Respectfully submitted by Karen Bonarrigo, TWGGA Secretary