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Official Minutes of the 2024 Annual Business Meeting

Meeting Convenes: Chairman Brad Barth called the 121st annual business meeting of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association to order at 1:30 p.m. on January 24, 2024. The meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, the Chairman and Secretary Duane Dahlman being present. The Chairman confirmed that notice of the meeting was properly mailed ten days prior to the meeting and was published in the winter 2023 issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower*. With more than 25 members in attendance, the Chairman declared that quorum was met. He took roll call of the Board members present.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the 2023 MCIA Annual Meeting were published in the spring 2023 issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower* and were included in the meeting documents. Duane Dahlman moved to approve the minutes of the 2023 MCIA Annual Meeting. The motion was seconded by Ryan Anderson and passed.

Treasurer's Report: The Chairman reported that the Statement of Activities and Financial Position for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2023, was included in the meeting documents. The financial report and an independent audit were successfully completed, presented, and accepted at the November 2023 Board meeting. Copies can be obtained by contacting the MCIA office. The Chairman stated that financial reports are reviewed by the Treasurer and the Chairman and presented at each meeting to the Board of Directors. Brent Benike moved to approve the May 31, 2023, financial report. The motion was seconded by Kelsey Henke and passed.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman stated that MCIA is in good financial position. He thanked MCIA's staff for their continued dedication to the organization and the loyalty of its members. MCIA is nearly fully staffed with a need to hire additional Organic Services staff as that department continues to grow. He congratulated Roger Wippler on his recent retirement, welcomed Carl

Anfinson in his new role as Foundation Seed Manager, and wished recent hires well as they begin their careers with MCIA.

Board of Directors' Election: The Chairman explained the Board of Directors' election ballot: One Category A director was seeking re-election for District 3. Two other Category A director positions were open, one for District 2, another for Related Industry. One nomination had been received for each position: Kelsey Henke, having completed one three-year term representing District 3, sought a second term. Gabel Hoseth of Waubun, Minnesota, was the District 2 nominee. Anthony B. Cortilet of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, was the Related Industry nominee. The UMN's Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station nominated Nancy Ehlike to serve as Category B director. There were no other nominations. Duane Dahlman moved to cast a unanimous ballot in favor of electing the three Category A nominees and ratifying the one Category B nominee. The motion was seconded by Kelsey Henke and passed.

President's Report: Dr. Fawad S. Shah, MCIA President/CEO, introduced MCIA's staff members. Next, he reported that fiscal year 2022–23 was another successful year for MCIA. Total revenues were \$3,435,306 while total expenses were \$3,218,024. MCIA has a general investment and a building reserve account. In 2015, the total investment value was approximately \$2.5 million. Strategic Wealth Group has taken a progressive and careful approach to both accounts, which have almost doubled since that time, with a current value of \$4,865,936. Organic Services led all departments in revenue generated followed by Field Services, Foundation Seed Services, Certification Services, and the Seed Laboratory. Organic Services' revenue continues to steadily grow. Revenues for Certification and Field Services continue to be strong but fluctuate in tandem with the number of acres applied for each year.

Official Minutes of the 2024 Annual Business Meeting, *continued*

Major expenses for all departments include salary, benefits, and payroll taxes.

The President then reported on the 2023 AOSCA Annual Meeting hosted by MCIA in Bloomington, Minnesota. MCIA raised over \$16,000 in sponsorships, developed and prepared registration packets, and provided logistical support. MCIA staff along with the board chairman attended and hosted the hospitality suite. Thom Petersen, the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, offered welcoming remarks and Tom Slunicka, CEO of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, was the guest speaker at the awards banquet. Overall, the meeting was a success and a great opportunity for MCIA to participate in various committees and discussions with AOSCA members.

MCIA was featured in several articles over the past year. In October, *Seed World* reported on MCIA's receipt of AOSCA's Excellence in Innovation Award. In another article *Seed World* reported on AOSCA's honoring of Roger Wippler with an Honorary Lifetime Membership. *Seed World* also interviewed MCIA's president, which led to the article "Should a State-Level Seed Certification Agency Invest Money Outside their State and Outside of Seed Certification?" In November, MCIA was the topic of a *Star Tribune* article.

The President conducted a talk about seed corn production at the Corn Conference held at the University of Agriculture, Pakistan. The President also presented an overview of MCIA to Delta Theta Sigma fraternity, led tours of the MCIA seed lab and conditioning facility, and he continues to develop curriculum and teach a Seed Science, Technology & Society course at the University of Minnesota.

Staff changes at the organization included the retirement of Foundation Seed Services Manager Roger Wippler and the subsequent promotion of Carl Anfinson as manager of the department. Claire Chapman Biel in the seed lab was promoted to seed technologist. Kate Sinnott was hired in August to fill the seed technologist position vacated by Sam Banks in March. Sarah Lindblom and Tessa Parks joined Organic Services as organic certification specialist/inspectors in June.

MCIA's Field Services inspected roughly 200,000 acres in 2023. Nearly 180 facilities are inspected each year under the Approved Facility Program. Field Services staff also perform organic inspections and

administer the MnDOT Approved Seed Vendors Program. Field Services continue to perform third-party audit inspections to facilitate specialty grain movement into international markets.

The MCIA Seed Laboratory tested 2,943 samples in the past year. The top five crops being tested are perennial ryegrass, soybeans, wheat, corn, and oats. Training of new staff continues. Claire Chapman Biel attended a four-day germination workshop at Iowa State University. The seed lab completed proficiency testing for SCST, USDA ASL, and ISTA. A customer survey was circulated and feedback was positive; 97 percent of customers were very satisfied with the service they receive.

Foundation Seed Services hosted an open house for the UMN breeding program staff and graduate students. Also, Foundation staff provided an education session to Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff. Foundation seed sales increased by 15 percent compared to year 2022. MCIA prepared six new license agreements for five soybean lines and one winter barley line.

Organic services increased the number of clients served from 564 to 585. The staff within the organic department participated in the IOIA Crop and Processor Training courses. A new NOP rule, Strengthening Organic Enforcement, requires that certificates be issued from the OID, a procedure which MCIA has already implemented. There will be an NOP on-site audit in July of 2024.

Administration and Certification staff worked closely with AOSCA to host their annual meeting event in June. Staff worked together to organize a new venue and program for the MCIA Annual Meeting. MCIA conducted an RFP process and contracted with a new managed IT services provider. There will be an on-site AOSCA certification audit in the spring or summer of 2024.

The President explained how MCIA communicates with members. Its publications include an annual Directory, a quarterly newsletter, the *Minnesota Seed Grower*, and a monthly bulletin, *Samplings*, as well as the annual *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide*. MCIA's website has a blog, press releases, and article links that provide even more information.

Meeting Adjourns: The Chairman then called for other business. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.