



**NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 16, 2025**

The Annual meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, May 16, 2025 at 1:00 pm at Nebraska State Fair Administrative Offices in Grand Island, NE. Public notice of this meeting was published in the Grand Island Independent newspaper on May 9 & 10, 2025; 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: Tom Schellpeper, Vice Chair; John McKeever, Secretary; Lanna Hubbard, Treasurer; Dawn Caldwell; Anna Castner Wightman; Tom Dinsdale; Ryan Hassebrook; Kevin Havlovic; Kevin Jorgensen; Alan Kahle; Kathleen Lodl, and Beth Smith. Absent: Boyd Strobe, Chair.

Others in attendance:
Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Nicki Stoltenberg, Sponsorship Director; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; Kourtney Lingeman, Competitive Exhibits Manager; Karli Schulz, Entertainment & Events Director; Keaton Irwin, Sales Director; Carla Warneke, Box Office and Volunteer; and Doug Hubbard.

The May meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was called to order by Vice Chairman, Tom Schellpeper. Tom 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 Lanna Hubbard for Approval of Consent Agenda, which included Regular Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2025.

Second by Tom Dinsdale.

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

Financial Report by Joe Stump

Tom Dinsdale moved to approve April Financials as presented.

Second by John McKeever.

Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.

Board Committee Reports

Events Report by John McKeever

- No report

Facilities Report by Tom Schellpeper

- No report

Agriculture Report by Dawn Caldwell

Dawn Caldwell moved, with recommendation from the Ag Committee, that the Board approve the Livestock Rules and Regulations for both State Fair and Aksarben Stock Show.

Kevin Havlovic seconded.

Roll call vote. Motion carried.

Finance Report by Lanna Hubbard

- Audit report received by Board members.

FFA Report by Ryan Hassebrook

- June 15 deadline for livestock nominations for 4-H and FFA.

4-H Report by Kathleen Lodi

- 4-H Day at the Fair, Sunday August 24, 1:00 – 3:00
- Parade of Champions at 3:00
- 4-H alumni event
- Volunteer recognition
- Beyond Ready Initiative
- Postcard distributed regarding Jordan Carfield Open House at Raising Nebraska.

Executive Report by Tom Schellpeper

- No report.

Staff Department Reports

Events Report by Karli Schulz

- Opening Ceremony – speakers, dignitaries
- Board Reunion and County Fair Day
- Farm Family Reception – expecting 400 – 420 people.
- Concert direction for 2026
- 2025 Marathon
 - Partnership with Goals Race Management
 - Case IH Sponsoring medal – ShowCASE Your Fair Face
 - T-shirt design
 - Registration updates
 - Active social giveaway – free registration
- Marching Bands and Largest Classroom numbers to exceed 2024
- Free stages are full
- Two new interns to start first week in June.

Operations by Tina Thuernagle

- Surplus Auction
- ARPA 2 update
 - Pouring concrete
 - Street sweeper
- Capital Purchases
- Focus in Ops Dept in April – 2025 layout & logistics
 - Main Gate
 - Middle of 3 ticket booths to be removed
 - Will be replaced by 3 self-serve kiosks
 - Concrete barricades w/mobile flower pots being added to Gate 2, Main Gate & Gate 5A for safety. This will separate motorized traffic from pedestrians.
 - Tram stop signs will have amber flashing light on top – guests will know exactly where to wait for a tram and when it will stop. Each stop will be numbered.
- ARPA, Director, Staff meetings, landscaping committee
- GILCA update
 - American Shorthorns – June 19
 - American Dairy Goats – July 10

Agriculture Report by Kourtney Lingeman

- All Competitive Exhibits, Livestock and Cattle Dog entry books are now online.
- DNA, broilers and swine EID tags opened on the 1st of May.
- Aksarben nominations opened yesterday.
- Swine Challenge pickup on site. Tagged pigs.
- Rules and Regulations for NSF and AKSS approved.
- Setup reports done and manuals completed.
- Vaughn, Tyler, and Sarah (Equine Coordinator) attended NALSRHMA.
- Tyler went to Summit in Virginia.
- Tyler set to graduate with his IFM at end of this year.
- Summer intern, Gabriella Fjerstad, is starting Monday, May 19.

Sales Report by Keaton Irwin

- Aksarben updates
 - Returning vendor contracts sent – looking for 40 – 45.
 - Contracts will be sent out June 2
 - Have received some payments
 - Livestock Judging Contest
 - Will be posting rules on website by June 1.
 - Entry books will be posted August 1.
- State Fair
 - Approaching 75% return mark for contracts, due July 1.
 - Working on mapping and making adjustments for ARPA projects.
 - New & Unique Foods Contest
 - Stuffed cucumber coming back
 - All ingredients are local and fresh

Marketing Report by Jaime Parr for Courtney Glock

- Exploring new advertising outlets
 - New platforms
 - New movie theatre in Grand Island
 - Baggage claim in Grand Island Regional Airport
 - Target market – involved moms
- Working to fill hospitality spots.
- Senators' Day, August 28
- Marketing Intern starting on Monday, May 19.
- Remind people to follow socials, and tag Nebraska State Fair.
- 98 days until opening day!

Sponsorship Report by Nichole Stoltenberg

- Thanked Board for supporting Internship Programs.
- Thanked Sales Dept for helping secure a new sponsor, Central Nebraska Trim Light.
- American Foods getting more involved with the Livestock Judging Contest at AKSS.
- Grand Kubota – monetary and in-kind sponsorship.
- Partnership with Case IH
- Marketing Team helped secure a new sponsorship with Novatech. They will be a strong partner for AKSS and NSF. Signed multi-year agreement.
- Collaborating with Ag Team to solidify partnership with Sullivan and Weaver without Purina.
- Cash Wa, Tallgrass, Merck, ABS Global and Big O Tires – potential sponsors.
- \$870,300 secured to date. Just over 536,000 in In-Kind dollars.
- \$181,000 in donations secured for Aksarben Stock Show.

1868 Foundation by Lindsey Koepke

- No report

Executive Director's Report by Jaime Parr

- 1868 Foundation
 - Met with small group of Fair Board members yesterday – discussed joint fundraising efforts. Intend to become more collaborative and strategic about outreach for funds in 2026 through 2030.
 - Email sent to Board members about a wish list/prospect list for projects over next 5 – 10 years.
- ARPA maps distributed, outlining work completed in 2024, work in progress, work to be completed after 2025 Fair, and work to be completed in 2026.
- Next stakeholders meeting will be next Wednesday, May 21.
- County Fair Tour is developing.
- Vet Clinic and 5 acres, including other facilities. Invitations to bid have been sent out to 3 veterinarians. Asking price is \$3,850,900. Deadline to submit bids is June 20.
- Staff Performance Evaluations complete for half-way point. Annual reviews will happen in October.
- Strategic Plan Review with staff
- New Administrative Assistant starting June 2.

Other Business

- None

Kevin Havlovic moved to adjourn.

Second by Lanna Hubbard.

All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes of May 16, 2025

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: June 20, 2025

By: _____

John McKeever, Board Secretary