



NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD
Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 21, 2023

The annual meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, April 21, 2023, at 1:00 pm 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 April 14th & 15th, 2023; 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: Dawn Caldwell, Chair; Jeff Kliment, Vice Chair; Boyd Strope, Treasurer; Tom Schellpeper, Secretary; Bob Haag; Tom Dinsdale; Beth Smith; Kevin Jorgensen; Kathleen Lodi; Lanna Hubbard; Brett Lindstrom, via Zoom; and Ryan Hassebrook. Absent: Steve Wehrbein.

Others in attendance:

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Holle Evert, Sales Director; Karli Schulz, Entertainment & Events Director; Ray Massie, Marketing Director; Vaughn Sievers, Director of Agriculture; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; Lindsey Koepke, 1868 Foundation, via Zoom; Carla Warneke, Box Office.

Dawn Caldwell 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 Boyd Strope for Approval of Consent Agenda which included Regular Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2023.

Second by Lanna Hubbard.

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

Approval of February Financial Reports as presented by Joe Stump and Jaime Parr.

Motion made by Tom Dinsdale to approve Financial Reports for February 2023.

Second by Bob Haag.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

Board Committee Reports

Ag report by Jeff Kliment

- Rules draft ready to send to lawyer.
- Fair prep – judges hired, livestock shows finalized, Superintendents in place.

Events report by Brett Lindstrom

- Ten counties have signed up so far for County Fair Day.
- Board Reunion invites will go out at the end of June.
- Heritage and Pioneer Farm awards
 - Will be working with individual Counties to get contact information.
- Currently 5 nominations for Grand Marshal in hand, 2 more expected.
 - Program has changed to include any deserving Nebraskan.
- Twenty-six marching bands registered.
- Finalizing National Anthem performer for Opening Ceremonies.

Facilities Planning Committee by Tom Schellpeper

- Tina reviewed capital purchases with committee.
 - Most items in the works. A few things are finished.
 - Discussed Nebraska building repairs happening this fall.
- ARPA
 - Surveying has started.
 - Some rfp's going out.
 - We'll see dirt being turned very soon.
 - Repairs and cleaning done on grounds.

Finance Committee by Boyd Strobe

- Cash in good position.
- Lottery coming in well.
- Jaime and staff are fiscally responsible, following budgets.
- Planning a joint meeting with facilities to coordinate expenditures.
- Jaime close to finishing CD investments (2 to finalize).
- Court order confirmed in Kopke bankruptcy that State Fair debt is non-dischargeable.
- Naming Rights legal case wrapping up.

4-H Committee by Kathleen Lodi

- School winding down, 4-H stepping in.
- Behind the scenes work being done with rules, processes, procedures.
- ShoWorks training is happening this week at Raising Nebraska – some NSF staff attending.
- Raising Nebraska space
 - Best use will help people understand food and the families that grow it.
 - Careers and technology in Ag.
 - Considering shifting hours.
- All invited to Chancellor of UNL, Ronnie Green retirement party.
 - Instrumental with Raising Nebraska move to Grand Island.
 - Wednesday morning, 9:30 – 11:30

FFA Committee by Ryan Hasebrook

- Finalizing rulebook
- Small animal show with rabbits and poultry
- Updates to premium books
 - Increase involvement with specific breeds.
 - To recognize more students.
- FFA Association – thanked those in room who participated in State Convention.
- Wrapping up school year for advisors, chapter banquets, new advisors, trainings.

Executive Committee Report by Dawn Caldwell

- Developed HR Committee (previous meeting)
- HR Committee Report by Beth Smith
 - Very minor updates made to employee handbook.
 - All changes were run by counsel, Mark Fahlson & Rembolt Ludtke team.
 - Added Grievance Procedure, Parental Leave, Training Reimbursement Policy, and Telecommuting Policy.

Boyd Strobe moved to adopt employee handbook and policies.

- Tom Dinsdale seconded.
Roll call vote passed unanimously.
- Committee discussed process for Executive Director review.
 - In May, Executive Committee will meet with Jaime (in position for approx. 6 months).

- In October the full Board will receive survey to review Jaime.

Staff Reports

Agriculture Report by Vaughn Sievers

Competitive Exhibits / 4-H Static / FFA Static / 4-H Dog Show

- Have 1 commitment for co-superintendent.
- Have 2 commitments to help with academic testing for Education Department
- Education Entry Book is Online
- Post the remainder of CE Entry Books online by May.

Livestock/Equine

- Finalized equine schedule posted on social media.
- Equine Entry Books currently being edited – Superintendent input.
- Hope to have entry books for livestock & equine posted on the website by May 1st.

Aksarben Stock Show

- Kelsey Loseke has resigned, last day Wednesday April 19th.
- Thanked her for her service to the AKSS and wished her best of luck in her new venture.

Agriculture

- Attended NAFM region 7 meeting in Valentine (Boyd Strobe also)
- Secured a New Equine Photographer
- Secured Load-in and Load-out group for the Full Fair.
 - Stockton Schroder will be providing this service for 8-24/9-4
- Goal to establish Management for Aksarben Stock Show... or team.
- Goal to develop and execute more transparency and collaboration from whole team for Aksarben Stock Show

Events Report by Karli Schulz

- County Fair Day – have a good number of registrations.
- Kayliana is working very hard to make Veteran’s Day unique this year.
- Nebraska’s Largest Classroom expected to far exceed numbers in past years.
- Battle of the Bands
 - Voting closed Tuesday at just under 8,000 votes.
 - Top 10 announced today on social media.
 - Will be sent to a panel of judges Monday to review their submissions.
 - They’ll be narrowed down to the top 7 who will then compete at Hear Grand Island this summer.
- Ticketed events went on sale last Friday.
 - Oak Ridge Boys great seller.
 - Great feedback from the public regarding this year’s lineup.

Marketing & Sponsorship Report by Ray Massie

- Presale of Concert tickets to email subscribers one day in advance (first time)
 - 37% of first weekend total
- Jaime and Ray advertising tour of radio stations across Nebraska
- State Fair to have much more data to target customers for 2023 Fair.
- Audio/Visual projects progress
 - Grounds-wide audio update completed. Equipment to be installed in August.
 - Video equipment may be installed as early as June.
- Building mobile app.
 - In conjunction with Rockhouse partners
 - Hope to have it operational by July 1.
 - 4 millionth visitor will happen sometime during 2023 State Fair.
 - Publication of 2023 State Fair gatebook to be in mid-July.
- Close to \$700,000 in sponsorship sales.
- New accounts (sponsors)

- Bomgaar's Supply – bought all Orschelns properties in Nebraska.
- Tractor Supply Co. – have never been a sponsor for Fair before
- Nebraska Public Power
- Sponsorship is becoming more involved with Aksarben.
 - New customer relationship manager called Hubspot
- Looking to establish new world record for most classic tractors on grounds (August 28)

Operations Report by Tina Thuernagle

- Revamped Beach Bar – bigger ship
- Rock bottoms banded – easier to move around.
- Gearing up for GILCA Stock shows
- Organizing both warehouses
- Fair setup meetings happening
- Secured Landscape committee their own shed.
- Planting Day June 3rd at 9:00 am
- Setting up for Volunteer Banquet next week
 - Thursday, April 27th @ 5:30 pm

Sales Report by Holle Evert

- Finished sending out vendor contracts this week.
- Analyzing what's missing now to create a robust shopping experience for our guests.
- Sustainability Partner and Program Partner applications sent out.
- Aksarben Stock Show vendor applications have gone out as well.
- Resurrecting State Fair Cares program.
- Marketplace & Grand District layout planning.
- Community Outreach – YTD 240 hours across state by NSF staff. SOME events include:
 - Earth Day events
 - Grand Island Public Library
 - Grand Island Chamber of Commerce
- Nebraska Waste Recycling Council calculates waste diversion numbers annually.
 - In 2022 State Fair diverted 91% of our waste from landfills.

1868 Foundation Report by Lindsey Koepke

- Collecting renewals and welcoming new donors.
- Through March 2023 (unofficially) revenue up 20% from last year at this time.
- Working with Idea Bank to start new, larger, state-wide appeals closer to 2023 Fair.
- May 4th, Annual Go Big Give – 24 hour online giving event put on by United Way.
- Grant opportunities for State Fair and Aksarben.
- Blue Ribbon Kickoff (Great Steak Debate) – Opening night August 25 in Events tent.
- \$150,000 in Foundation budget earmarked for a State Fair specific project.
 - Funding for screens in Livestock facilities
 - Official request of Foundation Board to occur Thursday.
- Moving Annual Trustee dinner to June to coincide with website launch.

Executive Director's Report by Jaime Parr

- Continue to meet 1:1 with State Fair Directors
- Group meeting with department heads twice per month
- Weekly staff meetings with full team & some extended staff
 - Cover financials, payables – transparency commitment
- Announced ticketed events – radio, print & social advertising, media tour
- Opened up Box Office
 - Selling tickets upstairs on days Box Office is closed.
 - Concert tickets are selling well.

- Genres are well-received in community. Something for everyone (Whatever Your Flavor)
- Equine changes – Thanked Amy & Sarah
 - Including a working draft horse show (log pull, obstacle course, feed race)
 - Draft horses exhibit all 11 days, but on 2nd weekend will have demonstrations.
- Distributed lambs from Burch Farms – 14 lambs representing 8 states.
- Met with Knights of Aksarben Foundation
- DNA envelopes – livestock nominations for breeding & market animals
- Thanked Kelsey for her service and wished her well.
- Staff training (fully extended staff team) – 3 meetings scheduled
 - US Department of Homeland Security (June) – Suspicious Behaviors training
 - NSP, Emergency Management, GI Police Dept, Double Locked Security (July)
 - First Aid, medical treatment
 - Conflict de-escalation training
 - Dept heads, local authorities (early August) – table talk exercises
- Trainings are a result of training through IAFE (International Association of Fairs & Expositions)
 - Boot camp classes
 - Committee with IAFE
- Customer Service training (middle of August) – seasonal manager certified through Disney Institute
- Best practices and licensing protection for liquor license will be expanded this year
- Insurance renewals, service contracts & wage agreements
- Parking RFP deadline has passed – need to secure parking attendants (probably in-house)
- Fonner Park meetings
 - Transition to happen on August 1
 - Aksarben & other State Fair details
- State FFA Convention
 - Ag department had booth at Trade Show (State Fair engaged with FFA youth)
- Volunteer Banquet this Thursday, April 27th at 5:30.
- Six-month employee assessments for staff team, annual in October.

Other Business – None

Motion to adjourn made by Boyd Strobe.

Seconded by Bob Haag.

All in favor. Motion passed.

Minutes of April 21, 2023

Nebraska State Fair Approved:

Date: May 19, 2023

By: _____
 Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary