



## NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD

Nebraska State Fair Board Room, Grand Island, NE  
Virtual Meeting in accordance with Exec Order No. 02-03

### Meeting Minutes

**June 12, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, June 12, 2020, at 10 am. Public notice of this meeting was published in the June 4 & 5 issues of the Grand Island Independent newspaper and posted to the Nebraska Public meeting calendar website from June 1, 2020. The public was invited to attend via Zoom due to Covid-19 social distancing recommendations.

Roll call was read with the following members present via Zoom: Dawn Caldwell, Vice Chair; Bob Haag, Secretary; Ryan Hassebrook; Lanna Hubbard; Jeremy Jensen; Kevin Jorgensen; Chris Kircher; Jeff Kliment; Kathleen Lodl; Chuck Rolf; Beth Smith, Chair; Boyd Strobe, Treasurer; and Steve Wehrbein. Others in attendance at the board room were: Jaime Parr, Interim Director/Director of Sales and Tish Eckstrom, Executive Assistant/HR Coordinator. Terry Galloway and Lindsey Koepke of the 1868 Foundation were present via zoom.

Smith announced the meeting had been properly advertised as an open meeting and informed those in attendance of the posting location of the Open Meetings Act.

#### **Minutes of May 29, 2020 Special Meeting**

There being no corrections:

**Motion made by Strobe to approve the minutes of May 29, 2020 meeting as printed.**

**Kliment seconded the motion.**

Discussion: none

**Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.**

#### **May Financials**

Strobe reported the Board has received all the Financials. There will be no approval at this time.

First quarter payment from the Lottery was received in April.

Parr mentioned the reclassification of some items on the budget which will show on the budget presented at the July meeting. There was a request to adjust the Professional Service: Legal and Lobby budget item from \$59,000 to \$180,000 based on services rendered to date. The other budget line item requested to be change was the FICA Tax which is comprised of three different taxes: FICA, State Unemployment tax and other taxes. Due to unemployment being high this year, it was suggested to double the amount allotted for this item.

Discussion: Jensen, Strobe.

**Motion made by Jensen to post the budget information for public accessibility on the Nebraska State Fair website.**

**Rolf seconded the motion.**

Discussion: Jensen, Parr, Smith, Strope.

**Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.**

Strope discussed oversight of 2019 budget and reasons of legal fees incurred.

**Motion made by Strope to amend the budget to show \$180,000 for legal fees and double the amount allotted for payroll taxes.**

**Caldwell seconded the motion.**

Discussion: None

**Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion: Rolf, Strope, Parr

### **Interim Director's Report**

Jaime Parr reported many internal and external meetings with Covid -19 working groups which include staff, Board members, Nebraska 4-H and FFA, Central District Health Department, Grand Island Mayor's office, Governor's office and City attorney's office, Zone 5 partners, and IAFE webinars with safety as the number one consideration as multiple scenarios were defined. Six different budget scenarios have been created and shared with State Fair board Covid-19 Working Group. Those budgets will be shared with the full board for consideration and preparation for a larger conversation will lead to a decision about the 2020 Nebraska State Fair. The members of the State Fair Covid-19 Working group are: Beth Smith, Boyd Strope, Kathleen Lodl, and Kevin Jorgensen. Ryan Hassebrook and Dawn Caldwell were invited to the most recent meeting of this group.

Conversations have been ongoing with partners, including Wade Shows and Neste with regard to contingency plans.

The vendors and concessionaires were surveyed and 174 responses were received. The survey consisted of questions concerning how likely they would be to participate in our Fair if there were certain requirements in place such as: wellness checks each day; wearing of face masks each day; one-way walkways; and limited capacities. The overall majority responded positively to participate with most of the contingencies. Volunteers are signing up but numbers are down from last year. Small groups of the Landscaping Committee were on grounds to plant flowers.

Livestock, Equine and Competitive Departments are working on scheduling and securing superintendents, judges, and additional support team. Entries will open in July. Updates will be on the State Fair website and social media platforms. Current alumni exhibitors from Open Class 4-H and FFA are being sought for their Nebraska stories.

Operations Department is discussing with partners set-up, tear downs, barns and buildings with regard to multiple scenarios put forth.

Events is working on all stage schedules. The Special Events Committee and team has been planning the Veteran's Day Celebration, Opening Ceremony and the Nebraska Free Stage.

Aksarben has been fielding calls from potential participants wanting to be involved in the upcoming stock show. Processing of DNA is taking place right now and generates revenue for the Nebraska State Fair. The amount of DNA processed to date is significantly higher than last year.

Seasonal Staff has been added to the social media, Aksarben, and Operations.

Laura Hurley gave an update on Sponsorship. So far this year, \$842,987 has been secured in cash sponsorships and \$409,057 in trade sponsorship for a total of \$1,252,044. There is roughly \$90,000 in cash sponsorships and \$35,000 in trade sponsorships still in negotiations. With the inclusion of those numbers, it would result in about a 14% increase over last year. So far this year there are 16 new sponsors and 6 new sponsors have been added for 2021. There are 3 options for sponsors if the 2020 Fair does not take place: 1.) Sponsorship can be refunded; 2.) It can roll over to 2021 Fair; 3.) Can donate

all or part of sponsorship to the General Fair Fund. All sponsorship contracts contain a force majeure to protect the Fair and the sponsor.

Hurley also reported on the monthly social media and digital campaign. In April, Color the Fair contest was launched with Greenline being the sponsor. There were over 150 entries. These entries will be judged by superintendents and the results will be announced in July. All of those entries will be displayed at the Fair. In May, the Drive-By Eye Spy Scavenger Hunt was launched and sponsored by Dinsdale, Aurora Cooperative, Home Federal Bank, and Wade Shows. 27 entries have been received. All correct entries will be entered into a drawing with prizes being provided by those sponsors. Results will be announced August 1<sup>st</sup>. Just this week, the non-profit Yarn-Bombing competition of State Fair Blvd, sponsored by Bosselmans, Viero, Sam's Club and Pepsi. This will be launched as a state-wide competition. In July, there will be a Surfing the Net Treasure Hunt announced.

The 1868 Foundation will be the Hospitality Team during the Fair hosting all of the VIP Hospitality venues. The partnership with Fonner Park is growing and they have been gracious in allowing us to have the above mentioned activities on the grounds.

Discussion: Smith, Jensen, Hurley, Wehrbein, Parr.

### **Committee Reports**

a. Finance-

Boyd Strobe reported the Finance Committee met and discussed getting recommendations from audits and putting together some plans, policies, and procedures along with attorneys.

Parr discussed a new line item added this month to the Financials representing expenses from 2019.

Discussion: Smith

b. Public Affairs and Outreach – Did not meet

c. Livestock-

Jeff Kliment reported the Livestock Committee talked about superintendent and judges contracts. Also discussed recent shows that have taken place in the state and how those were ran. The Committee looked at different scenarios for the Livestock shows.

d. Facilities-

Chuck Rolf reported no meeting of this committee.

The Board approved at the last meeting the Facilities Committee could move forward with rocking of the driving lanes of certain areas of the parking lot as long as it would not cost the Fair Board any money. Chris Kotulak was going to speak to his board about contributing to the project. The Fonner Board decided they could help with maintenance such as mowing and grading, but could not commit financially. The 1868 Foundation was approached about the rock improvement project. There were 3 quotes obtained for the project. Rolf suggested the O'Neill Transportation bid was the most favorable quote. Grow Grand Island approved a \$35,000 grant toward the project. The quote from O'Neill Transportation was \$72,000. Rolf sees the biggest issue being the ongoing maintenance of the rocked lot.

**Motion made by Rolf to move forward with the Rocking Project with the quote from O'Neill Transportation, if the 1868 Foundation is willing to raise \$150,000 toward the project with the excess over \$72,000 to be put in a fund for future maintenance.**

**Seconded by Caldwell.**

Discussion: Caldwell, Terry Galloway

**Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.**

e. Events-

Steve Wehrbein reported the Events Committee met and discussed Motorsports, which is on schedule with no changes. The Grand Marshal registrations were sent out to board members. No change to County Fair Day. Work continues on Opening Ceremonies with the need for a Master of Ceremonies. Steve White was suggested for this position.

Parr reported on the gift of the hand-crafted wooden carousel to the State Fair which was donated by a gentleman from Fremont who was a previous 4-Her. It is located on the first floor of the Nebraska Building.

Discussion: Smith, Strope, Wehrbein

f. Executive-

Smith reported the Executive Committee met and discussed issue surrounding Covid-19. Bill Ogg's first day will be June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Smith thanked Parr and entire staff for working through the continuing changes.

**Covid-19 Working Group Update**

Lodl reported the team has been working closely with Mayor Steele, the Health Department of Grand Island, and the Governor's Office gathering information to make the best decision for the Board and the State of Nebraska. The Covid-19 Working Group will meet again on June 25. There will be a Special meeting of the Board before July 1 to make a decision on holding the State Fair.

Discussion: Smith, Caldwell, Strope, Wehrbein, Kliment, Jensen, Hassebrook, Lodl.

**Foundation Update**

Terry Galloway reported on the 1868 Foundation's 2nd Annual Report.

Lindsey Koepke discussed elections of Board members. Koepke thanked Ken Staab and Jane Smith for their service on the 1868 Foundation Board and welcomed Steve Wehrbein to the Foundation as the Nebraska State Fair representative.

Discussion: Kircher, Jensen, Koepke, Galloway

**Other Business**

Jensen discussed the Operations and Vendor Analysis Report that he put together over the last 6 months. Jensen would like the 11 page document to be released publicly, either by posting on the website or reaching out to Board Chair Smith for release. This document contains findings by Lori Cox and staff during the internal investigation.

Discussion: Strope, Jensen

**Motion made by Jensen to release the 11 page Operation and Vendor Analysis Report to the media.**

**Seconded by Rolf.**

Discussion: Jensen, Smith, Caldwell.

**Rolf called for a vote.**

**Upon roll call vote, motion failed with Jensen, Kircher, and Rolf in favor; Caldwell, Haag, Hubbard, Jorgensen, Kliment, Strope, and Wehrbein voting against.**

**Executive Session-** Legal Counsel Report on Forensic Accounting Investigation and the State Auditor's Draft Report

**Motion made by Rolf at 12:02 to enter into Executive session to discuss Legal Counsel Report on Forensic Accounting Investigation and the State Auditor's Report.**

**Seconded by Wehrbein.**

**Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion made by Wehrbein at 1:40 to come out of Executive Session.**

**Seconded by Haag.**

**Upon voice vote, motion passed unanimously.**

**Future Nebraska State Fair Board Meeting Dates**

a. July 17, 2020

b. August 14, 2020

**Adjourn**

**Motion made by Jorgensen to adjourn.**

**Wehrbein seconded the motion.**

**Upon voice vote, motion passed unanimously.**

**Time adjourned: 1:45 p.m.**