



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Friday December 16, 2022

A regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, December 16, 2022, at 1:00 pm at the Nebraska State Fair Board Room, 501 E Fonner Park Rd, Grand Island NE. Public notice of this meeting was published in the Grand Island Independent newspaper on December 9th & 10th, 2022; posted to the Nebraska Public meeting calendar website; and on the Nebraska State Fair website. The public was invited to attend in person.

Roll call was read with the following Board Members present: Bob Haag, Chair; Dawn Caldwell, Vice Chair; Boyd Strope, Treasurer; Tom Schellpeper, Secretary; Ryan Hassebrook, via Zoom; Kevin Jorgensen; Tom Dinsdale; Jeff Kliment; Kathleen Lodi; Lanna Hubbard; and Steve Wehrbein. Absent: Beth Smith

Others in attendance:

Jaime Parr, Interim Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Eileen Dawes, Office Administrator; Karli Schulz, Entertainment & Events Director; Holle Evert, Sales Director; Vaughn Sievers, Agriculture Director; Tina Theurnagle, Operations Director; Jeff Bahr and Tyson Havranek, KRGI; Steve White, NTV; Carla Warneke, seasonal Box Office employee & volunteer.

Bob Haag 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.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion made by Tom Dinsdale for Approval of Consent Agenda which included Regular Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2022.

Second by Boyd Strope.

Upon roll call vote, motion to approve consent agenda passed unanimously.

Approval of November Financial Reports as presented by Joe Stump and Jaime Parr.

Motion made by Boyd Strope to approve Financial Reports for November 2022.

Second by Steve Wehrbein.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Board Committee Reports

No report for Events by Steve Wehrbein

Facilities committee report by Beth Smith for Dawn Caldwell

- Met with 1868 Foundation
 - Intentional dreaming – introduced avenues to resources for sizeable projects
 - State grant from ARPA
 - Additional structures that would be extremely beneficial
 - Master Plan to work from
 - Board and Staff to prioritize list
- Committee meeting - Capital Expenses for coming year
 - Went through staff priority list in detail
 - In alignment with what staff prioritized (made some suggestions)

Ag Committee Report by Jeff Kliment

- Finalizing judges and superintendents for all shows
- Budgets completed for review for every show
- Time for rules review

Finance Committee Report by Boyd Strobe

- Went over financials in more detail
- Aksarben in black again
- GILCA
 - Finance committee & entire board – want to stress we are NOT backing out of GILCA
 - We were contributing labor & equipment and not being reimbursed
 - GILCA has limited funds
 - 2015 agreement needed revamping
 - Amicable collaboration between the four partners
 - Another meeting on December 28
- Went over budget percentages

Boyd Strobe motioned to approve 2023 budget

Tom Dinsdale seconded.

Roll call vote. Motion carried.

- Capital Project list.
 - Considering reserves, projections, and incoming lottery funds in formulating a good recommendation of amount for Board to approve.
 - RFPs will be put out for appropriate items.

Boyd Strobe moved that capital expenditure amounts be approved in amount of \$900,000.

Dawn Caldwell seconded.

Roll call vote. Motion carried.

- Discussed investments - looked at interest-bearing reserves, repurchase agreements, CD rates. Jaime to do more research before committee recommends where best to put money.
- Fonner negotiations
 - Proposal of amended lease agreement with Fonner
 - Main concern is that casino will take away our vendor space and remainder of the Concourse will be unusable

Boyd Strobe moved that Board would grant Executive Director authority to approve and execute an amended lease agreement with Fonner based upon the guidelines outlined by the Executive Board.

Seconded by Tom Schellpeper.

Roll call vote. Motion carried.

- Addressed question of sales tax on vendor space that we have been paying.
 - Thanks to Joe & Jennifer (Stump) for researching.
 - NSF is not required to charge sales tax on vendor space rental.

FFA Committee Report by Ryan Hassebrook

- Continuing to work for 2023 show. Will have updates after first of the year.

4-H Committee Report by Kathleen Lodi

- Planning for 2023
 - Working to get State Fair book done so they can be utilized by County Fairs.
 - Exploring ideas for 2023
 - STEM exhibition – robotics and science

Executive Committee Report by Bob Haag

- Meeting topics have all been covered by different committee reports. Nothing more to report.

Staff Reports

Agriculture Report by Vaughn Sievers

- **Competitive Exhibits**
 - Kourtney's first year working on budget
 - Kourtney's first post-fair meeting
 - Went well, good attendance
 - Moving to City building from Concourse
- **Livestock/Equine**
 - 4-H & FFA judges committee
 - Open class beef judge committee
 - Equine Coordinator position posted
 - Survey to identify key areas to improve exhibitor experience
- **Aksarben**
 - Superintendent meetings complete – feedback good
 - Calf Challenge pickup – Saturday, December 3
 - 9 applicants
 - Longest distance someone drove for pickup – 17 hours (Montana)
 - Social media plan for January will be complete by December 27
- **IAFE attendance**
 - Met people in meetings – networking
 - Security meeting
 - Sponsorship meeting

Events and Entertainment Report by Karli Schulz

- **IAFE Convention**
 - Meeting with entertainment agencies, Etix, talent booking agency, NESTE
 - Trade Show – various entertainment options – little bit of everything
 - Gainbridge Fieldhouse tour – Indiana Pacers play there
 - Inclusivity – sensory friendly spaces to make Fair more accessible
 - Ticketed event calendar
 - Planning something for every day of 2023 Fair
 - Half of lineup in place
 - Getting applications ready to open for events for 2023 Fair
 - Reaching out to partners on all events
 - Contracting grounds entertainment
 - Working with Marketing team to update Nebraska Building lobby space

Marketing Report by Jaime Parr for Ray Massie

- Visited sponsors this week
- Reached out to all sponsors from last year
- Marketing – advanced sale promotion started today
 - Discounted wristbands and admission (lowest price this year)
- New sponsorship manager – Shirley McCallum (in January)
- Placer AI tool
- Idea Bank doing great job for State Fair – more to announce in January

Operations Report by Tina Theurnagle

- Operations team – Mike Kraft & Brian Hoffman
- AGR Show setup – loading in today, show tomorrow
- Planning for GILCA Draft Horse Show January 13 – 15
- Fine-tuning budget, working on Capital Expenditures list
- Brainstorming how to improve communications within Operations Team more successful and how to be more engaged with other departments.

Sales Report by Holle Evert

- **IAFE Convention in Indianapolis**
- **Tour of Gainbridge Fieldhouse**
 - **Guest experience**
 - **Employee retention**
 - **Satisfaction programs**
 - **Improvements**
 - **Additional mother's lounges**
 - **Sensory needs rooms – quiet spaces**
 - **Cashless system – cash to card machines (can be used everywhere)**
 - **Speeding up food & beverage lines with grab n go kiosks**
 - **Mobile ordering**
- **Completed 3 IFM courses that were offered**
- **Connected with fellow vendor and concession managers from across the country**
- **Returning vendor applications sent out**
- **Considering resurrecting State Fair Cares program**
 - **Applications for complimentary booth space to nonprofit organizations**
- **Attended Ag Expos**
 - **Increase our ag partners a goal**
- **Secret Shopper program**
- **Maps – new places to put vendors with relocation of Competitive Exhibits**

1868 Foundation Report by Lindsey Koepke (via Zoom)

- **Approved a motion to visit with State Fair Board about seeking out funding mechanisms**
- **End of year campaign – annual donor renewals**
- **Doing well financially – 1.2 compared to \$677,000 last year**

Interim Executive Director's Report by Jaime Parr

- **Continue to host weekly staff meetings and share FLASH Report to full staff, Executive Board, and Finance Committee**
- **One-on-One weekly with all Directors, and with full-staff team for final amendments to budget & capital drafts. Thanked Board for approving documents today.**
- **Department Head meetings twice a month.**
- **IAFE Convention**
 - **Workshops/seminars**
 - **Classes on sponsorship**
 - **Safety – prevention & recovery**
 - **How to better review our Emergency Action Plan**
 - **Guest experience – meetings with grounds attractions**
- **Staff Party – fun and engaging**
- **Board, 1868 Foundation, staff dinner last night**
- **Working on Sponsorship & Marketing with Ray**
- **Competitive Exhibits Superintendent meeting**
- **Layouts for 2023 Fair**
- **Chamber hosted Legislative Invitational – Vaughn & Jaime attended**
- **Convention & Visitors Bureau had event on Wednesday – local destination directors came together with hoteliers, and other interested parties.**
- **GILCA – AGR Livestock Show happening today and tomorrow**
- **NAFM Convention in Kearney on January 20**
 - **Fair Board meeting Friday, NSF Q & A session, Fair hosts hospitality room in the evening**
 - **Saturday workshops, elections for Counties - board members that are up for reelection, Showcase of talent, tradeshow**
 - **Sunday – big business meetings and awards**

- Last weekend to sign up to Ride the Bus – Zone 5 (Springfield, IL), March 3rd – 5th
- Community Outreach – busy month engaging with community
 - Toys for Tots
 - Adopt a Family
 - Salvation Army bell ringing
 - Cookie baking for Habitat for Humanity Cookie Walk
 - Rotary meetings
 - Grand Island Kiwanis
 - Library Board
- Thanked staff and Board for being so engaged and involved in NSF

Update on Executive Director selection

- Bob thanked Board for studying 22 applications & making recommendations
- Out of 10 responses – one name on all ten, another on six of them
- Interviewed those two last Monday, December 12 with both “very-qualified” people

Bob Haag made motion that an offer of employment agreement be made to Jaime Parr

Second made by Tom Schellpeper.

Roll call vote passed unanimously.

Other Business – None

Motion to adjourn made by Boyd Strope.

Seconded by Steve Wehrbein.


All in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes of November 18, 2022

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: December 16, 2022

By:



Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary