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Lancaster County Agricultural Society, Inc.

*A Nebraska non-profit corporation, designated as 501(c)(3) by the IRS
and separate county-level political subdivision
created under Nebraska law in 1870 to promote agriculture & youth.*

PUBLIC MINUTES

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Lancaster Room – Business Center on North side of Pavilion 1

Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds

4100 N. 84th Street, Lincoln NE 68507

7:30pm - Thursday, August 24, 2023

President Ronnau called the monthly meeting of the Lancaster County Agricultural Society board to order at 7:36pm.

Proof of due notice was given in the Lincoln Journal Star and the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was displayed in the room.

Roll Call -

Board members present in person:

- Ronnau, Hardesty, Cusick-Rawlinson, Suing, Hagan, Cooper, Dowding, Rutt

Board members not present:

- Sump

Staff present in person:

- Dickerson, N. Dowding, Bowen

Staff attending virtually

- Rief, Harrison

Also attending virtually were Eric Smallwood, President of Apex Marketing, Lyn Wineman President/Chief Strategist of KidGlov and Trudy Pedley, Lancaster County Fair Open Class Static Superintendent.

- 5 members of the public were also in attendance in person.

Approval of minutes – The minutes from the July meeting were presented. Cooper moved to approve the minutes; Hagan seconded the motion. The minutes of the July board meeting were approved without objection.

Officer and Committee Reports - Ronnau shared that she and LEC Staff met with two of the Swap Meet board representatives and worked out how their event could go forward on their March 2024 date. Ronnau stated that the group also discussed other ideas that would allow for future alternative events that could benefit the group's fundraising efforts on ongoing basis.

Ronnau also said that a meeting was recently held with Nebraska State Fair representatives visiting during the second week of the Lancaster County Super Fair to tour the Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds and talk about ways to work together. Ronnau and others said they hope to continue to grow this relationship.

Cusick-Rawlinson shared that the Lincoln Community Foundation has reached out to give an update on the Ag Society endowment which she would bring to the board in more detail at later date to ensure the initial donations to the endowment are vested.

There were no additional committee reports.

2023 Fair Initial Impressions - Dowding stated that he was very excited about the livestock auction and the high value sales. N. Dowding said that the weather was awesome leading to strong attendance. Cusick-Rawlinson stated that she was told by Wobig of County Extension that Extension was happy with the set up and felt that the fair went well. Ronnau asked that everyone take the time to write down what they feel went well and what could be changed so that ideas are still fresh at the Better Fair meeting.

Apex Marketing Commercial Rights Consulting Agreement - Ronnau introduced Eric Smallwood, President of Apex Marketing who was joining virtually, and talked about his experience with the Lancaster Event Center and his knowledge in this area. Smallwood spoke about the naming rights and sponsorship sales agreement. Smallwood gave the history of this agreement and explained what it covers. Smallwood said that it would support LEC Fairgrounds' efforts to secure larger LEC sponsors. Smallwood stated that he has appreciated working with the LEC staff and that he is impressed by the commitment of the LCAS board and LEC staff. Dickerson stated that Smallwood has been working with the LCAS for the goal of a major naming rights agreement since 2018. Ronnau asked if there were any questions. There were none. Cusick-Rawlinson made a motion to approve the Apex Marketing Commercial Rights Consulting Agreement; Hardesty seconded. Ronnau asked if there was any additional discussion. No additional discussion occurred. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Naming Rights Agreement - A Naming Rights Agreement with Sandhills Global was discussed. Ronnau explained that in past years the Lancaster County Ag Society has been encouraged by city, county, and state officials to have a naming sponsor for the LEC fairgrounds to maximize the revenues self-generated from the own operation of LEC Fairgrounds year-round before seeking further public support for infrastructure improvements. Ronnau spoke about the time and commitment of all current and past Ag Society members to keep the LEC fairgrounds open year-round and running successfully for the local community. Ronnau said that the goal was always to find a major naming sponsor that would align with and benefit from the types of visitors at LEC Fairgrounds and it was a testament to the successful operation of the fairgrounds to be able to secure major naming rights. Ronnau shared information about the process that the Ag Society used in researching and evaluating the current proposed naming rights agreement. Ronnau talked about the technical experts that were consulted during this evaluation and stated that the research and conversations resulted in the proposed 15-year, seven-million-dollar, naming rights agreement with Sandhills Global that is currently being presented. Ronnau said that this company sees the value of marketing exposure to the number and type of visitors that the LEC Fairgrounds serve. Ronnau explained that with this agreement, the facility will be named Sandhills Global Event Center. Board members said that they feel this is a natural fit for a sponsorship through the nature of Sandhills Global's agricultural-related work. Cusick-Rawlinson said that Sandhills employs 600 people locally, giving them a good foothold in the local community even for a global company. Dickerson shared that Sandhills Global has been in Lincoln since 1985 and has 47 different brands worldwide. Dickerson said Sandhills Global has picked seven of their most famous brands to name the existing, agreed upon highest traffic venues on the grounds as listed in the agreement. Ronnau stated that there would be no naming rights for the other areas on the LEC Fairgrounds including the arenas and rooms. Current naming rights are not changing—Amy Countryman Arena inside of Pavilion 4 (now TractorHouse Pavilion) and meeting rooms ABATE, Lancaster, Nebraska, Lancaster County Farm Bureau. The board discussed the idea to update the Lincoln Room to the Ag Society Hall as part of the updates to names as well as updating the Business Center to the Meeting Center to avoid confusion with the office that occurs. 4-H and FFA were mentioned as considered for naming of the Exhibit Hall and Meeting Room A but Dickerson mentioned that the Extension team had given feedback this wasn't possible due to the national nature of these brands and if pursued would mean types of events held in those spaces would be restricted year-round.

Smallwood reviewed the main points of the agreement including the length and value of the contract, new digital signage, and advertising rights. Smallwood said that advertising space on the new digital signage will be available to be sold to other sponsors as well. Cooper stated that the board does not have many questions on this agreement tonight, because a great deal of discussion has occurred prior to this meeting in the naming rights subcommittee and previous board meetings to allow all LCAS board members time to ask questions and share their thoughts. Cooper said that the idea of a naming agreement with any sponsor has been in the works over the past several years and is not being entered into lightly. Dowding stated that the Ag Society will work to help the public understand that this facility is still for the 4-H & other

youth in Lancaster County--this is only a naming change. Dowding said that the fair will still be called the Lancaster County Super Fair and that the facility will continue to be home to the Lancaster County Fair.

Ronnau opened the floor for the public in attendance to speak on this subject. County Commissioner Rick Vest voiced his appreciation for the Ag Society members and the work they do to keep the LEC Fairgrounds up and running. Vest asked if the value of time and money as it relates to future inflation, was considered in the agreed upon naming rights contract amount. Smallwood addressed this question and explained how the money was calculated with the consideration of inflation over 15 years. Vest said that he is very happy for the Ag Society and believes that this is a tremendous step for the Event Center. County Commissioner Roma Amundson also spoke, sharing about her first visit to the LEC Fairgrounds twelve years ago. Amundson said that she is proud of how integral the facility has become for Lancaster County, how successful its relaunch had been since 2014 and congratulated the board on taking a great step. Ronnau thanked Vest and Amundson for their support over the years and talked about their and the entire County Board's participation in improving and growing the Event Center Fairgrounds. Ronnau stated that she wanted to reinforce again that this change does not affect the day-to-day workings of the Lancaster Event Center. Charlie Willnerd, former Lancaster County Agricultural Society member, asked to speak. Willnerd thanked the board for their hard work and dedication. Willnerd shared information about the original planning for the LEC fairgrounds and gave history about the facility and how it came to be. Willnerd said he believes that this is a great move for the Lancaster Event Center as it was originally envisioned that this growth step would happen for the facility. Willnerd said that no matter what, by the nature of the grounds--it will always be the Lancaster County fairgrounds. Willnerd talked about how this change also benefits the Lancaster County Fair. Willnerd stated that he is glad to hear that the Amy Countryman Arena will not change names. Willnerd said that this partner has staying power and talked about the hospitals and rest homes in the community that Sandhills Global has supported in the past. Willnerd said he believes this decision is a win/win situation for the LEC fairgrounds.

Jerry and Marti Mienchow asked to speak next. Jerry asked about the Amy Countryman Arena name staying the same. Ronnau stated that the Amy Countryman Arena would maintain its name that the naming change for Pav. 4 would only apply to Pavilion 4 itself. Mienchow said that he appreciates that the named rooms and the Amy Countryman Arena name will stay the same. Mienchow shared some history on his past with the LEC fairgrounds. Mienchow stated that he was concerned that the naming sponsor will attempt to influence decisions relating to the fairgrounds. Ronnau confirmed that this agreement was for naming rights only. Marti Mienchow stated that she was pleased to see that the names of the rooms and arenas will not change, but that she is not in favor of the name change for the facility.

Ronnau asked if there was anyone else who wanted to speak; there were no other members of the public who wanted to speak. Suing stated that the LEC Fairgrounds would always be for the 4-H youth of Lancaster County.

Ronnau asked if there was any additional board discussion. There was none.

Hagan moved to approve the naming rights agreement; Cusick-Rawlinson seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any further discussion before a roll call vote was taken. Dowding stated that the sign in front may say something different, but the facility will always be the Event Center and Lancaster County Fairgrounds. No additional discussion was had. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Communication from the public - Charlie Willnerd asked to speak about future growth of the Event Center Fairgrounds. Willnerd challenged the board to move forward with the always-planned Phase 3 of buildout of the LEC Fairgrounds including an ag coliseum with fixed seating as was in the original plans. Ronnau talked about progress toward this goal and explained that the Ag Society is moving forward and checking off the things that will help get closer to accomplishing the future build of an ag coliseum. Ronnau thanked Willnerd for coming out and sharing his information and thoughts.

Lyn Wineman, President of KidGlov Marketing spoke and said she is excited for the county and the Ag Society Board as this naming contract approval shows that they have created something that a well-respected business in the community wants to be associated with and sees benefit in doing so.

LEC Operational Report - N. Dowding reports that the staff are working on cleanup from the Lancaster County fair and moving back into horse show season. N. Dowding shared that contracts are being finalized for larger events including a monster truck event in October, arena cross in January, and an indoor demo derby coming in April. N. Dowding said that the National Geographic exhibit has been postponed until 2025 for the months of January through June, due to the exhibit's travel schedule, with a museum quality exhibit.

N. Dowding shared that repairs from the July 4th storm are underway. N. Dowding said that there were 9 doors damaged and replacements are still on order. N. Dowding said the chain link fence at the grandstand was also damaged but is mostly repaired. N. Dowding stated that repairs of the 90 poles in the white fence that were damaged have all been repaired as of today. N. Dowding reports that staff are continuing to work with the insurance company to get the damaged bleachers replaced.

State ARPA Update & approval of draw request - Harrison talked about the State ARPA Fund tracker which shows each draw to date, uses of the funds, as well as the balance & planned future uses which were all listed in her report. N. Dowding talked about the next draw and what it will support. N. Dowding said the top items include lighting and roof condensation repairs to P3. N. Dowding said that other items to be included are painting, repairs to electrical, junction box changes at the grandstand, pothole repairs, sewer lift pump, updating to digital security panel, concrete in the MPA, some of the LED digital signs for naming rights agreement and other items that were decided to be the most important for continued operations. Harrison talked about the purchase of QuickBooks also being included in this draw. The board had short conversation about options on making the QuickBooks purchase and what might be the best

version to get. Suing moved to approve the draw request for \$637,282.90 for ARPA Draw #7. Dowding seconded. Ronnau asked for additional discussion, there was none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Hampton Construction Agreement - Dickerson introduced Scott Lockard, President of Hampton Construction who joined virtually. Dickerson talked about the work that Hampton had been doing free of charge to help the LEC Fairgrounds projects continue moving forward. Lockard spoke about the relationship between Hampton Construction and the LEC Fairgrounds. Lockard reviewed the proposed construction agreement and the need to have an agreement in place for when billed services begin. Cusick-Rawlinson made a motion to approve the Hampton Construction Agreement and Hagan seconded. Ronnau asked if there was further discussion. No additional discussion was needed. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Fiscal Year 2022 Audit - LCAS Auditor, Ryan Burger, CPA of GBE CPAs attended in person. Burger spoke about the FY22 auditor's opinion. Burger said that the opinion on the financial statement is that it is unmodified and accurate. Burger explained that the audit showed that FY22 ended in a net equity position. Burger said that the income statement showed an overall break-even year and that the LCAS was building a stronger position each year coming out of the pandemic. He said that any notes for improvement were seen on the majority of audits he did for similar-sized entities and we had a very strong audit report this year again. Ronnau asked if there were any questions about the audit. No questions were asked. Dowding moved to accept the Fiscal Year 2022 audit by the LCAS Auditor, Ryan Burger of GBE, CPAs. Cooper seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any additional discussion. Rutt asked questions relating to reconciliation that were answered by Burger. No additional questions were asked. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Fiscal Year 2024 County and State Budget Process Update - Burger reviewed the information provided to the board through the general budgeting information and annual state budget information as it relates to future funding access. Burger is preparing the final state budgets for the Ag Society and the Fairgrounds JPA to be approved in budget hearings by both boards on September 21st before the end of September state deadline.

Financial Report - Harrison reviewed the information that was provided on the July financials. Cooper made a motion to accept the July 2023 financials and Hagan seconded. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Harrison presented information on the checks for July 2023, totaling \$382,377.41. Cooper made a motion to approve the July checks totaling \$382,377.41 and Hagan seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Harrison spoke briefly regarding the information provided to the board about the annual operational and capital budgets and the process starting now to set next year's operational and capital budgets.

Managing Director Report - Dickerson provided a fundraising update. Dickerson said there is no new information about the shovel ready state grant at this time. Dickerson stated that she continues to work with the county to secure additional funding to be used as matching funds for this state grant and the county board was being very supportive. Dickerson shared that she has also met with the city to find out how to get them more involved in supporting the LEC Fairgrounds with a similar amount of matching funds after sending millions in incremental sales & occupation taxes to the city over the years from out-of-county LEC event visitors.

Other Business –


Ronnau confirmed with board members, the scheduled date of September 21, 2023 for the JPA and Ag Society meetings and budget hearings as previously scheduled.

Cooper shared that the new Livestock Extension person has resigned so the position is again open.

Adjournment - Cusick-Rawlinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Hagan seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 10:28pm.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED as set forth herein on this 21st day of September, 2023 Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

President Kendra Ronnau



Secretary John Cooper

