



## NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD

### Meeting Minutes

Friday, July 18, 2025

The Regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, July 18, 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 July 11, 12 & 17, 2025 (error in 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> notice corrected in 17<sup>th</sup> notice); 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: Boyd Strope, Chair; Tom Shellpeper, Vice Chair; John McKeever, Secretary; Dawn Caldwell; Tom Dinsdale; Ryan Hassebrook; Kevin Jorgensen; Alan Kale; and Kathleen Lodi. Absent: Anna Castner-Whiteman, Kevin Havlovic, Lanna Hubbard, Treasurer; and Beth Smith.

#### **Others in attendance:**

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Breanna Fanta, Executive Administrator; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Vaughn Sievers, Agriculture Director; Keaton Irwin, Sales Director; Courtney Glock, Marketing Director; Nicki Stoltenberg, Sponsorship Director; Mark Fahleson, Rembolt Lutke Law Office; Cindy Johnson, Consultant; R.J. Post, Grand Island Independent; Ray O'Conner; and Jay Stewart.

The July meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was called to order by Chairman, Boyd Strope. Boyd 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 Tom Dinsdale for Approval of Consent Agenda, which included Regular Meeting Minutes of June 20, 2025.

Second by Kevin Jorgensen.

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

#### **Financial Report by Joe Stump**

Alan Kahle moved to approve June 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**

- The committee discussed ARPA projects and ongoing improvements, which dominated the meeting.

#### Agriculture Report by Dawn Caldwell

- No report

#### Finance Report by Boyd Strope for Lanna Hubbard

- The group reviewed financials, ARPA funding, and ticket sales.

#### FFA Report by Ryan Hassebrook

- Preparations are underway for the Fair, with 23 days left for exhibitors to register their entries.

#### 4-H Report by Kathleen Lodi

- It is the peak of County Fair Season, with approximately 83 County Fairs happening within a five-week window. Those entries are all getting ready to be displayed at State Fair next month.

#### Executive Report by Boyd Strope

- Operations concerning GILCA remain up in the air and discussions continue regarding the project's \$20 million gap and future operation.

#### Event Report by Jaime Parr for Karli Schulz

- This year's Nebraska State Fair will feature celebrations for America's 250th anniversary, including an 11-day display of a giant American flag, six nights of fireworks and drone shows, and 60+ performances of the National Anthem.
- Veterans and active-duty military will be honored on Labor Day with performances by the U.S. Army Field Band's Six String Soldiers and a Veterans Tribute Program.
- The "Nebraska Remember Our Fallen" exhibit will be on display all 11 days of the State Fair.
- As of the meeting, 17 county fairs are registered for County Fair Day, 3,200 students for Nebraska's Largest Classroom, 66 marching bands, 465 marathon participants, 14 schools for FFA Day, and 30 cars for the Cruising Car Display.

#### Operations Report by Tina Thuernagle

- Shorthorn Show (GILCA) has come and gone.
- The Dairy Goat Show saw a record 3,314 registered goats, far exceeding capacity.
- Final preparations are ongoing for Hall County Fair and other upcoming events.
- Competitive exhibits setup and ticket booth refurbishments are progressing.

#### Agriculture Report by Vaughn Sievers

- Board ribbons for exhibitors again this year.
- Education entries closed. Over 2,000 entries this year.
- Efforts are underway to recruit a 17-foot enclosed trailer for exhibit transportation.
- Standard Operating Procedures for scales.
- Aksarben entries open August 1; 1,200 broilers to be ordered, matching last year's numbers.

#### Sales Report by Keaton Irwin

- Met with NMC, Middleton, Tina, Karli and Jaime: discussed generators and towers.
- County Fair Tour Update: visited 5 County Fairs to date. Kearney, Hall, and Lincoln Counties upcoming. This has created a strong presence of Nebraska State Fair in the community.
- Older Nebraskan's Day Wellness Festival
- Vendor payments and insurance certificates process going well.
- Sales and Marketing collaborating on project to drive participation in our local communities.

### **Marketing Report by Jaime Parr for Courtney Glock**

- Marketing efforts have delivered 199,178 streaming radio impressions, 2.7 million Meta (Facebook/Instagram) impressions, and 243,110 TikTok impressions.
- Gate books are printed and will be distributed at newspapers, gas stations, and online.
- Electronic versions of the gate book and up-to-date daily schedules will be available on the website and app.
- There are 5,177 hours of activities planned for the fair this year, including livestock shows, stage entertainment, and ground attractions.

### **Sponsorship Report by Nicki Stoltenberg**

- Tallgrass is the new sponsor for the antique tractor display and related events.
- New Grand Island Motor Company branding will appear on campus.
- Collaborations continue with the 4-H and FFA foundations.
- Discussions are ongoing with First National Bank and others for potential new partnerships and initiatives.
- Nebraska Poultry Industry will create new interactive experiences for future fairs.
- Sponsors and partners are invited to the Aksarben Stock Show's Purple Banner Night.

### **1868 Foundation Report by Jaime Parr for Lindsey Koepke**

- Great Steak Debate, Friday, August 22 at Party Pit.
- Corndogs & Cocktails
- Annual Trustees Dinner
- Gift Shop

### **Executive Director Report by Jaime Parr**

- Continuing to share payables with finance committee and staff team.
- Board ticket request form reminder
- Law enforcement meeting
- Electrical distribution meeting
- Fuller staff meeting coming up next Monday, July 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Security – active intruders, ICE, drones
  - Virtual tour of grounds
  - Opportunities for improvement
- Gatebook: stage time, grounds, strolling, animals = 5,177 hours of things to do at Nebraska State Fair.
- ARPA, GILCA, Naming Rights
- ARPA and stormwater construction projects are progressing; part of the south parking lot will reopen for Hall County Fair.
- Recent stormwater improvements functioned well during a “500-year” rain event in June.
- County Fair Tour – 13 total Fairs
- Safety folder distributed including:
  - Letter
  - Shelter map w/AED locations and first aid stations
  - Will be shared with superintendents
  - Full Emergency Action Plan (53 pages) + smaller, condensed version

- **Measles outbreak update – only one case in Nebraska so far.**
- **Next Board meeting August 22, 2025 at 9 am (Opening Day)**
- **Aksarben Stock Show September 25 – 28, 2025.**
- **Thanks to staff for participating in County Fair Tour.**
- **Thanks to State Fair Board.**
- **Thanks to Ops staff for GILCA, Fair prep, etc.**
- **Thanks to Interns**
- **Thanks to Managers, Directors, and Breanna, Executive Administrator**
- **Thanks to those who are to come, Superintendents, assistants, judges, and 400+ seasonal workers.**

**Adjournment**

**Motion made by Dawn Caldwell to adjourn.**

**Second by John McKeever.**

**All in favor. Motion carried.**

**Minutes of July 18, 2025**

**Nebraska State Fair Approved:**

**Date: August 22, 2025**

By:



John McKeever  
John McKeever, Board Secretary