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## Lancaster County Agricultural Society, Inc.

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

### MINUTES

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting  
Lancaster Room—Sandhills Global Event Center  
4100 N. 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln NE 68507  
7:00pm - January 30, 2024

**President Ronnau called the monthly meeting** of the Lancaster County Agricultural Society board to order at 7:00pm.

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

**Lancaster Ag Society Board members attending** in person were Hardesty, Ronnau, Dowding, Cooper, Rutt, Hagan, and Suing. Arriving later were Cusick-Rawlinson at 7:09pm and Sump at 8:32pm. SGEC staff in attendance included Bowen, Rief, Dickerson, and N. Dowding. SGEC staff attending online was Harrison. Members of public included Karen Wobig from UNL/Lancaster County Extension and Ron Bohaty.

**The Annual Facility Insurance Renewal Update** was presented Rob Burkett of UNICO Group SGEC's facility/liability insurance agency. Burkett reported that he has been working on getting quotes from hundreds of suppliers for SGEC's upcoming annual insurance renewal on March

transferring income from the day of giving to the Lincoln Community Foundation to be deposited into the Ag Society's Lancaster County Fairgrounds endowment fund. Give to Lincoln Day donations now total approximately \$9K to date. Cusick-Rawlinson suggested that moving this money would allow the Ag Society to fulfill the commitment to meet the initial \$10K required by the deadline of 2025 to complete the process of permanently establishing the fairground's Lincoln Community Foundation endowment fund and ensuring the funds deposited there to date stay in the fairgrounds' endowment fund. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was none. Suing moved to designate Ag Society's Give to Lincoln Annual Giving Day donations, present and future, to the Lancaster County Agricultural Society Fairgrounds Endowment Fund; Hagan seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any additional discussion. There was no additional discussion. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed 8-0. Cusick -Rawlinson will follow up on this in the marketing of Give To Lincoln Day this year to focus on raising funds for the endowment.

**Annual Election of Ag Society Board Officers** - Ronnau discussed the four Lancaster County Ag Society officer positions that are up for election tonight. Ronnau asked the newer board members if they had any questions about these officer positions. Ronnau asked for nominations for officers. Hagan moved to keep the slate of officers as they were in 2023 which was Ronnau as President, R. Dowding as Vice President, Cooper as Secretary and Rutt as Treasurer. Suing seconded the motion. Ronnau asked again two times if there were other nominations for these positions. There were none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

**Designation of 2024 Lancaster County Fairgrounds JPA Members from Ag Society** - Ronnau stated that Vest and Amundson will continue to be the Lancaster County Commissioners serving on the JPA. Ronnau said that Hagan, Suing, and Ronnau served in this position in 2023. Ronnau asked for nominations to fill the Ag Society member positions for the JPA. There were none. Ronnau asked a second time for nominations for Ag Society members positions on the JPA. Dowding moved to retain the current Ag Society board members of Hagan, Ronnau and Suing to serve on the JPA board for 2024. Rutt seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

**Karen Wobig from Lancaster County Extension** provided an update. Wobig talked about the Nebline for March/April. Wobig stated that in the past this issue included the nomination information for the Ag Society VIP awards. Wobig asked if the board would like to continue to have this information in this issue. Dickerson confirmed yes and asked Wobig to send information on this to her as had been done for announcements done each year in the Nebline. Wobig shared that a new livestock person, Madelaine Polk, has been hired. Wobig asked about how pavilions will be labeled for the Fair Book. Dickerson confirmed that they will be labeled

contacts. Rief stated that they had some new ideas for future events for the fair, thanks to these contacts.

Sump shared that he had spoken with a drone light show vendor about cost and possibilities. Sump talked about attending the convention for the first time as an Ag Society board member and the things he learned about the fair planning process. Sump also stated that he spoke with VisitNebraska.com about a grant program that might be helpful in providing funds for youth events and the fair.

**The 2024 fair planning update** was provided by N. Dowding. N. Dowding reviewed the new and changing roles of several staff members. N. Dowding said Sara Juengel will take over fair entertainment and food vendors, Anjanette Rief will work with commercial vendors, and Renita may work on calling smaller sponsorships. There was discussion about adding another cultural event, a draft horse exhibit, a best of all breeds horse show and about possible changes to the Grandstand events.

N. Dowding talked about the carnival contract and options around the contract. Ronnau stated that a subcommittee should be created to work with staff on recommendations for the 2026 and 2027 carnival. Ronnau asked for volunteers for this committee. Hardesty, Ronnau, and Rutt volunteered for the committee, with Cusick-Rawlinson as a backup if needed.

Cusick-Rawlinson made a motion to move number 14 on the agenda up to discuss at this time. This motion was seconded by Hagan. Ronnau asked for discussion, there was none. The motion passed without objection.

**Operations Report** - N. Dowding said that several shows have signed new contracts for this year including the Magical Lights show who had a successful first year in 2023. N. Dowding talked about the new ideas that Magical Lights provided for their 2<sup>nd</sup> year for 2024. N. Dowding also discussed additional ideas for a Christmas Village that would be run by SGEC. N. Dowding reports that the Deer and Game Expo was successful, the Gun Show had great attendance, and that the Pool Tournament attendance was up with 80 tables running for competitors.

Rief provided an IT update as it related to current construction and maintenance projects. N. Dowding stated that currently the emergency lights in the LivestockMarket Pavilion were being finished and the wider kitchen entrance door in the Good Times Grill will be put up in March. N. Dowding said that the NE Ag Expo was happy with the updates that had been done to the LivestockMarket Pavilion roof, LivestockMarket & EquineMarket Pavilion new LED brighter lighting, Nebraska Room polished floor, Meeting Center painting/wallpaper, SGEC way-finding signs inside and outside. He talked about the discovery of new water drips from the ceiling of

asked if there were additional questions; there were none. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 9-0.

Harrison talked about information provided related to draw 10 on the state ARPA fund. Harrison explained information on the HVAC bill for the unit above the Good Times Grill and the options for a repair or replacement due to its age. Cooper stated that the control system for a new HVAC should be kept in mind to make sure that it is compatible if a new system is needed. Ronnau asked for additional questions; there were none. Suing moved to approve Draw 10 for \$182,634.67 on the state ARPA funds; Hardesty seconded. Ronnau asked if there was any additional discussion. Cusick-Rawlinson asked for further explanation on the IT updates listed in the information. Harrison and Rief talked about the entries for IT updates. Ronnau asked if there were any other questions; there were none. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 9-0.

Harrison talked about carry over of unused vacation and comp time for three full-time employees that have not been able to use all their leave. Harrison stated that this was due to understaffing in certain areas. Ronnau asked for discussion; there was none. Hagan moved to allow employees to carry over their unused paid time off and comp time; Rutt seconded. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was none. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 9-0. Ronnau stated that the board appreciates the dedication and hard work of these and all employees that work so hard to keep the SGEC moving forward.

Harrison spoke to the board about the impact of new Clover cash register system implemented just before the NE Ag Expo in early December on the Cafe team tips. The use of this program has helped to double tips over the amount from last year with much higher tips from credit card payments with a screen asking if would like to tip now facing the customer.

Harrison talked about the SGEC full time team member benefits package in the process of annual renewal on February 1. She explained that there will be a change in dental insurance carriers due to poor service due to a corporate management change, but all other benefits are looking to be on track as is and SGEC's benefits insurance agent, Kollmorgen, did a nice job explaining the value of SGEC's leading benefit package to the full-time staff in a recent benefits enrollment meeting when compared to other small/medium businesses in the area.

**Managing Director Report** - Dickerson provided an update to the board on the current status of the grants and funding sources. Dickerson stated that she continues to work with the legal team to research information that will help move forward on which funding sources can be used in what capacities for the SGEC including some questions from State Department of Economic Development. The Shovel Ready Grant (SRG) appears to be ready to be certified now with matching funds secured and asked for board approval to submit these SRG matching funds in a

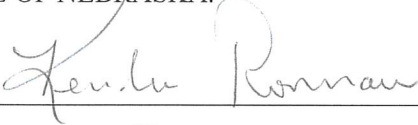
**Other Business** - The board presented a sympathy card to Ronnau for the recent loss of her daughter.

**Adjournment** - Cusick Rawlinson made a motion to adjourn; Hagen seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 10:16pm.

**Next meeting scheduled for:** TUESDAY February 27, 2024 at 7:00pm  
See SandhillsGlobalEventCenter.org → Public Notices

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED as set forth herein on this 27 day of February, 2024. Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA.

President Kendra Ronnau



Secretary John Cooper

