



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 28, 2026

The meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, August 28th, 2026 at 9:00 am 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 August 21st, 2026; 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, Chairman; Tom Schellpeper, Vice Chair; Lanna Hubbard, Treasurer; John McKeever, Secretary; Anna Castner Wightman; Alan Kahle; Dawn Caldwell; Kathleen Lodl; Kevin Havlovic; Mark Hesser; Ryan Hassebrook; Scott Russman; and Tom Dinsdale. None were absent.

Others in attendance: Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Breanna Kozisek, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; and Cindy Johnson, consultant.

The August 28th meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was called to order by Chairman Boyd Strope at 9:00 am.

Strope announced the meeting had been properly advertised as an open meeting and informed those in attendance of the on-site posting location of the Open Meetings Act.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion made by Kevin Havlovic for the Approval of Consent Agenda, which included the Regular Meeting Minutes of July 17th, 2026.

Second by Tom Dinsdale.

Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.

Financial Report by Joe Stump, AMGL

Lanna Hubbard moved to approve the July 2026 Financials as presented.

Second by John McKeever.

Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.

Committee & Staff Reports

There were no reports presented.

Executive Director Report by Jaime Parr

- Ray O'Connor's passing was shared with the group.
 - Ray was integral to the State Fair getting established in Grand Island those first few years. He was also incredibly impactful with Aksarben Stock Show fundraising. Ray had many ties to Grand Island, including the ownership of several hotels. His passing is a loss to the community.
- Thanks were shared from the Grand Island Area Clean Community.

- Local volunteers helped clean the area in preparation for the State Fair. They cleaned a total of 169 miles, equal to roughly 115 acres, and included 30,000 lbs of trash.
- Thanks were extended to those volunteers.
- Events of Opening Day were discussed.
 - Nebraska State Troopers and local students will slide down the midway slide at 1 pm.
 - The Nebraska State Patrol Colonel will participate in the State Fair's New & Unique Food Contest at 11 am following the Open Ceremony.
 - US Senator candidate Mark Cohen will be in the parade.
- Thanks to Double Locked Security and Courtney Glock for their preparation efforts in welcoming dignitaries to the State Fair.
- Livestock numbers look good entering the State Fair.
 - 4-H has big increases from last year. There are 100 more beef entries, 93 more poultry entries, and 50 more goat entries compared to the 2025 State Fair.
- Competitive Exhibits have also seen an increase in entries.
 - There are 100 more quilts and almost 100 more visual art entries compared to last year.
 - Photography has also seen a significant jump in entries.
- Lifetime Pass Member candidates were considered.
 - There were three candidates total, with two meeting qualifications through service.
 - David Zumbrum was considered to receive a Lifetime Pass for reaching 1868 volunteer service hours with the State Fair.
 - Beth Smith was considered having served a full State Fair Board term of nine years.
 - Jim Ritzman, the third to be considered, has been a long-term partner with the Fair. Ritzman has partnered with the Fair since 1972 as a vendor.
 - Kevin Havlovic motioned to approve all three candidates receiving a Lifetime Pass.
 - Second by Lanna Hubbard.
 - Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.
 - Dawn Caldwell and Anna Castner Wightman were not present for the vote.
- Weather at the start of the week posed some concern.
 - The Grand Island area had seven inches of rain recently – two inches shy of what was seen during the 2019 flooding on Fair grounds.
 - While there were some muddy areas, the ARPA improvements proved helpful in parking areas and drainage on grounds.
 - Some ARPA projects will continue after the 2026 State Fair concludes. All ARPA projects are very close to completion.
- Cindy Johnson asked about dignitaries attending the Fair.
 - Parr informed the group that US Senator Ricketts would have a panel at the Aurora Coop Pavillion at 3 pm on August 31st. A debate will also be held on Tuesday, September 1st – there will not be audience questions or comments.

Adjournment

Motion made by John McKeever to adjourn.

Second by Kevin Havlovic.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 am.

Minutes of August 28, 2026

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: September 1, 2026

By: _____



John McKeever, Board Secretary