



State of New Jersey

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

MINUTES OF MEETING

March 27, 2024

(Wednesday)

Public meeting notice was certified by communication on March 21, 2024.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by giving written notice of the time, date, location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48-hours in advance this notice has been posted on the third floor, Riverview Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey; mailed to the Newark Star Ledger; the Camden Courier Post; the Philadelphia Inquirer and filed with the Office of the Secretary of State.

President Holly Sytsema called the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture to order at 1:15 pm. Board members in attendance included President Holly Sytsema; Vice President Barney Hollinger (via Teams), Kurt Alstede, Lisa Specca, Bob Blew, David DeFrange, John Hart and Stephen V. Lee, IV. The meeting was held at Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ.

Also in attendance were Secretary Wengryn, Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison, Dr. Sebastian Reist, Assistant Director, Division of Animal Health; Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition; Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources; Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry; Nancy Wood, Division of Marketing & Development; Christopher LaRegina, Nathan Schatz (via Teams), Alyssa Pitt, Robert Vivian, Jeff Wolfe and Jeff Beach (via Teams), Office of the Secretary. Also in attendance were Ashley Kerr, Peter Furey, Al Murray, NJ Farm Bureau; Dr. Brian Schilling, Rutgers University; Sarah Lally, Farm Service Agency, Erika Boyland (via Teams), Acting Conservationist, NRCS, Bruce Eklund, NASS, Jeff Burd and Linda Walker, NJ Department of Agriculture.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by Stephen Lee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2024, regular meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Burd, Mercer County Board of Agriculture, reported that at the recent Philadelphia Flower Show, Mercer County Community College's Horticulture Program and the Design Landscape Program were awarded a gold medal. Only five were awarded for the entire competition, this was a very big honor. He noted that they were also awarded the Chicago Horticulture Award and thanked Professor Amy Ricco and

Adjunct Professor David DeFrango. He noted that it was a great accomplishment and that they are looking forward to the future with these students.

REPORT OF RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Dr. Brian Schilling represented the College and congratulated new Agriculture Secretary Ed Wengryn on his recent appointment and wished him much success in his new role.

- Presented updated memo regarding the data related to the “soil protection standards” rule proposal.
- Peggy Brennan is leading the submission of a grant that he is supporting to get some USDA funding for video conferencing equipment and infrastructure at some of the marine facilities. He noted that some of the stations in Ocean County, Cape May and Cumberland County would benefit from the equipment that will effectively allow them to have more efficient ways of doing online programming. Some of their facilities, believe it or not, don’t have the internet that can support it.
- Two new County Agents as of March 1st; Kate Brown is an agricultural agent with RCE of Somerset County. Kate is a former Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Associate in Burlington County; her new role focuses on agricultural viability and on-farm food safety. In addition, Janine Spies joined RCE’s Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources as the Statewide Program Leader in Fruit IPM. She will be coordinating and supervising staff delivering IPM scouting, grower education, and adoption of new technologies in fruit production across the state. He reported that they were in the final steps to filling the Essex County position in urban agriculture. Finally, he noted that the Salem and Warren County positions have been difficult ones to fill, and those searches remain open as are a few others.

REPORT OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY (FSA)

Sarah Lally reported the following from FSA:

[Emergency Relief Program 2022 \(ERP 2022\) Track 1 and Track 2](#)

On December 29, 2022, President Biden signed into law the Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328) that provides about \$3.7 billion in financial assistance for agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms and other eligible disasters occurring in calendar year 2022. The NOFA is available here: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-10-31/pdf/2023-24009.pdf>

ERP 2022 Track 1 will provide assistance to producers who were impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms, and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar year 2022 using existing Federal Crop Insurance or Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) data already submitted to FSA. Producers will be receiving letters and FSA-523 Applications if they received a 2022 Crop Insurance Indemnity or 2022 NAP Payment.

ERP 2022 Track 2 is a revenue-based certification program designed to assist producers who suffered a loss in revenue resulting from 2022 calendar year disaster events when compared with revenue in a benchmark year. The revenue-based track provides an alternative method to establish revenue in cases

where there has been a change to operation capacity, circumstances where revenue does not reasonably reflect a normal year's revenue, or for crops that are used within the operation and do not generate revenue from the sale of the crop.

No deadline for 2022 ERP yet but anticipate one will be announced in the near future.

General CRP

Agricultural producers and private landowners can begin signing up for the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) starting March 4 and running through March 29, 2024.

General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland.

Additionally, General CRP includes a Climate-Smart Practice Incentive to help increase carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by helping producers and landowners establish trees and permanent grasses, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands.

General CRP is one of several ways agricultural producers and private landowners can participate in the program. Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local USDA Service Center to learn more or to apply for the program before their deadlines.

Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC)

Enrollment for 2024 DMC is open and ends April 29, 2024. For those who sign up for 2024 DMC coverage, payments may be made immediately for any payment triggered in January 2024.

DMC continues to offer protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

FSA has revised the regulations for DMC to allow eligible dairy operations to make a one-time adjustment to established production history. This adjustment will be accomplished by combining previously established supplemental production history with DMC production history for those dairy operations that participated in Supplemental Dairy Margin Coverage during a prior coverage year. DMC has also been authorized through calendar year 2024. Congress passed a 2018 Farm Bill extension requiring these regulatory changes to the program.

The DMC decision tool has been enhanced and was developed in partnership with representatives from the University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin to help producers determine the level of coverage under a variety of conditions that will provide them with the strongest financial safety net.

Loss Adjusters

New Jersey Farm Service Agency is seeking Loss Adjusters (LAs) for the Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP). Loss Adjusters are required to have knowledge of field crops and specialty crops, as well as a thorough understanding and execution of crop adjusting guidelines and program provisions, as applicable to FSA programs.

REPORT OF NEW JERSEY FARM BUREAU

Peter Furey represented the Farm Bureau and reported on the following topics:

- DEP Model Tree Ordinance is a growing concern the more farmers hear about it.
- Good discussion the previous evening with their Directors on SPS and the changes that are being made; he noted it's a work in progress, moving in the right direction and they are looking forward to the SADC meeting the next day where they will further review the changes that have been discussed and followed by a written narrative that would be distributed at the meeting.
- Heat stress – he noted that dangerous legislation has been introduced that would be binding for all industries that have outdoor exposure for their workers to high heat. We will need a legislative strategy to deal with this, an exception for agriculture that says that agriculture is a unique industry with unique work conditions, and we have a great partner in Rutgers Extension to treat this as an educational matter with minimal standards. We need to have an alternative. We need to work with Secretary Wengryn and the Commissioner of Labor leading the way with input saying what would those standards be to protect workers and not impose an undue financial burden on the producers. We will continue to monitor the legislation.
- Camden County Board of Agriculture met the previous evening and hosted Assemblyman William Spearman for a question-and-answer session, there were more than 40 people in attendance and he was very well received.
- The Invasives legislation that was previously vetoed needs a restart and noted that some Boards are taking the initiative to see what can be done to get it over the finish line.
- Congratulations to Secretary Wengryn.

REPORT OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE (NASS)

Bruce Eklund, State Statistician, reported the following:

- Census profiles were released just an hour ago and is released every five years. This information is also available online now and will show all kinds of information by country. This data comes in four pieces; with the US total and you can see where New Jersey ranked very high in certain things with vegetables, blueberries and cranberries all ranked in the top tier.
- 2023 Land Values and Cash Rents information was provided to the Board members for their reference.
- Floriculture survey underway and they are wrapping up the aquaculture survey.

NATIONAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Erika Boyland, Acting Conservationist reported to the Board via Teams:

- Equip Program – as of right now they have obligated 35% of the \$19.7 million in funding that they will be receiving for the program.
- Cut off for CSP Program applications is March 29.
- Currently interviewing for an RCCP Coordinator position and they are also interviewing for the Woodstown District Conservationist as well.

- Expecting a visit from the Chief on April 10 and 11; on the 10th there will be an employee roundtable discussion with the Chief for State Office employees as well as a hybrid session for field staff that are not able to attend in person.
- April 11th they will be holding a roundtable discussion with some of their partners in the morning and will head out in the afternoon to showcase a few EWP sites.
- In addition to the Chief, our Northeast Regional Conservationist Casey Taylor will also be present. All of this information is on the NRCS website.

Board member Kurt Alstede commented that producers are grateful for the opportunity to apply for funding for the ash tree problem but are becoming very frustrated at the speed at which things are happening. He noted that there is still a large number of operations that have not been approved and those that have been approved haven't gotten the green light to proceed and now the whole offseason has been lost.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Wengryn reported that the first few days were going well. His first appearance was the previous night at the NOFA's annual meeting, it was a nice opportunity to meet with their members on a different level and looks forward to working with them and their issues as we go further in this role. He reported that the SADC got approval from the Governor's Office on their red line and staff is in the process of getting organized to present to their members tonight, so they have time to review before their meeting tomorrow. The timetable is that if their Board releases the red line draft, it will submit to them at their April meeting, it will be an adoption with major amendments proposed and then another 60-day comment period. This will give the industry time to review and move forward from there. He publicly thanked Assistant Secretary Atchison for his service as Assistant Secretary during the time without a Secretary and noted that he looks forward to working with him going forward.

Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison thanked Secretary Wengryn and agreed that the first few days were going well. He commented that Secretary Wengryn dove headfirst into the waters and is getting acclimated with the way public service works and meeting with all the Division Directors. He reported that the budget season is upon us, and we will be meeting with the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees and the Secretary and the Directors are preparing for that. He reported that he was able to coordinate with the Camden County Board of Agriculture to have Assemblyman Spearman come to speak at their Board meeting the previous night and that following the State Agricultural Convention in February, the Assemblyman formed two working groups, a logistics and a processing working group. He noted that the logistics working group was already scheduled to meet the following week and that the processing working group was still being scheduled. In addition, the Division of Marketing & Development is working on the rollout of the Jersey Fresh campaign which will be underway in mid-April with asparagus and going forward from there we will be celebrating 40 years of Jersey Fresh. He, along with Dan Wunderlich will be travelling to upstate New York for a dairy conference for the Dairy Business Innovation Center and then will be travelling to Virginia for a Food Export Conference to make sure that the State continues to have access as part of the agreement. He reported that we are required to attend a conference every two years and there is approximately \$3.5 million for food export so we are constantly trying to identify agricultural resources because most of the people that take advantage of the food export dollars are processed foods that may have no real connection to New Jersey agricultural

products so if there are opportunities where we can incorporate some production agriculture from New Jersey into that program as well, we try to do that.

Frank Minch, Director, Division of Agricultural & Natural Resources, commented that the heat stress issue for farmworkers, is separate from OSHA but that several states have petitioned OSHA to adopt the emergency plan for heat following Washington and Oregon's mitigation plans. The plans are very prescriptive and the legislation that was discussed earlier today also has a lot of prescriptive requirements, we will be watching this closely. In addition, he reported that DEP has issued their final adoption of the septic permit that we have talked about at previous meetings that is aggregate and gallonage over 2000 gallons so anyone who falls within those categories is eligible for that. In addition, he reported that this is the time of year that we see an uptick in questions about farmland assessment form filing.

Joe Zoltowski, Director, Division of Plant Industry, reported that all spray treatments have stopped for the winter for spotted lanternfly (SLF), so treatment now consists of exclusively of physically scraping and crushing egg masses. Crews scraped 13,060 egg masses at 43 properties in February. Before treatments can occur at a particular location, SLF teams must secure permission by getting property owners to sign our agreement. He reported that the municipal reimbursement program still has money available for towns and that applications are still being received. In addition, he reported that the Hemp Program has registered six growers, one processor and two handlers. Growers have registered a total of 10.5 acres outdoor and 37,425.2 sq ft of indoor grow. Growers have submitted two seed requests and three planting reports with five total varieties approved by staff. Finally, he reported program staff continue to meet with the administrators of the four municipalities participating in this year's LDD aerial suppression program to ensure they have completed their required responsibilities of participation, as well as municipal notifications, prior to the commencement of treatment activities. This May a total of 1,458 acres of forested residential properties and 1,720 of State lands are scheduled for treatment in Burlington, Cape May, Passaic and Sussex Counties.

Rose Chamberlain, Director, Division of Food & Nutrition, noted for the Board that the School Nutrition Unit just completed a management evaluation by the USDA that was done the week of March 18, USDA was onsite, and they go through all the components of our operations at the State Agency level, they review the sponsor agreements and the Grants that we administer. In addition, the week of April 15 our Fiscal Unit will have their USDA management evaluation and they will go through all the reimbursements, basically the money management of the Division. She reported that the Division continues to work collaboratively with the Department of Education, Department of Human Services and the Governor's Office staff on Summer EBT. The memorandum announcing the upcoming Summer EBT training and flyers to promote the program was posted in the School Nutrition Electronic and Reimbursement System (SNEARS) on March 15. The website for the program went live this month nj.gov/summerEBT. More content will be added as we get closer to the launch of the Program and training for SFA's will be April 17 by webinar. Finally, she noted that the Division is in full swing of the direct certification with Medicaid. The project has been going well with the Department of Human Services, Medicaid Office data sharing so that we can get more students eligible for free meals.

Dr. Sebastian Reist, Assistant Director, Division of Animal Health, reported that the Division is currently dealing with a national disease issue. Last week Texas announced that they were tracking disease issues

in dairy that they believe is an HPAI infection. So that is a High Path Avian Influenza HPAI in dairy cattle. He reported that lactating dairy cows or ones that have had several pregnancies seem to be affected. He noted that the Division will keep a close eye on this and are developing some messaging to go out to specifically dairy farmers and veterinarians around dairy farmers. In addition, he reported that there had been a blue tongue quarantine last period on a cow that was shipped into New Jersey and then tested positive. He noted that they are developing messaging to educate people about this, and this is why the regulations exist.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

John Hart reported that he had attended the Mercer County Board meeting and there was no news to report. He reported that Mercer County was very wet and there is a problem with drainage, and they are waiting to do any groundwork.

Bob Blew announced that in an effort to raise money, Salem County has brought back their Friends of Agriculture meeting, so the Elmer Grange hosted about 170 guests along with a few local legislators and they were able to raise some funds for the Board. He has suggested the idea to other Boards that he attends to try to duplicate the efforts and help raise money for the county boards that are struggling for funds. In addition, he attended Gloucester County where he heard from Dr. Beier who reported that the Rowan Vet School has been doing emergency calls for animals now. There are just limited times that they are available and don't have many of the necessities in place yet. In Atlantic County he was asked a question about Agrivoltaics on blueberries that are considered in a wetland. Secretary Wengryn commented that would be part of the pilot program, it would have to be part of their application and then that would be reviewed by Rutgers, the BPU team and Department staff. He noted that we are still waiting on the final proposal for that. Finally, he noted that the low price of grain has been mentioned and many are extremely concerned.

Stephen Lee announced the recent passing of longtime Burlington County farmer Dorothy Pettit, owner of Huff & Puff Farm, lifelong advocate for New Jersey agriculture. She was instrumental in many aspects of agriculture, specifically, the New Jersey Agricultural Society's Leadership Development Program. He along with Bob Blew were members of Class 5 of the Leadership Program, and she told him that once you get into the program, you have to do something with it which was great advice. He noted that at the recent Burlington County Board meeting there was talk about separating Extension from Rutgers in the needs assessment that is going to the Board of Managers. He noted that we understand the difference but some in the Legislature don't necessarily understand the difference and don't understand how critical that is for the success for the Ag Experiment Station. He reported that the Camden County meeting the previous night it was great to have Assemblyman Spearman present to take questions from the audience and he took a good deal of notes. They talked about the importance of cut outs for agriculture for different things - labor, housing, heat stress, etc. He noted that going forward we need to for the legislators to understand the importance of carve outs for agriculture.

David DeFrance noted that several of the topics he had have already been covered but noted that the needs assessment being done by the Board of Managers is critical and encouraged all to be sure that all counties have submitted theirs as this information is critical to Rutgers administration so that they can be looking ahead to see what is needed. He commented that Ag Viability has really come up, the cost of

things, we are coming out of things with almost a flat line. He is concerned that even though inflation has not gone up, the cost of the operation in general has gone up and their profit line has really dropped. He noted that on farm meetings are very beneficial, tours on farms will garner support from the communities that we are trying to serve.

Lisa Specca reported that legislation had been passed and signed by the Governor, remapping yet again the affordable housing industry in New Jersey and for agriculture this issue is very important. She attended the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture meeting where they had a guest speaker from a food pantry called Lunch Break of Red Bank and they have been in business for 41 years. She reported that they just opened a great big new facility that was donated, and they have a breakfast and lunch program and are introducing a new program called Citizen Gardner, the goal is to have the gardeners donate the produce so that they can incorporate fresh produce rather than preserved things that they get through the food banks. She helped them make a connection with Farmers Against Hunger. Allen Carter spoke just days after the SADC had revised the SPS standards and thanked the Board for their hard work and felt that the needle had moved. She noted that the industry is waiting for the new SPS draft to be released and then have the opportunity to comment again. Monmouth County has a great representative to the Board of Managers, and they have done a very comprehensive two-page preliminary needs assessment.

Kurt Alstede reported that North Jersey has experienced very cold conditions for several nights that there was a freeze protection put in place on farms in their region which threatened early plum varieties, strawberries and apricots for the most part peaches and apples were still pretty tight. He noted that they double covered all the strawberries and they think things are fine. He noted that there are a lot more extremes (weather) and farmers need to adapt and do things differently. He appreciated the Department's efforts to make sure that the DEP gave the burn permit. This brings up the importance of getting the Farm Bill renewed and county boards are commenting on the Farm Bill Renewal and making sure that there are provisions in the Farm Bill for Risk Management and proper insurance. The ash tree situation continues to be a critical issue. He noted that some new DOT truck weight limitations that have been placed on county roads in Warren County that don't exempt farm trucks and there is a tremendous amount of concern about the differentiation of a farm truck doing something local versus somebody that's transiting across the county road trying to bypass the interstate system. The issue was raised at the Warren County legislative dinner and Frank Minch of the Department emphasized that this DOT proposal is not final, and they are asking if there is anything that the Department can do to help mitigate the situation for the farmers if something could be proactively done to very visibly, easily exempt all the farm commerce that is going on. He noted that there was a North Jersey Caucus meeting last week as well as a South Jersey Caucus. A candidate has already expressed interest in the North. He noted that there is concern about a DEP rule that governs groundwater under the influence of surface water, currently this is retroactive and any well that is within 200 feet of surface water is subject to these rules, there are no exemptions. There is a battery of tests that need to be done to prove that the ground water well is not subject to the influence of the surface waters. The costs involved for the testing was very high. Finally, he reported that the counties are still concerned about the SPS issue but are happy that they will have another opportunity to comment.

Board member Dave DeFrange commented that the ash tree problem continues to be a serious issue with the funding source taking so much time, some have had to have some work done prior to the funding because of safety concerns.

Vice President Barney Hollinger reported that he had attended the Cumberland County board meeting and most of the discussion there focused on the SPS rule. There are currently four farms waiting to be preserved but they are currently waiting for real estate assessments on it before they move forward. Finally, he reported that John Schuler made a presentation on the solar panel standards that are being sent out.

President Sytsema reported that she had attended the Warren County legislative event where one of the main concerns was the Route 519 restrictions, and Sussex County shared the same concerns as Route 519 is one of those roads that traverses the entire state. She noted that Frank Minch was going to inquire about this. She noted that Sussex County was very positive about the State Agricultural Convention and thanked Assistant Secretary Atchison for putting it together a great program and they were happy to see so many legislators in attendance. She reported that the Sussex County Community College is looking to revamp their ag programs as they don't have the students enrolling which goes back to the Ag Viability issue. In addition, she attended a Sussex County Chamber event on branding and marketing, and it was very informative. She reported that they would like to the Board to support S740 which revises elements of offense of agricultural trespass, expands number and type of activities constituting agricultural trespass, and expands the definition of "lands" susceptible to agricultural trespass. Finally, she announced that Emily Kuperus, from Kuperus Meadows Farm in Wantage will be representing New Jersey in June after being selected as the first educator in Sussex to receive the Ag in the Classroom scholarship.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Sytsema reported that the Personnel Committee is in the process of interviewing for the HR Manager position and will keep the Board apprised with updates.

Vice President Hollinger reported that the Policy Committee would be reviewing the Proposed Readoption w/Amendments – NJAC 2:36 for Child Nutrition Programs prior to the next Board meeting.

Stephen Lee reported that the Grants Committee would be meeting soon to review all the grant submissions.

Lisa Specca reported that one of the things that the Right to Farm Committee has been talking about is farmer safety and she thanked the Gardener News for the front-page picture and article that they did so that readers see the importance of farm safety. She has been doing some research and Iowa and Indiana have a project called the Community Campaign to reduce farm vehicle roadway crashes. She has made some inquiries about their program and perhaps doing something similar here.

Kurt Alstede reported that the Governor's budget proposal includes a 14% increase in the Department budget which includes funding for new positions in Animal Health and monies that are needed to complete the HVAC improvements at the Bug Lab. The Committee will be working with Secretary

Wengryn to see how we can best support the approval of this budget through the Legislature. In addition, the Ag Viability Committee has its work cut out as it was the most important resolution at the Convention.

David DeFrange reported that the Legislative Committee would be meeting soon with Secretary Wengryn to review what the Committee has been working on and what is coming. In addition, he wants to discuss the possibility of upcoming legislative tours. He reported that the SPS Committee has met multiple times, and he feels good about where we are. He is looking forward to seeing the language prepared by SADC for the new draft. Finally, he reported that the Invasive Species Committee will be meeting soon.

President Sytsema reported that that there was a change in Committees, Bob Blew will now be serving on the Legislative Committee and Vice President Hollinger will now be Chair of the Pinelands Advisory Committee.

There was further discussion on the North/South Route 519 commercial truck diversions that created this situation, and many are trying to get it resolved. A meeting has been scheduled for mid-April; it was suggested that a number of concerned farmers should attend. It was also suggested that someone invite a member of the State Police to a Board meeting so that we can articulate to them the issue.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval – 2024 Agricultural Fairs

ON the MOTION of John Hart, seconded by David DeFrange, the Board voted unanimously to approve the fairs as presented for the 2024 season.

Assistant Secretary Atchison reported that Camden County was not reflected in the list, but they are working within their Parks Department to put something together for one day in the fall.

Resolution for Joesph Atchison

President Holly Sytsema asked that Board member Lisa Specca read the prepared Resolution thanking Assistant Secretary Joe Atchison for his dedication to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture from July 1, 2023 through March 22, 2024 while standing in for the Secretary. (Resolution attached).

ON the MOTION of Kurt Alstede, seconded by Bob Blew, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Resolution.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

RESOLUTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by David DeFrange, the Resolution for Executive Session was read:

The Board adopts a resolution to enter executive session pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)(8), to discuss a matter involving the terms and conditions of employment of a current employee who works for the Department of Agriculture. This will include a discussion of hiring procedures in situations where Board Members and the Secretary participate in an interview.

The Board will disclose the contents of the closed session immediately after this closed session in today's public session if an action is taken and we are able to do so. Minutes will be approved at a future board meeting.

ON the MOTION of Barney Hollinger, seconded by Lisa Specca, the Board voted to go back into the public section of the meeting.

Action as a Result of Executive Session

ON the MOTION of Bob Blew, seconded by David DeFrange, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the Personnel Committee to proceed within its discretion to fill the positions they were currently conducting interviews for.

MEETINGS

The next regular meeting of the State Board of Agriculture will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 beginning at 1:00 pm at 200 Riverview Plaza, Trenton.

ADJOURNMENT

ON the MOTION of David DeFrange, seconded by Bob Blew, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Edward D. Wengryn