



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 18, 2024

The regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, October 18, 2024, at 1:00 pm at the State Fair Administrative Offices in Grand Island, NE. Public notice of this meeting was published in the Grand Island Independent newspaper on October 11 & 12, 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; Kevin Jorgensen; Alan Kahle; Brett Lindstrom; and John McKeever. Absent: Tom Dinsdale, Ryan Hasebrook, Kathleen Lodl, and Beth Smith.

Others in attendance:

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Karli Schulz, Events & Entertainment Director; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; Kourtney Lingeman, Competitive Exhibits Manager; Keaton Irwin, Sales Director; Courtney Glock, Marketing Director; Nichole Stoltenberg, Sponsorship & Hospitality Director; and Eileen Dawes, Office Administrator.

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 Dawn Caldwell for Approval of Consent Agenda, which included Regular Meeting Minutes of September 2, 2024.

Second by Boyd Strobe.

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

Financial Report by Joe Stump and Jaime Parr

Boyd Strobe motioned to approve August and September Financials as presented.

Second by Brett Lindstrom.

Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.

Board Committee Reports

Events Report by Brett Lindstrom

- Positive surveys
- County Fairs, Board Reunion, Grand Marshalls, Marching Bands, Opening Ceremonies, Parades, Veterans Day logistics: discussed what worked and what didn't, and how to improve for next year.
- Farm Family Events attendance in 2023 was 75. This year attendance was 400.
- Floats need touched up.
- Veterans Day was a favorite of many.
- Complaints minimal. Distance to walk was a concern.
- Invited ideas for other motorsports options or ticketed event (possibly equine related) for 2025.

Facilities Report by Tom Schellpeper

- **Capital Purchases – what has been done and what’s left to do.**
- **Roof over jumping pillow**
- **ARPA updates**
 - **Phase one winding down**
 - **Phase two out for bids**
- **Cindy Johnson gave update on Good Life District.**

Agriculture Report by Dawn Caldwell

- **Surveys from 4-H, FFA, Open-class, and Aksarben**
 - **What’s important to participants**
 - **Info important to staff for 2025 planning**
 - **75% asked to keep 4-H and FFA on separate weekends**
- **Drug testing on all animals that are champions and reserve champions**
- **Brand walls in Tom Dinsdale Barn Bar**
- **Amy Kelley resigned. Left some great processes in place.**

Finance Report by Lanna Hubbard

- **ARPA and Good Life District**
- **Karli talked about concert negotiations**

Lanna Hubbard moved to set concert budget at \$1.3 million

Second by Boyd Strope.

Roll call vote. Motion carried.

- **Thanked Jaime and team for conscientious budget planning**
- **Boyd and Brett discussed Investment Policy Statement as another set of guidelines to enhance financial planning efforts.**

FFA Report

- **No report**

4-H Report

- **No report**

Executive Report by Jeff Kliment

- **Discussed highlights of all other committee meetings**

Human Resources

- **No Report**

Staff Department Reports

Events by Karli Schulz

- **2024 wrap up surveys – 159 responses**
 - **90% were satisfied with State Fair as a whole**
 - **Events were organized and communication strong**
 - **Fairtastic Friday needs more visibility**
 - **Marching band/parade route & staging area was a major noted change**
 - **Veterans Day program best in years**
- **Ticketed Events**
 - **TD Landing extremely well received (layout and VIP area)**
 - **Positive feedback for Christian concert indoors – sold out show**

- **RFP sent out for Talent Buyer for 2026 thru 2028 will close mid-November**
- **Grounds Entertainment**
 - **2024 lineup well received**
 - **Indicated a need for new entertainment, more options, acrobatics, animal entertainment and more strolling options – main focus for 2025.**
- **Budget**
 - **Wrapping up 2024 and preparing for 2025**
 - **Thanked Board for approving concert budget.**
- **Education**
 - **IAFE Management graduate program to wrap up in April**
 - **Annual Convention in November**

Operations by Tina Thuernagle

- **Shout out to State Fair Operations team and the State Fair Cleaning team**
- **First year 4-H barn turned over by 12 am**
- **20 people stayed until all pens were cleaned out for all three turnovers**
- **Air conditioned, portable trailers for TD Landing backstage and VIP sections**
- **Sheep and Goat tent in West parking lot this year**
- **Pig Challenge**
- **GILCA Update**
 - **Aksarben Stock Show**
 - **Boer Goat Show**
 - **Australian Shepherd Dog Show**
- **Tying up loose ends from 2024**
- **Budget**
- **2025 State Fair planning and projects**

Agriculture Report by Kourtney Lingeman

- **Open-class Competitive Exhibits, Open-class Livestock, 4-H, FFA, and Aksarben surveys sent**
 - **Vaughn has full results for viewing**
 - **Highlights**
 - **78% importance of drop-off and pickup locations**
 - **95% importance for online entering process**
 - **70% importance for Ease of loading in and loading out for Open-class Livestock**
 - **Highest ranked was connection with fellow breeders and exhibitors**
 - **Just under 75% preferred 4-H and FFA split weekends**
 - **Cost of entry fees and additional fees competitive**
 - **Collecting invoices to start 2025 budget process**
 - **Sending out thank yous**
 - **Scheduling Post Fair and Post Aksarben Superintendent meetings**
 - **2025 Aksarben Calf Challenge open now**

Sales by Keaton Irwin

- **Tremendous growth across the board in Sales Department**
- **7.1% increase in vendor sales**
- **10% increase in total number of vendors on grounds**
- **Optimized available square footage**
- **Surveys**
 - **12.8% increase in total number of responses**
 - **Satisfaction rating strong at 93.2%**
 - **9.63% increase in outdoor marketplace responses**

- **2024 Aksarben Stock Show**
 - **Introduced several new Beyond the Showring activities**
 - **Pumpkin painting**
 - **New inflatable in Activity Acres**
 - **Read a book, take a book station**
 - **Football field**
 - **30% increase in total number of vendors at 2024 AKSS**
 - **Variety of different vendors**
- **Thanked Tina and Ops/Cleaning crew**
- **Shout out to Jenny, Mark, Lydia, Brent, Val, and Jaime**

Marketing Report by Courtney Glock

- **Overall guest experience surveys**
 - **Infographics**
 - **Attendance up nearly 2% over last year**
 - **Average time spent at Fair 5.5 hours**
 - **Overall satisfaction up 6% in 2024 over last year**
 - **State Fair Volunteers ranked at very top score of 4.54 out of 5 stars**
 - **Fair staff rated 14% higher than 2023 (great and informative)**
 - **Safety increased slightly**
 - **Need more shade structures**
 - **Alcohol policy remains unchanged**
 - **Goal for 2025 is 4 out of 5 stars for overall Fair experience, almost there.**
 - **Compared stats with marketing strategy**
 - **85.5% of respondents said they will attend again in 2025**
- **Will provide marketing medium info next month.**
- **Idea Bank budget stayed well within parameters given for 2024, and did a great job.**

Sponsorship Report by Nicki Stoltenberg

- **Talking with sponsors about 2025 Fair**
- **14 meetings scheduled, talked with 7 business/industry people already**
- **Networking in Lincoln**
- **Hope to meet and exceed sponsorship numbers next year**

1868 Foundation by Jaime Parr

- **Foundation met in NSF Board room yesterday**
- **Blue Ribbon Rollout décor stayed in Party Pit tent and helps provide ambience for Farm Families and other groups who used the tent.**
- **Lanna added that fresh ideas for fundraising efforts were topics also.**
- **Jaime continued by listing supports by 1868 Foundation this year**
 - **Ag premiums**
 - **One Man Band**
 - **Volunteer program**

Executive Director's Report by Jaime Parr

- **Meet every week with staff/share payables**
- **Meet every other week with smaller Director's group**
- **Aksarben Stock Show great success overall**
- **Shout out to staff team**
- **2024 Fair wrapped up – Team shared highs and lows**
- **5,000 shuttle riders brought to campus during Fair**

- Fonner Park landlord/NSF tenant for 60 days – turned campus back over faster than ever before thanks to Ops Team.
- Will provide more details regarding surveys upon request
- 2025 Planning
 - Some grounds attractions already booked
 - Approval of main stage budget today provides opportunity to move ahead with concert planning
 - Layout changes
- ARPA 1 almost complete
- Currently in RFP process for ARPA 2 – look forward to having recommendation for Board to consider at November meeting.
- Capital Improvements
- IAFE Annual Convention – Phoenix, December 1st thru 4th
- Thank you staff, partners, and board

Executive Session

Motion made by Boyd Strobe to go into Executive Session to protect the public interest to discuss negotiations and potential real estate acquisitions.

Second by Dawn Caldwell.

Unanimous roll call vote. Moved to Executive Session.

Motion made by Kevin Jorgensen to come out of Executive Session.

Second by Alan Kahle.

Unanimous roll call vote. Moved out of Executive Session.

Boyd Strobe: Subject to final approval by this Board we have negotiated the purchase of approximately 20.5 acres. There are several buildings on the property, together with personal property included in the purchase. The value of the improvements in personal property is approximately 2/3 of the total purchase price as we've studied and determined.

Boyd Strobe moved to approve the real estate purchase agreement, dated October 8, 2024, related to 20.5 acres , more or less, together with improvements thereon in personal property for \$4,250,000.00, located at 1009 E Stolley Park Road as such agreement may be amended prior to closing; that the Executive Director, Jaime Parr, after review by the Executive Committee is authorized to conduct and approve such due diligence matters as may be appropriate under the agreement; and to negotiate and approve such amendments as may be necessary or desired to the agreement, which do not materially or adversely affect the Nebraska State Fair's interest in the transaction.

Second by Dawn Caldwell.

Unanimous roll call vote. Motion carried.

Boyd Strobe moved to authorize Jaime Parr, the Executive Director, to determine which funds and/or CDs will be used to pay the purchase price of the October 8, 2024 real estate purchase.

Second by Alan Kahle.

Unanimous roll call vote. Motion carried.

Other Business

- None

Dawn Caldwell moved to adjourn

Second by Kevin Jorgensen.

All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes of October 18, 2024
Nebraska State Fair Approved:
Date: November 15, 2024

By: 
Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary