



Visit us:  
[LancasterEventCenter.org](http://LancasterEventCenter.org)

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

Home of the



August 1-10 2024

## 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 MEETING

#### MINUTES

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Lancaster Room—Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds

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

7:30pm - Thursday, October 19, 2023

**President Ronnau** called the monthly meeting of the Lancaster County Agricultural Society board to order at 7:32pm.

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

**Roll Call was taken** - Lancaster Ag Society Board Members attending in person: Ronnau, Suing, Hardesty, Rutt and Sump. Cusick-Rawlinson arrived later at 7:35pm. Absent were: Dowding, Cooper, and Hagan.

Lancaster Event Center staff attending in person: Jones, Bowen, Rief, and N. Dowding. Staff attending virtually: Harrison and Skillett. Contractor NHSFR Event Manager John Kaiser also joined virtually.

Also attending in person was Wobig for Lancaster County Extension. Anderson for Lancaster County Extension attended virtually.

Approval of minutes - The minutes from the September meeting were presented. Suing moved to approve the minutes; Sump seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The September minutes were approved in a vote of 5-0.

**Officer Reports** - Ronnau said that staff are working hard to get the county fair recaps completed while getting set up for the next group of events that are coming in. Ronnau also stated that the Sandhills Naming Committee has been super active recently.

7:35pm Cusick-Rawlinson arrived.

**Committee Reports** - No Committee Reports

**Extension Update** - Wobig shared information on behalf of Lancaster County Extension. Wobig said that Lancaster County 4-H is having their big Open House on Sunday and are expecting great attendance. Wobig stated that the front hall of the Extension building is getting new floor tile, so the front doors will be closed soon for a week while this happens. Wobig stated that the side doors will be open for use during this time.

**Communication from the public** - No public in attendance

**Fair Report** - N. Dowding said that the carnival would like to get the contract completed and signed for 2026, 2027, and 2028 as they are receiving requests for other locations. N. Dowding said that in order to keep this same company it should be signed soon. Ronnau stated that the board will look at the contract and see if there are any changes that need to be made to continue to improve security. Discussion occurred around which fees the carnival company pays in relation to security. Ronnau encouraged the board members to review the carnival contract and share their thoughts and questions.

Ronnau said that the Livestock 4-H Better Fair meeting is being held on the same night of the LEC Blue Jean Gala so the board would not be able to attend.

A motion was made by Rutt to move to the NHSFR Report and return to the Fair Report after that discussion was complete. Sump seconded. Ronnau asked if there was any discussion and there was none. Motion passed without objection.

**National High School Finals Rodeo Report** - Kaiser said that he has met with Cinch and Equibrand to do some PR with these national sponsors of the NHSFR. Kaiser stated that to establish a better relationship between LEC and National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA) he talked to these sponsors about what LEC can do to make improvements in the NHSFR rodeo when returns to Lincoln in 2026/2027. Kaiser shared that in November, he will be going to Denver to meet with the NHSRA staff to have similar conversations. Kaiser said that if the Gillette community decides to build an additional indoor arena facility, NHSFR is considering going to Gillette for all future events for a long period of time to be determined. This would mean no future NHSFR events would be held at the LEC beyond those already contracted in 2026 & 2027. Kaiser stated that he is working with the LEC management team to make further improvements requested by the NHSRA for the next NHSFR held at the LEC and he feels that plans have been made to solve these issues. Cusick-Rawlinson asked about working to get a contract with the Junior High School Rodeo Finals. Kaiser said that is an option and that he feels this could be a really good event for LEC to reach out to for future events if there were the right dates in June on the LEC calendar. Cusick-Rawlinson asked Kaiser if the NJHFR would be looking to move to Gillette permanently as well; Kaiser said he did not think that would be the case.

Ronnau thanked Kaiser for the update. Discussion returned to the Fair Report.

Joni Jones as Sponsorship & Fair Coordinator provided a 2023 Super Fair Summary of events she was involved with in supporting. Jones shared information showing there were large increases in entries in several areas of the Super Fair including: Open Class Static Events, Kiwanis Bingo, Car Show, Cookie Eating Contest, Pedal Tractor Event, Mutton Busting, Beer Garden Sales, Youth Scavenger Hunt and the Cinnamon Roll Contest.

Jones shared information about the Hispanic Cultural Event and its success. Ronnau stated that this was a fantastic event with a lot of interest from the community. Jones said that vendors and sponsors are already voicing interest in participating in this event next year. Jones stated that moving it to a Saturday in 2024 might help allow for attendance to continue to grow and would open up room for another cultural event.

Jones shared information about the new Weiner Dog RoundUp. Jones shared that attendance and entry numbers for this event far exceeded goals. N. Dowding suggested moving this event to the MPA in 2024 and placing bleachers on both sides of the room to allow for additional crowd seating. Jones stated she would like to get Hy-Vee and the Oscar Meyer Weiner mobile to support this event as well. Ronnau asked about doing additional events with other dog breeds.

Hardesty asked about past experience with high school and other bands performing at the fair. There was discussion about adding a band competition in 2024. Hardesty said she is reaching out to local high school bands about attending in 2024 and will report back to the board with more information at a later date.

Jones talked about working to enhance special days like, daycare day, in order to create better attendance and community support for those days.

Jones shared information about free sponsor fair gate ticket numbers and ticket distribution rates at sponsor retail locations.

There was discussion around possible changes to the beer garden including the size of the tent and addition of fans in the tent. N. Dowding said that he was going to talk to Case about bringing a sprayer in, set on mister for people to enjoy the cooling effect during the hottest days. This would also allow people to see some Case farm machinery as it would work in the field. Ronnau and others felt this was a great idea.

Ronnau complimented Jones on the work she has done to collect this information on portions of the Super Fair she organized.

Hardesty asked about information on the Military Veterans Day. Jones said that she does not have any information about it at this time. Hardesty said she is talking to military officials at the Nebraska Army National Guard about having a presence at the Fair. Hardesty would also like to get the Army National Guard Band to come out and play at the fair.

Cusick-Rawlinson asked that Jones look for more ways to use the Grandstand during the fair.

**Operations Report** - N. Dowding reported that the Silver Classic Horse Show was very large this year with a significant increase in exhibitor numbers. N. Dowding said that a large crowd is also expected for the Monster Truck event to be held this weekend.

N. Dowding provided a construction update including current and upcoming work being done. N. Dowding said that this list includes: new polished floor in Nebraska Room, upgraded LED lighting in P2 and P3 to LED to increase the brightness & energy efficiency/cost, replacing A/C units in the Lincoln Room, replacing the freezer in the Lincoln Room, installing new shower basins in the MPA Showers, and adding windows to the main move-in garage doors for the NE Ag Expo-- all while working with Hampton Construction & subcontractors on naming signage installations by December 1 effective re-naming date.

**Financial Report** - Harrison reviewed the financials for August. Ronnau asked for questions. There were no questions. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to accept the August financials as presented. Suing seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

Harrison reviewed the financials for September. Ronnau asked for questions. Cusick-Rawlinson asked if anyone would be interested in being on a committee to review the fair numbers closer from year to year. There was some additional discussion about this idea. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to accept September financials and Hardesty seconded. Ronnau asked if there was any other discussion; there was none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved 6-0.

Harrison presented the checks for September totaling \$482,746.11. Sump moved to approve the checks and Hardesty seconded. Ronnau asked for additional discussion but there was none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved 6-0.

Harrison shared information requesting Draw 8 from the ARPA funds. Harrison discussed expenses that are going out for construction and naming rights sign changes. Harrison asked for additional monies to use to pay bills that have been submitted relating to these expenses. Ronnau asked if there were any questions. Hardesty asked about the process in paying this type of bills after the LEC reaches the \$40,000 cap in the naming rights agreement. Harrison shared information about the process. Suing made a motion to approve draw 8 and the disbursements

as shown on the draw request. Hardesty seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried 6-0.

Harrison stated that the LEC was recently officially awarded a \$5 million State Shovel Ready grant to be used for modernization of infrastructure that was applied for on July 1st. \$5 million in other matching funds are required to receive the full grant amount from the State that would then constitute a total potential \$10 million project. Harrison read the following information to the board from the grant application describing the project:

“Grant funds and matching funds will be used by the Lancaster County Ag Society (LCAS), for Phase I Modernization of Lancaster Event Center (LEC) Fairgrounds’ infrastructure (“Project”).

The Project will address critical infrastructure improvements across 10 acres of multi-use event space under roof, as well as 161-acre grounds and outdoor event facilities. These infrastructure improvements will allow LEC Fairgrounds to maintain and grow its unique community and economic impact for the State of Nebraska and continue to compete with other “national fairgrounds” to host large events while maintaining service vital to local youth, workforce development, non-profit, businesses and emergency uses related to Nebraska’s agricultural industries.

The physical facilities at the LEC Fairgrounds range in age from 2 to 22 years. Uses of these grant funds include construction, replacement, and improvements to new and existing building infrastructure, grounds, and fixtures, including: HVAC, roofing, lighting, sound, electrical, security and alarm systems, sewer, water, broadband internet infrastructure, signage, arena improvements, horse and livestock stalls and pens, concrete and other floorings, food and beverage kitchens/cafes remodeling and fixtures, construction of permanent storage areas, remodeling and expansion of office/staff support work areas, replacement of asphalt/concrete in existing and construction of additional parking lots, driveways and walkways, construction of bathhouse to service campground with 1,275 recreational vehicle sites, remodeling and construction of public restrooms, construction of food/beverage prep/serving areas for outdoor grandstand and other outdoor activity spaces, drainage, landscaping, and hardscaping improvements, and fencing.”

Ronnau asked if there was any discussion. There was none. Hardesty moved to authorize the \$10,000,000 State Shovel Ready modernization project and authorize the Managing Director to apply for grants, public funds for matching funds. Rutt seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was no additional discussion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 6-0.

**2023 Ag Society Hall of Fame nominations** - Ronnau stated that the names that have been nominated were Roma Amundson and Jerry & Marty Minchow. Suing stated that he felt these were excellent nominations and great supporters of the local agricultural community and Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds. Suing made a motion to approve the nominations and Hardesty seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 6-0.

**Annual Board Election Nominating Committee report** - Ronnau stated that the candidate statements and pictures are due by November 15, 2023 for election slate to be set at the November 16 board meeting. Sump and Cusick-Rawlinson are both willing to run again. Ronnau stated that she had spoken to Hagan and he is also wanting to run.

**Managing Director Report** - Ronnau shared that Dickerson was out due to an illness in her family. Ronnau said that the Blue Jean Gala preparations are underway. Ronnau stated that the list of invitees is being updated and reviewed by several on staff so that invitations can go out soon. Ronnau shared that the one AkSarBen Pioneer Farm Family is bringing 31 people to the event.

N. Dowding talked about the naming signage agreements and a priority list for the Naming Rights work. N. Dowding said that a meeting will be held on Monday to finalize these issues with the LEC staff working to get as much signage changed and up by the December 1 effective naming date. N. Dowding said it will be nice to have the color in the buildings and the lit-up signs will look good. Ronnau and others agreed.

**Other Business** - Jones stated that the Magical Lights Show is being built at this time. Jones said that the company is wanting to work with local nonprofits to allow people to buy tickets with \$5 of each carload sale going to the nonprofit.

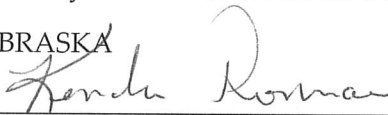
**Adjournment** - Suing moved to adjourn the meeting and Cusick-Rawlinson seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 9:33pm.

**Next meeting scheduled for:**


Thursday, November 16, 2023 - Monthly Ag Society Board Meeting at 7:00pm  
See LancasterEventCenter.org → Public Notices

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED as set forth herein on this 29<sup>th</sup> day of Nov., 2023 Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

President Kendra Ronnau

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer Karen Rutt

  
\_\_\_\_\_

d

o

o