



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 17, 2024

The regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, May 17, 2024, at 1:00 pm at the State Fair Administrative Office in Grand Island, NE. Public notice of this meeting was published in the Grand Island Independent newspaper on May 10 & 11, 2024; 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: Jeff Kliment, Chair; Boyd Strobe, Vice Chair; Lanna Hubbard, Treasurer, via Zoom; Tom Schellpeper, Secretary; Dawn Caldwell, via Zoom; Tom Dinsdale; Beth Smith; Ryan Hassebrook; Kathleen Lodi; Alan Kahle; and John McKeever. Absent: Kevin Jorgensen, and Brett Lindstrom.

Others in attendance:

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Vaughn Sievers, Ag Director; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; Keaton Irwin, Sales Director; Jack Sheard, Idea Bank; and Haley Roush, Box Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator.

Jeff Kliment 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 Strobe for Approval of Consent Agenda, which included Regular Meeting Minutes of April 19, 2024.

Second by Beth Smith.

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

Financial Report by Jaime Parr

Motion made by Tom Dinsdale to approve Financial Report for April 2024.

Second by Boyd Strobe.

Upon roll call vote, motion approved.

Board Committee Reports

Events

- No report

Facilities by Tom Schellpeper

- Cindy Johnson gave Good Life District update.
- Current ARPA updates given by Jaime.
- Tina gave Operations updates.

Ag Committee Report by Boyd Strobe for Dawn Caldwell

- Judges and awards lined up.
- Pig Challenge animals distributed (farthest from Western Colorado).
- Amy Kelley and Sara Kucera working Equine department.

- Vaughn and Amy attending the State Angus Junior Association Banquet, helping with show next day.

Finance Committee Report by Boyd Strobe for Lanna Hubbard

- Reviewed financials
- CD investments
- Possible proposal for sales tax on lottery
- Marketing staff update
- GILCA restructuring.
- Cindy spoke about Good Life District.
- Master Plan facilities opportunities

FFA Committee Report by Ryan Hassebrook

- School's out. Plenty of activities.
- Chapter Officer Leadership training in Aurora.
- Continuity of processes (FFA & 4-H processes are the same)
- Due date to be eligible for State Fair is June 15.

4-H Committee Report – Kathleen Lodi (via Zoom)

- Processes same as FFA
- Premiere Animal Science event (similar to FFA Livestock judging) in June.
- Premiere Communications event
- Residential camps
- National Shooting Sports event in Grand Island
- Quality Assurance training
- June 3 Kickoff event for Raising Nebraska and June schedule (fliers distributed to Board members)
- New Water Demonstration with Reike Irrigation

Executive Committee by Jeff Kliment

- Master Plan meeting last week
- Facilities planning
- ARPA updates
- Personnel updates

HR Committee – Beth Smith

- Met with Tammy (HR)

Staff Department Reports

Events by Jaime Parr for Karli Schulz

- Ticketed Events sales slow but expected to pick up after July 4th.
- VIP experience at Ramon Ayala y sus Bravos del Norte offer to public.
- All stages and grounds attractions have been solidified.
- 2024 Fair will feature over 300 hours of free entertainment.
- Sure Sound & Audio solidifying orders for capital projects.
- Setup reports, layouts for operations, sharing security details.
- 54 registered marching bands
- 96 schools, 3,300 students and teachers registered for Largest Classroom Days
- 20 County Fairs registered for County Fair Day
- Veterans Day event schedule
- Fairtastic Friday – August 30
 - Inclusive decompression room available all 11 days of Fair
 - Highlight services to families with special needs.

- Quiet, no lights on midway
- Recruiting vendors for Fairtastic Friday and Veterans Day.
- Grand Marshall receptions – Board members will receive invitations.

Operations by Tina Thuernagle

- GILCA:
 - Hereford Junior Nationals July 5 – 13
 - Boernanza (Boer Goat Show) October 3 – 6
 - Australian Shepherd Club of America National Specialty October 11 – 19
 - Planning, visits, securing labor to make these shows happen.
- Bringing in seasonal help for Operations Department.
- Goal to have all Ag Department Livestock and Competitive Exhibits requests completed by July 1.
- Moving items out of Aurora Coop Pavilion in preparation for summer and fall events in that area.
- Work on Aurora Coop Pavilion floor will start May 30.
- Skid steer sweeper ordered. Will arrive beginning of June.
- Mister fans will be installed throughout grounds this year.
- Thanked Board for approving capital expenditures to improve guest experience.
- Working on department layout needs and logistics for 2024 Nebraska State Fair.

Agriculture by Vaughn Sievers

- Competitive Exhibits
 - Sit 'N Stitch – new this year (Keaton will talk about it in his report)
 - Walnut Middle School revamped summer school curriculum
 - Working on exhibits to bring to State Fair this year.
 - Will increase our education exhibits.
- Livestock
 - Pig Challenge animals distributed.
 - DNA nominations open.
 - Open Class entry books posted.
 - Aksarben livestock schedule posted.
 - In effort to grow number of open class entries, attending other stock shows to determine the reason for decrease in numbers. While attending, we will help with their shows.
 - High School Rodeo layout & flow

Sales by Keaton Irwin

- Team Community Outreach – 71 ½ hours in April (68% increase)
- Sales
 - Only 7 contracts left to collect by July (192 collected so far)
 - Changed method of collection
- Bobbie's Bargain Book
 - Keaton researched WI and MN State Fair models to create a Nebraska booklet.
 - 50 pages
 - \$1,500 worth of savings for \$5 presale
- Sit 'N Stitch
 - Open to all skill levels
 - Meeting under Dept of Natural Resources pergola.
 - Coffee, doughnuts from vendors wishing to participate.
 - Strategic location
 - Outside in proximity to 4-H building (exposure)
 - Near food & shopping vendors
 - Near Family Fun Zone also
 - Spring road cleanup – May 31st

- **New Vendors**
 - Fred Hoppe Sculpture Studio
 - Zany Vibes – charms for crocs
- **New Concessionaires**
 - KS Snack Shack – Wagu Smash burgers & shakes
 - Tajillos - wood-fired pizza
- **Alejandro’s Concessions – healthy alternatives (mango on a stick, fruit cups, palattes, and so much more).**
- **Ag Marketplace – CPI Tires, MidAmerica Structures**
- **Working on finding space for some ATVs, UTVs.**
- **Month of June focus will be on Aksarben.**
 - Vendors
 - Junk Jaunt
 - Fitting vendors into available space

Marketing & Sponsorship by Jack Sheard (Idea Bank Agency)

- **Sponsorship**
 - \$55,000 in new commitments (79% of goal)
 - Two new sponsors
 - City of Grand Island (trade value)
 - Bryan Health GI Regional (proposed, not confirmed)
 - Aksarben
 - \$30,000 new sponsorship (40% of goal)
 - \$51,000 new In-Kind overall (92% of goal)
- **Marketing**
 - Drive to get more open class exhibitors
 - Ad in national magazines
 - Working with Vaughn to get word out for State Fair & Aksarben
 - Working on new wraps for new vehicles (talked about last month)
 - New style brand for next three years
 - Real animals (going away from cartoon animals)
 - Grounds signage (will match same style)
 - PA announcements on grounds (every day, every 15 minutes)
 - Digital signage
 - Paid radio, social, billboard, streaming and other advertising
 - New intern, Abigail Marshall, will be posting free social.

1868 Foundation – by Jaime for Lindsey Koepke

- **Annual Meeting of Trustees**
 - Reelected Terry Galloway and Jill Staab
 - Steve Wehrbein new official Foundation Board member
 - Funding
 - Premiums for market champions and reserves in the 4-H & FFA Shows
 - Volunteer banquet & program
 - Vision & Planning
 - Master Plan updates
 - Good Life District
 - Funding opportunities through the foundation
 - Jay Vavricek received Lifetime Friend of the Fair Award.
 - Don Warner received 1868 Society Award.

Executive Director’s Report by Jaime Parr

- **Meeting 1:1 with staff, directors, group, and full staff (sharing financials).**
- **Marketing – staffing developments (will share at later date when more official)**

- Fair planning & layouts for ticketed events
- Parking changes – response to ARPA projects and casino build
- Capital improvements progress shared to Facilities Committee each month.
- Carnival coming for onsite visit.
- Volunteer Banquet
- Volunteers visit with Haley 1:1 at library and here in her office.
- Aksarben
 - Trade show
 - Sponsorship review
 - Swine Challenge distribution
- ARPA 1 projects near completion
- ARPA 2 still in planning phase
 - Bid process happening during 2024 Fair
- Master Plan development and funding opportunities
- GILCA – working toward finding a more sustainable funding model
- Walk-thru for Australian Shepherd Show (October)
- NALSARMA (North American Livestock Show & Rodeo Managers Association) next week in CA.

Boyd Strobe moved to go into Executive Session to protect the public interest for the purpose of discussing negotiation strategies relating to facilities and real property.

Second by Beth Smith.
Roll call vote. Motion passed.

Boyd Strobe moved to come out of Executive Session.

Tom Dinsdale seconded.
Roll call vote. Motion carried.

Boyd Strobe moved to adjourn.

Second by Beth Smith.
All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes of May 17, 2024
Nebraska State Fair Approved:
Date: June 21, 2024

By: 
Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary