



February Board Meeting, 2/12/2026, 2:00 pm

1. Welcome

- a. Thao Schlichte – present
- b. Bambi Press – present
- c. Ellen Ciarimboli – present
- d. Michelle Clausen Rosendahl – present
- e. James Dickson – absent
- f. Michelle Boyd – absent
- g. Merri Cross - present

2. Board seat nomination and election process – **Thao**

- a. Finalize nomination process
 - i. Current nominees [Merri will screenshare draft ballot]
 - ii. Review draft nomination survey [Merri will screenshare]
 1. Discussed what constitutes an “active member” and how to add clarification to the “Contact Information” section of the form.
 2. Merri indicated she will present attendance information at the next Board meeting for each nominee.
 3. The survey was approved for distribution.
 - iii. Secretary asked for assistance on drafting the email which will have the survey link included
 1. *The Governance Guidelines for the Iowa Food Protection Task Force require an election of Advisory Board members every two years. Current Advisory Board members are: Chair, Thao Schlichte; Vice Chair, Bambi Press; Members at Large: Ellen Ciarimboli, Michelle Clausen Rosendahl, and James Dickson. All seats are open for nomination. As a current, active member of the Task Force, this is your opportunity to nominate yourself for a position on the Board. If you are interested in nominating yourself for a position (or all three positions), please complete the survey at [this link]. Nominations will be accepted by close of business on March 2, 2026. The nomination survey contains details on the duties of each Board position. NOTE: if you are nominating someone else, they must be a current, active member of the Task Force and must*



approve the nomination. They will be contacted by the Secretary to verify acceptance. If you have any questions, please contact the Task Force Advisory Board Secretary, Merri Cross.

- iv. The email language was approved.
- v. Email with survey link will be sent by the Secretary to active Task Force members after this meeting.
 - 1. The deadline to receive nominations will be **no later than 3/2/26**
 - 2. The responses will be tracked in an Excel spreadsheet and **will be shared with the Board at the March 16th meeting.**
 - 3. **Merri emailed the survey link to members on February 12th after the meeting.**

3. Planning for Spring General Meeting - **Thao**

- a. Discussion on potential speakers
 - i. Agricultural Products on the Farm panel discussion
 - 1. Hannah Hansen is a nominee for the Board, but has not been asked to be a panelist
 - a. **Merri will reach out to her to be a co-presenter (the Hub's work on aiding small businesses in Iowa)**
 - 2. Ellen had given the name of a mushroom expert she is working with, Dr. Heather Hallen-Adams. If we do a virtual meeting, she could present if the Board approves adding her to the panel.
 - a. **Merri will reach out to her to be a co-presenter (an example of an expert who works with businesses in a niche field)**
 - 3. Other invitations to the panel address regulatory challenges in Iowa:
 - a. IDALS: Dr. Polking and Janis Hochstetler
 - b. DIAL: Kurt Rueber
 - 4. Bambi suggests individual invitations be sent to presenters. Reminder to ask if they cannot present, then suggest someone who can take their place.
 - a. **Merri will reach out to each of them, with the exception of Kurt. Thao agreed to ask Kurt for his availability.**
 - 5. The Board asked if the panel would come up with their own questions. Discussion agreed with them coming up with questions, and ideas on speaking.



- a. These details will be added to the email invites.
 6. The moderator of this panel will need to be determined at the March meeting.
 - a. The Board suggested Dr. Dickson be the moderator, as he did an excellent job at the November 2025 General Meeting.
 - b. Merri will add the discussion to the March agenda.
 - ii. Backup presentation: Banned ingredients and dyes in foods
 1. Scott Platt, DIAL, has presented on this before.
 2. Suggested reaching out to main presentation panelists first
 - b. Virtual vs. in-person
 - i. Speakers can be given the option to present in-person or virtually.
 - ii. Merri recommends Task Force members join in-person, however, there could be a meeting link provided.
 1. If we do a hybrid meeting, then polling will need to be activated to vote on the ballots (one poll for Chair, one poll for Vice Chair, one poll for Member at Large and choose the top three; in that order)
 - iii. The Board has determined to hold the April 2026 General Meeting in a hybrid format, with presenters and attendees joining virtually or in-person.
 - iv. Merri and Thao will work together on formatting the polls, the logistics of holding the meeting with the new AV equipment, and staffing during the meeting.
 - c. Order of the meeting (floor nominations/voting first, or speakers first) will be decided at the March Board meeting
 - i. Merri will have a membership list and overall attendance records available for floor nominations.
 - ii. The Board will need to vote and approve the slate of nominees during the meeting.
 - iii. Merri will have a printed list of nominees available – email with the meeting invite and agenda, and printed for in-person attendees.
 - iv. A DIAL employee will need to count the poll votes and add them to the total of absentee ballots received.

4. Agenda items for March Board meeting – Thao

- a. Review and approve nominations



- b. Finalize the election ballot
- c. Discuss sending the election email to members after the meeting
- d. Discussion on status of speakers and meeting format (hybrid), including meeting/voting logistics
- e. Finalize the General Meeting agenda
 - i. Merri will have draft examples available of the agenda depending on the format, and the Board will approve one of them.
- f. Are there other items to add to the agenda?
 - i. No other items were added to the agenda.

5. Open Discussion

- a. Discussed the past efforts of the Board (creating the Governance Guidelines, working with each other, etc.). Members extended appreciation to each other on the work done in less than two years.

Meeting adjourned 2:46 pm

Merri Cross, Advisory Board Secretary