



A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to growing community through events like yours, and the Super Fair.

## 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.*

### MINUTES

#### Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Lancaster Room—Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds

4100 N. 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln NE 68507

July 21, 2022 – 7:30 pm

Zoom link for non-voting attendees: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82427586369>

or Call in: 1-253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 824 2758 6369, Passcode: 4100

If technical problems, call/text 402.429.1950

**President Ronnau** called the monthly meeting of the Lancaster Country Agricultural Society board to order at 7:31pm.

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

**Board members present** in person Lynn Hagan, Ron Dowding, Kendra Ronnau, Karen Rutt, John Cooper, and Bryce Doeschot. Also present were LEC staff Greg Rook, Nate Dowding, Sue Morrison, Amy Dickerson, Megan Schafersman in person and by Zoom Lois Harrison. Extension staff that joined were Karen Wobig, Calvin Devries and Tracy Anderson via Zoom. Trudy Pedley also joined in person.

**Approval of Minutes** – Doeschot moved and Hagan seconded to approve the minutes from June 2022 meeting. Motion passed without objection.

**Financial reports for June 2022** – Harrison walked the board through the financials noting items that stood out including Monster Trucks during the fair is a rental event where LEC gets the food and beverage and grandstand arena rental for the event, notable differences in camping sales from having NHSFR last year and not this year, horse shows' attendance down this year due to fuel costs but shavings sales up due to Quarter Horse shows buying more. In the year to date it was noted the 9% rental price increase will just be for new events not already contracted. Ronnau shared price increases are happening all across the country at similar facilities due to high inflation across the country.

Board member Jennifer Cusick-Rawlinson arrived at 7:42pm.

Harrison shared the 2021-22 budget with actuals since December 2021 and budget estimates through end of fiscal year in November. She said the budget was set based on history from the past year and meetings that are starting to happen with managers each month to review the budget actuals and

estimates. Harrison said the budget will be a learning process for the team to work on getting as accurate and helpful a tool as possible. Board members commented they were pleased to see the budget. It was noted with the football season coming up there is some income to be made for football season camping and in the future would like to advertise this more.

It was moved by Cooper and seconded by Hagan to accept the June 2022 financials. Motion passed without objection.

As Harrison reviewed the accounts receivable, she stated she was asking for fair sponsorships to be paid for before the fair. For accounts payable lots of balances are still left over from the rodeo. Cusick-Rawlinson asked what the plan was to pay back the WW Manufacturing for the rodeo panels. Harrison and Ronnau noted the next payment is due Aug 15<sup>th</sup> and may need to be delayed until ARPA grants are received since the panels were planned to be paid for with the two international events canceled due to the pandemic in 2020 (NHSFR, FMCA), but that WW has been extremely good to work with and very understanding. Cusick-Rawlinson asked about money from the VPC lodging tax grant, and Dickerson stated the \$600,000 first payment was received this year without even having to remind the County about it and that went against the construction bridge loan. Doeschot asked what is our plan for the \$490K that we owe to people today, to become sustainable. Harrison said that the city/county will announce who gets the local non-profit tourism entity ARPA grants, noting we qualify for \$1 Million and all of that would go to paying off debt as the grants were designed to do, to help tourism industry recover from the pandemic.

Dickerson said we have up to \$5 Million also from the State ARPA bill that just went through this spring, but they have yet to hear how and when that money can be distributed which is a lot slower process coming through the State. Dickerson said in the meantime that the team has been working with vendors on payment plans and if we learn the ARPA funds are coming but won't flow fast that LEC could bridge the timing with the bank. However we believe city/county grant payment process will be quicker to work with than the State.

Ronnau shared that the board had sat down when committing to do the NHSFR (prior to knowing about added challenges of the microburst storm and pandemic) that we knew it would stretch this facility since it has never been supported for the economic impact we bring, but what it did do is put us on the map in a positive way and helped out city, county and state. Ronnau noted we wouldn't have gotten the ARPA dollars or recognition, but now the city and state have our backs.

Hagan shared a lot of facilities similar to us are in the exact same boat right now from getting hit so hard. Ronnau commended the team and noted once the money starts flowing from these outlets sometimes you have to spend money to make money and we just hit some kinks. Doeschot shared the debt is the Ag Society's responsibility to pay and he hopes to hear a concrete plan how we will pay in the future. Cusick-Rawlinson was happy to hear we have the support but wants us to have the money to run operationally and not be relying on handouts once the debt paid off. Cooper noted would like to see that too but stated the harsh reality is we are in a business we don't get to reap the rewards and most other similar facilities around the country receive support recognizing this economic impact. Ronnau shared after the fair the board will need to sit down and think what is feasible to do going forward. Dowding stated the community came to us and asked us to pick up the slack when the state fair left, but we can't afford \$21K in generators each year (for the fair) so if we can't get support somewhere from

the city/county then we'll have to cut back on things at the fair. Cooper shared one place we fall short is soliciting donations and sponsorships like we should – Ronnau shared Melissa is making great strides in just a few short months. Dickerson noted it sounds like after this conversation the board would like to take some time to update the strategic plan and will take note to set a meetings up to do this in the future.

**Approval of Checks** – It was moved by Cusick-Rawlinson and seconded by Cooper to approve the checks in the amount of Checks \$241,238.12. Motion passed without objection.

**Officer and committee reports** – None.

**Extension Update** – Wobig, Anderson and Devries gave an update on Extension's preparations for the county fair.

**Communication from the public** – None.

**2022 Fair Update** – Nate Dowding shared the big preparations for the fair are done now and just finishing up the final set up. Several smaller A/C units around the facility have gone down and currently working on getting them fixed –it was noted the units were from original build in 2021 so hopefully one day we can get funds to get them fixed. The board discussed roles during the fair. Pedley gave an update on numbers for open class static. Morrison shared an update on security plans for the fair including several meetings with LPD and making significant security improvements with each fair day shutting down earlier at 10 pm and more police presence.

**Operations Director Report** – Rook shared a draft of fair organization chart and team contact cards. Two staff/volunteer fair training meetings were held today in person and via zoom that went very well. Volunteer numbers are way up and all slots are full. Trustees are back this year 1-8:30.

**Managing Director Report** – Dickerson gave an update noting work on sustainable funding with all the meetings with city, county and state. It was noted the local ARPA funding should be announced soon and will move a lot faster locally than the state.

**Decide if move September meeting to Sept 22** – The board discussed if the Sept board meeting date should be changed. The budget submission deadline is extended to the 30<sup>th</sup>. It was decided the board should check on Sept 27 or 28<sup>th</sup> and decide which one is best.

**Other business** – Board asked about how process was going to get dealer licenses needed for FMCA event. Rook is contacting local dealers to fulfill this need but this is a hindrance to national events that needs to be adjusted in state law going forward. The staff at the state motor vehicle dealer licensing office agreed to help on these changes.

**Executive Session** – It was moved by Cusick-Rawlinson and seconded by Hagan to enter into an executive session to discuss personnel changes at 9:01 pm.

It was moved by Dowding and seconded by Cusick-Rawlinson to exit executive session at 9:46 pm.

**New business** – Dowding moved and Hagan seconded to award Susan Bulling who just retired after 20 years of service a certificate for free camping for life at LEC Fairgrounds as well as a \$200 gift certificate to spend on the gift of her choice in recognition of her 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Motion passed 7-0.

**Adjournment** – It was moved by Doeschot and seconded by Cooper to adjourn the meeting. The board approved the motion without objection and meeting adjourned at 9:56pm.

**Next meeting: September 27 or 28, 2022 at 7:30pm**

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED as set forth herein on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2022 Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

President Kendra Ronnau Kendra Ronnau

Secretary ~~John Cooper~~ K. Rutt

Treasurer Karen Rutt