

**South Carolina Soybean Board
Minutes
Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center
Tuesday, February 4, 2025**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

- Fitzhugh Bethea, Chair
- Wes Woodard, Vice Chair
(outgoing)
- Rachael Sharp, Secretary-
Treasurer
- Jeffy Westbury, Vice- Chair
(elected)
- Cecil Eaddy
- David Owens
- James Shuler
- Charlie Whiten

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

- Joe Alvin Derrick
- Michael Grier
- John Rivers

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

- Mary C. Cromley, Executive Director, SCSB
- John Long, Chairman, SC Corn Board
- Dr. Michael Plumblee, Corn and Soybean Specialist, Clemson Extension
- Samuel Quinney, Director of Agricultural Outreach, SCDA (via Zoom)
- Ellen Lloyd, Administrative Assistant, SCDA (via Zoom)

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:15pm.

- II. **Approval of Minutes** – December 16, 2024 – ***A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as typed. All were in favor. Motion carried.***

- III. **Reports**
 - a. **Executive Director** – Miss Cromley reported a summary of her activities since the last Board meeting, including attending the National Corn Growers Association State Presidents and Executives Training in Louisville, KY, and Washington, DC. She also noted that she would be traveling on behalf of the Board to several meetings, including the SCFB YF&R Conference in Hilton Head Island, SC; the United Soybean Board meeting in New Orleans, LA; Commodity Classic in Denver, CO; and the American Soybean Association Board Meeting in Washington, DC.
 - b. **Treasurer’s Report** – Miss Sharp noted that she was still working on the issues related to investing the Board’s uncommitted funds and that the Board would discuss these further in Executive Session. Miss Cromley noted that many of the partners the Board supports – such as USSEC and Clean

Fuels Alliance – operate on different fiscal years and that those invoices were expected to come closer to the end of the Board’s fiscal year.

- c. **Clemson Extension** – Dr. Michael Plumblee provided updates to the Board on the current status of dicamba availability. He noted that the status for the 2025 crop year was still up in the air, but there were some in the industry that hoped the tool would be available in some form. Dr. Plumblee also discussed new developments related to grower compliance with the Endangered Species Act, including the proposed “point system”. Dr. Plumblee fielded several questions related to the qualifying practices and how many points certain practices would be worth in this proposed compliance system. Dr. Plumblee also noted that the main message they would be taking to county extension meetings is “stick to the fundamentals” due to the current economic conditions. He also reported that he would be hosting a Corn and Soybean Field Day at the Edisto REC in late July and encouraged the Board to attend.

IV. **New Business**

- a. **Conflict of Interest Statements** – all Board members and staff completed the Conflict of Interest Statements. After completion, the Board reviewed the forms and the followings conflicts were disclosed:
 - 1. Rachael Sharp listed two conflicts related with Mixon Seed and the South Carolina Crop Improvement Association;
 - 2. James Shuler listed a conflict with Ag in the Classroom; and
 - 3. Mary C. Cromley listed a conflict with the South Carolina Corn Board, South Carolina Corn and Soybean Association, and additional part-time employment with Agriliance Insurance Group as an agent working with clients in Georgia only.
- b. **Election of Officers** – Miss Cromley noted that Wes Woodard had termed out of being Vice-Chair, but that Fitzhugh Bethea and Rachael Sharp could still serve an additional term in each of their respective roles, if they wished. After brief discussion, the floor was opened for nominations. ***A motion was made to nominate Jeffy Westbury to serve as Vice-Chair and to renominate Fitzhugh Bethea as Chair and Rachael Sharp as Secretary-Treasurer. All were in favor. Motion carried.***
- c. **Sponsorship Proposals and Travel Requests**
 - 1. **Clemson Extension Outreach Support** – Miss Cromley proposed that the Board consider providing a grant of \$1,000 to each extension agent who would like to host a county meeting focused on soybeans. Miss Cromley noted that she recently attended a meeting in Lumberton, NC with Dr. Plumblee that the North Carolina Soybean Producers Association supported, and that Georgia also provides similar support for county

meetings. The suggested amount is \$10,000 to cover 10 county meetings throughout the year and an additional \$4,500 to sponsor each regional field day at \$1,500. ***A motion was made and seconded to provide \$14,500 of total support for Clemson Extension Outreach Support. All were in favor. Motion carried.***

2. **Soybean State Staff Meeting** – Miss Cromley presented the request from the Iowa Soybean Association for \$1,500 for the Soybean State Staff Meeting in Oklahoma City, OK. She noted that this meeting is very beneficial and provides a great opportunity to connect with all soybean staff. Chairman Bethea asked if this included travel, and Miss Cromley noted that it did not but that the Board could approve travel at the same time. ***A motion was made and seconded to sponsor the meeting and approve Miss Cromley’s travel expenses to attend. All were in favor. Motion carried.***
 3. **John de la Howe Foundation Event** – Miss Cromley and Miss Sharp discussed this proposal and the presentations that they have heard from the staff and students who work and attend the Governor’s School for Agriculture. After discussion on the background of the school and potential future opportunities to engage with the school, ***a motion was made and seconded to sponsor the John de la Howe Foundation Event at the \$5,000 level. All were in favor. Motion carried.***
 4. **American Soybean Association Board Meeting** (March 2025) – ***A motion was made and seconded to approve Miss Cromley’s travel expenses to be shared with the SC Corn and Soybean Association to the ASA Board Meeting, which includes the WISHH and ASAAP meetings. All were in favor. Motion carried.***
 5. **National Agricultural Law Conference** (June 2025) – ***A motion was made and seconded to approve Miss Cromley’s travel expenses to attend the National Agricultural Law Conference in Memphis, TN., to be shared with the SC Corn Board. All were in favor. Motion carried.***
- d. **Review of FY2026 Research Proposals** – after discussion and minor adjustments to funding levels, the Board agreed to vote on the research proposals en bloc, for a total of \$123,375 of funded projects. ***A motion was made and seconded to fund a total of \$123,375 of soybean research with Clemson University for FY2026. All were in favor. Motion carried.***
- e. **Next Meeting Date** – The Board determined that the next meeting would be held at the Sandhill REC on a date to be determined from April 8 – 10, 2025.

- V. Executive Session to discuss matters of employment – ***A motion was made and seconded that the Board enter Executive Session to discuss matters of employment. All were in favor. Motion carried.***

The Board entered Executive Session at approximately 2:54pm.

The Board voted to conclude Executive Session at approximately 5:10pm.

A motion was made for the South Carolina Soybean Board to inform the South Carolina Department of Agriculture of proposed changes to Memorandum of Understanding as outlined in Executive Session. All were in favor. Motion carries.

Following the vote, Chairman Bethea noted that SCDA would receive an MOU that, among other changes, would be four months in length and be contingent upon progress being made to transfer \$480,000 to investment accounts.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.

- VI. **Adjourn** – the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:18pm.

Minutes submitted by Mary Catherine Cromley, Assistant Secretary Treasurer of the South Carolina Soybean Board.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the South Carolina Soybean Board Meeting on February 4, 2025.

Fitzhugh Bethea, Chairman

Date