



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 7, 2026

The meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Monday, September 7 at 11:30 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 28th, 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; Kathleen Lodl; Kevin Havlovic; Mark Hesser; Scott Russman; and Tom Dinsdale. Absent: Dawn Caldwell and Ryan Hassebrook.

Others in attendance: Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Breanna Kozisek, Business Administrator; Cindy Johnson, Consultant; Terry Galloway, 1868 Foundation Chairman.

The September 1 meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was called to order by Chairman Boyd Strope.

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 September 1, 2026.

Second by Lanna Hubbard.

Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.

Committee & Staff Reports

4-H Report by Kathleen Lodl

- The 4-H Dog Show was held at a new location – the Thompson Arena. Families appreciated the new venue, which worked well for the event.

1868 Foundation Report – Terry Galloway for Lindsey Koepke

- The Great Steak Debate was a success this year drawing 400 attendees – one of the largest group of attendees yet – and bringing in \$120k.
- The Foundation partnered with the Casino this year. If you donated \$10 and got \$10 on a player's card, the 1868 Foundation received a portion of the funds. The Foundation received \$3,800.
- The VIP Reception on Sunday brought new members and life sponsors. Some attendees also increased their commitment levels, making the event a success.
- Events overall during the Fair went well. Additional food from the events was taken to seasonal departments across grounds working overtime and into the night.
- The America 250 statue installed outside the 1868 gift shop was unique between the celebration and its permanent fixture on Fonner Park's campus. The fundraising came up a little short, but the endeavor was a joy.

- This year looks like the best year yet and was certainly a lot of fun.
- Boyd Strobe thanked Terry and the rest of the 1868 Foundation for their support.

Executive Director Report by Jaime Parr

- Some 2026 State Fair numbers were shared, pending finalization.
 - Carnival sales were significantly higher in 2026 than last year.
 - Fair attendance during the week was down compared to years prior, but the hot weather was attributed to that decrease.
 - The beverage department saw record sales this year, particularly on the weekends.
- Appreciation was shown toward the State Fair Board for all their participation this year.
- The Aksarben Stock Show is coming up September 24 through September 27.
- The Board was requested to consider feedback after this State Fair season. Successes, opportunities, and ideas will be discussed at the October board meeting.
- The November board meeting will focus on goal setting. Thanks to Cindy Johnson for her help in setting that up.
- Boyd Strobe shared his appreciation for the board and all their help.
- Lanna Hubbard expressed joy with fellow board members and how much they've accomplished as a group.

Adjournment

Motion made by John McKeever to adjourn.

Second by Kevin Havlovic.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned 11:50 am.

Minutes of September 7, 2026

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: October 16, 2026

By:  _____
 John McKeever, Board Secretary