



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 17, 2023

The annual meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, March 17, 2023, at 1:00 pm at the Nebraska State Fair Administrative Offices in Grand Island, NE. Public notice of this meeting was published in the Grand Island Independent newspaper on March 10th & 11th, 2023; 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: Dawn Caldwell, Chair, via Zoom; Jeff Kliment, Vice Chair; Boyd Strope, Treasurer; Tom Schellpeper, Secretary, via Zoom; Bob Haag; Tom Dinsdale, via Zoom; Beth Smith; Kevin Jorgensen; Kathleen Lodl, via Zoom; Lanna Hubbard, via Zoom; Brett Lindstrom, via Zoom; and Steve Wehrbein. Absent: Ryan Hassebrook.

Others in attendance:

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Eileen Dawes, Office Administrator; Holle Evert, Sales Director; Karli Schulz, Entertainment & Events Director, via Zoom; Shirley McCallum, Sponsorship & Hospitality Manager; Vaughn Sievers, Director of Agriculture; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; Rebecca Pfeifer, Beverage Manager; Terry Galloway, Lindsey Koepke, both of 1868 Foundation; Mark Fahleson, Rembolt Ludtke, via Zoom; and Chris Lindner, FORVIS.

Dawn Caldwell 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 Boyd Strope for Approval of Consent Agenda which included Regular Meeting Minutes of February 24, 2023.

Second by Lanna Hubbard.

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

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

Motion made by Steve Wehrbein to approve Financial Reports for February 2023.

Second by Beth Smith.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

2023 Audit Report by Chris Lindner

Motion by Tom Dinsdale to accept audit report.

Second by Boyd Strope.

Board Committee Reports

Ag report by Jeff Kliment

- Finalizing details
 - Exhibitor experience survey
 - Improving Check-In rules
 - Judges, Superintendents, Entry books
 - Aksarben Stock Show Superintendents, judges

Events report by Steve Wehrbein

- Welcomed Brett Lindstrom to Committee.
- Welcomed Kayliana Cox as new Events Manager.
- Discussed County Fair Day and Board Reunion – first Saturday of 2023 Fair.
- Heritage and Pioneer Farm Family awards – contact info from each individual district.
- Veterans Day will be held Monday, September 4 (Labor Day) – Wendy K Johnson: speaker.
- Opening ceremonies on Friday, August 25 – Governor Pillen to give short speech.
- Grand Marshall nomination forms available.
- Historical display downstairs (Nebraska building) – muralist will be doing mural on southwest corner.

Facilities Planning Committee by Dawn Caldwell for Tom Schellpeper

- Moving forward on drainage project with ARPA grant money.
 - Considering where to start that work in consideration of GILCA events coming up.
 - What project could we complete this spring without disrupting events – before Fair or after Aksarben.
 - Committee chose 3 areas:
 - By Anderson Field – drainage, grading, piping
 - By Welcome Center, west of HEC and going north. Water goes north and south. We can do north portion.
 - West parking area – grading and installing some pipe.
 - 1868 Foundation and Fonner Park were represented at meeting.

Dawn Caldwell moved that Board accept recommendation of Facilities Planning Committee to work on (in priority order) completing Zone 5, Zone 2, and West Public Parking projects.

Second by Tom Dinsdale.

Motion passed by roll call vote.

- Discussed Capital Expenditures and getting some things implemented
 - Sunshades – colored tops (material)

Finance Committee Report by Boyd Strobe

- Financials are in great shape.
- CD investments – good rates, maturing at different intervals.
- Initiated Positive Pay Protection program with 5 Points Bank.
- Jaime negotiating Naming Rights.
- Fonner lease amendment was negotiated and signed.
- Still negotiating with GILCA.

4-H Committee Report by Kathleen Lodi

- Schedules going out to families, judges preparing.
- 4-H and FFA Day at 2023 Fair, questioning what we can do to value add.
 - Programming opportunities for young people around careers in Ag
 - How can we expand on their 4-H or FFA project?

FFA Committee Report – Dawn and Kathleen for Ryan Hassebrook (not present)

- All judges announced except for one.
- Looking for volunteers to help at State FFA in Lincoln as judge or timer.

Executive Committee Report by Dawn Caldwell

- Exec. Committee did not meet – no report.

Staff Reports

Agriculture Report by Vaughn Sievers

Competitive Exhibits

- **Statehood Day was March 1st.**
 - NSF co-sponsored with Nebraskaland Foundation
 - 200+ in attendance
 - Photos posted on NSF Facebook page.
- **Visual Arts would like to implement more competitions at the Fair.**
 - Mission is education.
 - Considering what to put on our stages to educate the public that come into our building.
- **Goal – to have at least one person hired for Education Department in the next month.**
 - Judi Harper has chosen to step down.
 - We appreciate everything she has done over the years.

Livestock & Equine

- **Amy has started investigating feedback from 2022 Fair to find ways to improve exhibitor experience.**
- **Judges have been announced for 4-H & FFA.**
- **Amy's goal is to finalize Equine schedule in next month.**
- **Birthing Pavilion a staple in our Ag Education piece.**
- **Our Ag Team will be manning State FFA booth.**

Aksarben Stock Show

- **Challenge Programs**
 - 28 applicants for Lamb Challenge
 - 15 of 28 selected
 - Will pick up lambs April 2nd.
 - Burch Livestock will be supplying lambs this year.
- **Abi Parker has been hired as DNA ShoWorks software coordinator.**
 - May 1 thru September 30.
 - Replacing Jacque Johnson, who has done it the last two years.
- **Kelsey's goal to have her judges selected next month.**
 - Committees have until March 15 for nominations.
 - Ranking will start after March 15, 2023.
- **Hired new Equine Coordinator – Sarah Kucera**
 - Appears to be getting along well with superintendents.
 - Moving some shows to evening for greater guest experience.

Agriculture - Vaughn

- **IFM (Institute of Fair Management) Summit meeting in Washington, DC.**
 - Fall 2023 graduation expected.
- **Long term goal to get CFE credentials – Certified Fair Executive**
 - 5-year process
- **Positive education quotes solicited by County Fairs.**

Events Report by Karli Schulz

- **Applications for all events open now (except Car Show)**
 - Available on statefair.org
 - Greater number of submissions than this time last year
- **Still looking for Grand Marshalls – invited everyone to submit nominations.**
- **Updated Entertainment and parade applications to include Spanish version.**
- **Fairest Showdown Battle of the Bands**
 - Submissions close tonight.
 - Public voting will open at 8:00 Tuesday morning (3/21/23)
 - 41 applicants so far.
 - Looking for judges currently.

- **State Fair Cares**
 - Working with sales team to revive program.
 - Applications have gone out to non-profits for vendor booths.
 - Bringing the State Fair to You program
 - Bring entertainment & fair food (Fair experience)
 - Last year brought to Veterans Hospital.
- Every ticketed event confirmed for 2023 Fair.
- Announcements to take place in the middle of April.
- **Zone 5**
 - Nebraska State Fair is hosting in 2024.
 - Visited hotels in Lincoln & Omaha – decision coming soon.

Marketing & Sponsorship Report by Shirley McCallum for Ray Massie

- Sponsorship sales through the end of February almost at halfway point with \$458,540 collected.
- Current invoices \$102,000 for march (so far). Anticipate higher number as proposals are being renewed and contracts issued.
- NSF Core Values included on proposals to keep top of mind for staff and sponsors.
- Continuing to seek out new business partners locally, statewide, and nationwide.
- Keeping outside event tent busy during 2023 Fair is one of our goals.
 - Ideal for sponsors and local businesses
 - Team building event, business meeting or customer thank you reception.
 - Class or large family reunions at the Fair with nearby outdoor game area.
- Early gate admission and wristband ticket sales robust – 68% increase over 2022.
- Announcement of 2023 Concert Lineup coming in April.
 - Performers have been confirmed.
 - Radio presenting stations have been selected.
- Move to new email provider and its integration with Etix.
 - Increase of 12,000 addresses to our database
- Billboards for Eastern Nebraska to attract urban Nebraskans as well.

Operations Report by Tina Thuernagle

- Busy with 2023 requests from all departments
- Finalized 3 big photo op chairs project.
 - Next step paint according to color-coded districts
 - Challenged all to take selfie in big chair during 2023 Fair.
- Team accommodated (last minute GILCA show) Aurora Co-op camp.
 - 22 head of cattle
 - 20 participants
- Accompanied Ag team at Oklahoma Youth Expo – they had no wheelbarrows.
 - NSF has just increased our wheelbarrows by 30 for total of 63.
- Currently cleaning up outside shop and 2022 shade procurement.
- Also seeking more shade structures.

Sales Report by Holle Evert

- **State Fair Cares Program**
 - Non-profit organizations across the state have been given opportunity to have a complementary booth.
 - Application can be found on our website.
 - Will select a committee (a few Board members will be asked to participate).
 - Will select 3 (1st, 2nd, and 3rd place) to participate on two weekends and a weekday.
 - Will select location with abundant foot traffic for most attention.
 - A cash award will be given in addition to complementary space.
 - Application went live this week and we already have an applicant.

- **Vendor Update**
 - Offers went out yesterday for space that we have available in Expo Center.
 - Expo Center will be full, and we have opportunity to bring in a few new vendors.
 - We are placing about ½ of the vendors from the Fieldhouse in the Expo Center for 2023, and other half will be in the Nebraska Building on the first floor.
 - New layout for the northern part of the Outdoor Marketplace.
- **Sustainability Pavilion will look a little different.**
 - More seating in that area
 - Looking for vendors to fit “Family Friendly” theme.
- **Ag Marketplace**
 - New vendor reached out with new product.
 - Old vendor returning
 - Actively recruiting food vendors.
- **Communication committee meetings scheduled for next Thursday.**
 - Commercial Exhibits
 - Concessionaires
 - Opportunities for NSF to learn from vendor’s feedback.
- **Institute of Fair Management (IFM) in Washington, DC**
- **Zone 5 Conference in Springfield, IL**
 - Thanked Board & Jaime for opportunities and encouragement to learn.

1868 Foundation Report by Lindsey Koepke

- **Sponsorship similar to State Fair – cyclical giving**
 - Certain giving at certain times of year
 - Closer we get to Fair, more urgent giving, donations come in faster.
- **Unofficially (February financials not approved yet)**
 - One campaign complete - current members
 - \$43,000 committed to a budgeted \$31,000.
 - Will re-engage with past donors – targeting with more information.
 - Working with Idea Bank Marketing
 - Out of State outreach & local outreach
- **Statehood Day dinner was wonderful.**
- **Grand Marshalls – Foundation standpoint**

Executive Director’s Report by Jaime Parr

- Meeting one-on-one with each of the directors
- Group meetings with all the directors twice a month
- Weekly staff meetings sharing and reviewing payables.
- IT delays this week. Thanked Finance Committee for their patience.
- Lifetime Pass Membership – asked for suggestions.
 - Serve a complete cycle of terms on NSF Board and/or Foundation Board
 - Staff members who have more than 25 years of service
 - Volunteers can receive lifetime pass when they have reached 1,868 hours of service.
 - Nebraskans at large who have given their time, talent, resources to better the Nebraska State Fair and those ideals that the Fair represents.
 - Invited Board to bring nominations to April Board meeting.
- Fair planning and visualizing
 - Grand District
 - Media Partners
 - Nebraska Lottery Concert Series to be announced in April.
 - Also, tickets go on sale in April – Box Office personnel here now to prepare.
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Security RFP awarded to Double Locked Security

- Parking piece pulled from RFP and posted separately. Live on website now.
- Audit completed.
- Positive Pay Protection Program being set up at 5 Points Bank.
- Couple meetings with Fonner Park – good progress.
- Networking
 - Zone 5 Conference in Springfield, IL March 3 – 5.
 - Monica Kleinschmidt organized bus trip.
 - Staff Team engaged outside of NSF with County and State Fair’s from Nebraska, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa.
 - NAFM District meetings
 - Monica attended one in St. Paul last weekend.
 - Jaime attended one in Holdrege on Sunday.
 - Staff will represent at 5 more district meetings.
 - NSF County Tours – Monica facilitating.
 - Staff Team will represent NSF at 7 different County Fairs.
 - Plus, any others that individual staff wish to attend.
 - Community Outreach
 - YWCA – Girls Circle
 - Rotary Grand Island
 - FFA judging
 - Booth at convention in two weeks in Lincoln
 - A number of staff have signed up to volunteer.
 - Jaime presented at Noon Rotary Club in Kearney – well received.
 - Young Professionals groups
 - Grand Island Senior High Scholarship Reviews
 - Multi-Cultural Coalition’s Meet the Director
 - Met with Interim City Administrator
 - Kiwanis
 - Library opportunities

Other Business – None

Dawn announced next meeting is April 21, 2023.

Motion to adjourn made by Tom Dinsdale.

Seconded by Lanna Hubbard.

All in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes of March 17, 2023

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: April 21, 2023

By:  _____
Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary