



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Friday, July 21, 2023

The regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, July 21, 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 July 13th & 14th, 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; Jeff Kliment, Vice Chair, via Zoom; Boyd Strobe, Treasurer; Tom Schellpeper, Secretary; Bob Haag, via Zoom; Beth Smith; Kevin Jorgensen; Kathleen Lodi; Lanna Hubbard, via Zoom; and Steve Wehrbein. Absent: Tom Dinsdale, Ryan Hassebrook, and Brett Lindstrom.

Others in attendance:

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Vaughn Sievers, Director of Agriculture; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; Keaton Irwin, Director of Sales; Karli Schulz, Events Director; Ray Massie, Marketing Director; Shirley McCallum, Sponsorship & Hospitality Manager; Eileen Dawes, Office Administrator; Lindsey Koepke, 1868 Foundation, via Zoom.

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 Steve Wehrbein for Approval of Consent Agenda which included Regular Meeting Minutes of June 16, 2023.

Second by Boyd Strobe.

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

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

Motion made by Beth Smith to approve Financial Reports for June 2023.

Second by Kevin Jorgensen.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Board Committee Reports

Ag Committee report by Jeff Kliment, via Zoom

- Finalizing details with judges, contracts, supplies, awards, etc.
- Finalizing Aksarben planning details as well.
- Discussed Junior Nationals that just took place.

Events Committee report by Steve Wehrbein

- Welcomed Olivia Koenig to team.
- Referenced updated Board Participation Schedule.
- Discussed County Fair Day and Board Reunion.
 - 11 participants slated for County Fair Day
 - 12 participants for Board Reunion
- Heritage and Pioneer Farm Family Awards (not much response yet)
- Grand Marshalls – 11 signed up, dates assigned.

- **Veterans Day**
 - **Speaker: Major General Wendy K. Johnson**
 - **Show Choir from Northwest**
- **Marching bands – 57 so far**
- **Opening Ceremonies – first Friday at 10:00 am**
 - **Governor to speak.**
 - **Dawn Caldwell to speak.**
 - **New stage being built.**
- **Three Dog Night – 1,500 tickets sold.**
- **Tractor Pull – 100 tickets sold.**
- **Demo Derby – 100 tickets sold.**

Facilities Planning Committee report by Tom Schellpeper

- **Thanked Tina for her efforts.**
- **New screens in cattle/livestock barns are working well.**
- **Five more shades for the public have been ordered.**
- **ARPA funding – a few more signatures on Memorandums of Understanding, then we'll be ready to accept contractor's bids on some projects.**

Finance Committee report by Boyd Strope

- **Discussed financials in greater detail – in great shape.**
- **Commended Jaime & staff for mindfulness of finances.**
- **Will be presenting some major projects to the Board for long term vs. year by year to use available funding.**
- **Aksarben is in a good position currently.**

4-H Committee report by Kathleen Lodi

- **County Fair Season in Nebraska! Travel 10 miles in any direction and find a County Fair.**
- **Culmination of months of work from youth.**
- **4-H & FFA entries are open.**
- **New event – Fitting Contest**
 - **Pilot project**
 - **Beef & goats**
 - **First Saturday of 2023 Fair**
- **Made a change last year – checks went to Counties, and County distributed, saving money.**
- **Counties are currently figuring out what celebration looks like locally.**
- **Program to grow and evolve.**

FFA Committee – no report (Ryan Hassebrook absent)

Executive Committee report by Dawn Caldwell

- **Executive Committee did not meet this month.**
- **HR Committee did not meet this month.**
- **Dawn thanked Lanna & Jeff for joining via Zoom.**

Staff Reports

Sales Report by Keaton Irwin

- **Jenny Lech – new Sales Manager (training)**
 - **Hit the ground running.**
 - **Thinks outside the box.**
 - **Encourages challenge.**
- **Following up and ironing out details for 2023 Fair**
- **Ramping up for Aksarben**

- Returning Vendor applications
- Sent out contracts.
- **Indoor marketplace**
 - Ideas from County Fairs & Karli w/Agtivity Acres
 - “Agtivity Acres” for children 8 and under who don’t have opportunity to show, but they’re coming with their families to Aksarben Stock Show.
 - Reached out to Antique Tractor Clubs for pedal tractors.
 - Inflatable slide, scaled farm toys, die cast tractors.
 - Considering CHI partnership
 - Indoor movie area
 - Indoor study hall
 - Allow parents to sit, talk, or eat.
- **Community Involvement**
 - 75 volunteer hours completed in June.
 - 56 volunteer hours completed in July so far.
- **Attending other County Fairs as well as County Fair Tour.**

Marketing Report by Ray Massie

- **22 billboards across the state. 17 active currently.**
- **Gatebook completed and will appear in 12 newspapers 10 days ahead of the Fair (August 15).**
- **Paid social campaigns are running right now.**
- **YouTube ads in both English and Spanish start next week.**
- **Video streaming ads on television start next week.**
- **Digital campaign is always ongoing.**
- **Mobile app up, operating, and active in Apple Store and Google Play.**
 - Worked out some bugs with help of Keaton in Sales Department.
 - Monetary support of Levander Automotive
- **County Fair Tour**
 - Madison County
 - Howard County
 - Five more to go: Gosper, Lancaster, Sarpy, Cass, Cherry
 - Keaton took his own personal time to go to Dawson County Fair (not on County Fair Tour)
 - Welcomed new intern, Megan McDonough.
- **Going to cover the Fair as a news agency so we can have sponsorship material for next year.**

Sponsorship & Hospitality Report by Shirley McCallum

- **\$850,540 invoiced and committed as of June 30.**
- **\$51,500 so far in July.**
- **New sponsor (this past week)**
 - Tabitha Senior Care Living located west of the new hospital in Prairie Commons.
 - Day Sponsor for Older Nebraskan Day
- **Another potential sponsor wanting to do a large flag (40 x 60 ft)**
- **Also have some sponsors for the shade structures.**
- **Hosting a Business After Hours combined with a Sponsor Celebration**
 - Thursday, August 3, 4:30 – 6:30
 - Five Points Bank Arena Loft
 - (Passed out invites to Board members)
- **Hospitality spaces filling up.**
 - 5 Points Bank Arena Loft – most sought-after venue (two evenings left)
 - New, improved area this year – 2 elevated risers on each side of Pit for concerts
 - Each will have dedicated bar.
 - Space for 2 – 150 group parties on each side
 - One or both spaces can be reserved or combined with other sponsors.

- Completely booked for Lee Brice concert on Saturday.
 - Still have availability in the Event Tent and Bosselman Party Pit
 - Also in Board Room and veranda outside
- Still pursuing negotiations with naming rights.
- Continuing to coordinate efforts with Ag Team for Aksarben sponsorships and scholarships.
- While busy with fulfillment process and gathering market collateral, we're keeping an eye on how to tweak our systems so we can hit the ground running next year.
 - Documentation and photography will be key.

Events Report by Karli Schulz

- Pretty much everything in place, just doing last minute things.
- Sending packets out to entertainers, marching bands.
- Getting all events up on website. Box Office and Marketing interns assisting.
- Fairtastic Friday – day for individuals with special needs
 - Have 150 separate registrations.
 - First year
- Battle of the Bands – semifinal rounds
 - Next week HEAR Grand Island and Hamilton County Fair
 - Tonight, going to Harlan County Fair to film No Drinking On Grounds
- Concerts
 - Tickets selling well for previously announced concerts.
 - Three Dog Night is selling well.
 - Tuesday, August 29 at 7:00 pm
 - Events Center
- Karli is now a Board member for National Travel Association.
- Also, Zone 5 representative for IAFE steering committee for Young Professional Board.
- Kayliana, Events Manager resigned effective today. Wished her well.

Agriculture Report by Vaughn Sievers

- Competitive Exhibits / 4-H Static / FFA Static / 4-H Dog Show (Kourtney Lingeman)
 - Online entries opened July 1st.
 - Short term Goals – Sort supplies by department by August 1st
 - Board Member's Best in Show Ribbons – Competitive Exhibits
- Livestock/Equine (Amy Kelley)
 - Entries – open for open class livestock, waiting on equine.
 - Short term Goals – have credential packets sent out to superintendents and judges by July 28th.
- Aksarben Stock Show (Jacque Johnson)
 - Entry books reformatted, updated & posted on website.
 - Challenge Program - Tejlor hosted nutrition learning programs
 - Short term Goals - Open entries on August 1st
 - Encouraged board members to help with Aksarben Judging contest.
 - You DO NOT need livestock experience to help.
- Ag Director Report (Vaughn Sievers)
 - Vaughn, Kourtney & Amy volunteered to help at PASE in Lincoln June 21st.
 - Vaughn, Jacque & Amy attended the NAYI Career Fair in Lincoln
 - Continuing to attend weekly Rotary meetings.
 - The Ag Team will be attending a few Livestock Shows at county fairs.
 - Vaughn and Amy are attending the Cherry County Fair August 11-12, as part of the State Fair County Fair Tour put together by the marketing team.
 - Continuing 1:1 with Ag Team, Amy, Kourtney, Jacque, Tejlor and Tina along with meeting with Jaime once a week on NSF & AKSS items

Operations Report by Tina Thuernagle

- Completed 2 Junior National Shows (GILCA) Successful, not perfect.
 - CHI Maine Jr National
 - ANGUS Jr National
- Starting State Fair setup

1868 Foundation Report by Lindsey Koepke (via Zoom)

- Contributed \$150,000 toward screen enhancements in barns.
- \$40,000 toward 4-H & FFA Youth Division Award premiums
- \$25,000 to Volunteer Program
- \$10,000 to be co-presenting sponsor of the Three Dog Night concert.
- Acknowledged Jay Favricek and Spirit Inside Productions
- 1.3 mil in assets, compared to 1.1 mil last year at this time.
- The Foundation Board approved nomination of Matt Gundersen and Mike McQuillan to serve on Board.
- Blue Ribbon Kickoff scheduled for Friday, August 25
 - Working on sponsorship
 - Kick off 2023 Nebraska State Fair
 - Auctioneer – Russ Maravik
 - Great Steak Debate
 - Steve White
 - Spencer Schubert
 - Sponsored by Certified Piedmontese of Lincoln – providing all NY Strips
 - Shawn Engberg with Allie Rose/the Nautical Rose at Johnson Lake – catering
 - Diane Kucera with Country Catering was not available this year.
 - Collecting auction items
 - Thanked Board for increasing tent size.
 - Goal is \$100,000
- Truck raffle – hosted by QTEGO online.
 - 2023 Chevy Silverado RST Crewcab Diesel
 - Sponsored by Tom Dinsdale Automotive
 - Tickets \$25 each (low cost point)
 - Raffle ends Sunday before Labor Day 9:00 pm.
 - Truck presentation at 2:30 in the Earl May Fair Square on Monday (Labor Day)
 - Tickets go on sale online August 1, 2023.
- Donor Reception on Sunday, 4 pm in VIP Loft
 - Catered by Shawn Engberg with Allie Rose
 - Invitation only for donors of a certain level
 - Approx. 250 people
- Corndogs and Cocktails – Wednesday, August 30 at 7:00 pm
- Gift Shop – merchandise has been ordered.

Executive Director's Report by Jaime Parr

- Weekly staff meetings with full staff team
 - Review of payables before we pay the bills.
 - Offering availability of balance sheet and general ledger and bank account balances regularly.
- Meeting weekly 1:1 with Department Heads.
- Meet every other week as a Directors Group.
- Group meeting with department heads twice per month
- Fair planning & vision – Moving through final details efficiently & quickly.

- Three Dog Night sales going well. Grateful to promoters who brought show to NSF.
- Aksarben Stock Show
 - Regular meetings
 - Challenge Program progressing – entries ready to post August 1.
- Staff training for Event season is almost complete.
 - First Aid training on July 25
 - Table Talk exercises in August regarding weather and post event activity responses.
 - Customer service training in August also.
- Department Orientations
 - Gates
 - Beverage
 - Security
- Administrative
 - Capital investment in screens
 - New Sales Manager – Jenny Lech
- Weather Insurance application submitted – have received quote.
- ARPA agreement – couple signed, one more expected.
- Fonner Park – Chris Kotulak
 - Occupancy set for August and September.
 - Will transition back by October 1.
- Hall County Fair up and running right now.
 - NSF has provided equipment on loan.
- Community Outreach
 - Madison, Howard, Dawson, Clay County Fairs, Bertrand Days, Sarpy County Jackpot Swine Show
 - Sarpy, Gosper, Cherry, Cass, Lancaster, Frontier Days coming up.
- HEAR Grand Island Concert Series
- Local law enforcement meeting – Nebraska State Patrol, Double Locked Security, police department, FBI, Department of Roads
- Moment of silence for recent for many recent deaths and illnesses.
- Karli's involvement with Zone 5 and YPI Boards.
- Recognized full staff team and volunteers for efforts to prepare for 2023 Nebraska State Fair.

Other Business – None

Motion to adjourn made by Steve Wehrbein.

Seconded by Boyd Strobe.

All in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes of July 21, 2023

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: August 25, 2023

By: 
 Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary