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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 MEETING MINUTES

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting
Lancaster County Farm Bureau Room
Sandhills Global Event Center
4100 N. 84th Street, Lincoln NE 68507
7:00pm - Tuesday, February 27, 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, Sump, Hagan, and Suing. Arriving later at 7:07pm was Cusick-Rawlinson and arriving at 7:40pm was Rutt. LEC staff in attendance included Bowen, Rief, N. Dowding, Juengel, and Bohaty. LEC staff attending online was Harrison.

Annual Facility Insurance Renewal Final Update - Rob Burkett of UNICO presented the final insurance renewal information. Burkett said that he was able to acquire coverage with a premium increase. Burkett discussed the option of SGEC taking on some of their own risk to carry a higher wind/hail deductible but in balancing the numbers does not feel that the return is sufficient to warrant this.

7:07pm Cusick-Rawlinson arrived.

Bohaty stated that increases in rental equipment during the fair required an increase in insurance coverage during the peak season, which resulted in an increase in premium. Bohaty stated that the inventory list values had been updated. There was discussion regarding replacement cost and actual cost value on inventory; Bohaty will update the inventory list to reflect actual cost value. Bohaty will evaluate business interruption coverage to see if this would be a need to increase coverage in the future. Ronnau asked if there were any other questions. There were none. Cooper made a motion to authorize SGEC Staff to proceed with possible changes to the insurance policy, as discussed, with a \$25,000 wind/hail deductible buy down. Suing seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was some additional discussion regarding future need for spoilage coverage for food and beverage. Cooper stated that he felt Burkett had done his due diligence in creating an insurance package that was appropriate for SGEC. A roll call vote was taken; the motion was approved 8-0.

Approval of minutes - The minutes from the January meeting were presented. Cooper moved to approve the minutes; Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. Sump abstained. The January minutes were approved in a vote of 7-0.

Officer Reports - President Ronnau shared that Board Clerk Kim Bowen was recently recognized as a Lancaster County 4-H Volunteer of the Month. There were no additional Officer reports.

Committee Reports - Hagan presented an update on the NHSFR Rodeo. Hagan said that Kaiser has had conversations with NHSFR staff about next steps and will be in Lincoln to update the board in April on his progress. Ronnau talked about the UNL Rodeo team. Ronnau stated that new coach is already hard at work with fundraising and moving ahead toward building a new facility for the rodeo team. Ronnau stated that three potential NHSFR interns were identified with UNL Rodeo Coach Clark's assistance.

7:40pm Rutt arrived.

No additional committee reports were presented.

Extension Update - There were no 4-H Extension members in attendance. Ronnau stated that SGEC staff have had difficulty getting responses from Extension staff, in particular Kate Pulec. Ronnau explained that SGEC staff have reached out several times regarding changes in shavings purchase hours during the fair. Ronnau said that several team members have met to create a schedule that will work for everyone but have been unable to move forward without a response from Pulec.

Communication from the public - There were no public in attendance.

2024 Fair Update - N. Dowding reminded everyone of Fair Book deadlines. N. Dowding stated that the team decided to move ahead with the changes in shavings hours and prices without input from Pulec to meet the Fair Book deadlines. N. Dowding said that he will email the Ag Society Board if there are any changes.

Harrison reviewed information provided on the fair budget verses actual expenses. Cooper asked for additional details on the increase in income. Harrison said that when the audit was done in 2022, that our auditor had found that \$40K of the annual 3% property tax increase in the fair budget was

missed in the annual budget which the County Board included in the next year budget. Taking that now resulted in a 1-time increase in budgeted fair income. Harrison also pointed out there was some increase in the fair gate tickets/parking income included in the budget that staff would be presenting. Rutt asked if the increases in judges wages for static events were included in the prepared information. Harrison said they were not so she will make this adjustment and update.

Bohaty presented a staff parking /gate ticket proposal to create a new combination "Fair Parking Pass" instead of requiring both \$3/person fair gate tickets and \$5/vehicle fair parking passes with free gate tickets available at gate ticket sponsors which hadn't changed since 2017. Bohaty said that changing to a carload "Fair Parking Pass" would allow for quicker entry, less traffic congestion and lower sales tax paid by the fair as not due on parking fees. The Fair Parking Pass would be \$15/carload with a \$5 coupon available at gate sponsors and would include entry for all people in the vehicle instead of requiring a separate gate ticket per person simplifying the entry experience for the fairgoer and gate staff. Cooper asked if a car could leave and come back the same day without an additional charge. N. Dowding said there would be a paper parking pass for same-day reentry as in the past. Bohaty was asked to look into multi-day discounted entry passes like Gage County does and options to sell online via eTix for prepaid Fair Parking Passes. Cooper brought up the expense of parking for vendors and N. Dowding answered that vendors would receive special entry hangtags for the number of staff they request as in the past. Just like 4-H/FFA Exhibitors will still receive a free entry pass hangtag good for all 10 days. Rutt asked about drop offs and how these would be handled. Bohaty said that each vehicle would purchase the same \$15 Fair Parking Pass. For those that walk in without a vehicle, Bohaty said that added staff was being added at the highest volume location of Gate 2 where also under 16-year old kids were being dropped off against fair rules. Cooper mentioned that we would never be able to catch all walk-ins.

Cooper made a motion to approve the 2024 fair budget with the new combination "Fair Parking Pass" proposed for \$15 per car with a \$5 sponsor coupon available, and task staff with working out the details before the fair book due date. Hagan seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for further discussion. Cusick-Rawlinson asked that staff have a clear policy for drop offs stated. Cooper said that this is something that needed to be looked at and addressed reasonably. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was approved 7-2 with R. Dowding and Suing voting no.

N. Dowding updated the Ag Society Board on the fair schedule including bringing back commercial and educational vendors located inside during the first four days of the fair. Ronnau stated that the layout for vendors will be important for a manageable nightly close down. N. Dowding said that the Reptiles attraction has a signed contract and the Racing Pigs have been confirmed. N. Dowding also reported that the bands are all booked and confirmed a total of 5 bands. N. Dowding shared that staff are still firming up the cultural festival details. N. Dowding said that the Hispanic Festival is willing to extend their hours for a longer event. Cooper reminded staff that if hours for these festivals are extended, supplies will need to be increased proportionately. N. Dowding stated that the team also reached out to the Asian Cultural Center with no response. There was discussion around other possible cultural festivals that could be offered.

Hardesty gave an update on the Marching Band plan. Two local High Schools have already committed, and Hardesty continues to talk to others. Hardesty reports that the SGEC staff have worked with her to create a main and alternate route for the bands to march on weekday nights that lead to and from the staging area. Cusick-Rawlinson suggested looking for a freebie sponsor to help provide items for the students.

Ronnau discussed the Ag Olympics and said that she would like to pass this to another board member this year. Cusick-Rawlinson asked if this might be something that could be supported by the UNL Rodeo Club.

Ronnau said that the Future Fair sub-committee had met and talked about options for future fair dates. Ronnau explained that the contract for the carnival has been signed with dates through 2025. The committee shared information on several options for the carnival and recommended that the carnival contract be signed with dates through 2028. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to authorize President Ronnau to sign the Carnival Contract through for 2026-2028 with Dickerson to negotiate additional contributions from carnival for any remaining carnival-caused costs and more food revenue contribution before sending to carnival. Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 9-0.

Financial Report - Harrison shared information presented in January financials. Ronnau asked if there were any questions; there were none. Hagan made a motion to accept the January financials as presented; Cusick-Rawlinson seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there were any questions; there were no additional questions. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 9-0.

Harrison presented the January accounts receivable and accounts payable information. There were no questions asked. Harrison talked about recently hired employee, Hannah Stara who will serve as Assistant Controller. Harrison feels Stara will be a big asset to SGEC. Harrison shared information about the work being done for SGEC Event Coordinators to begin to create each event's Client invoice to increase accuracy vs. the Client agreements created by the Event Coordinators and inform creation of next year's Client agreements vs. having accounting prepare the Client invoices. Harrison presented the January checks totaling \$537,544.57. There were no questions about the checks. Dowding made a motion to approve the January checks in the amount of \$537,544.57. Suing seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 9-0.

Bohaty and Harrison reviewed the FY2024 Operational Budget which includes the Fair budget. Cooper asked if the operational budget had been presented in the past and Harrison confirmed she had presented it last year and that the management team was taking even more ownership of the budget this year. Bohaty mentioned he is working with his department managers on the portions of the budget they manage. The Board expressed appreciation to staff for working through and sharing this level of detail on the annual operational budget. Harrison stated that the goal would be to do a mid-year update in June to share any adjustments needed.

Operations Director Report - Bohaty talked about staffing updates. Bohaty said that Kathleen Orton was recently hired to serve as an Event Coordinator along with Justy Hagan and Amy Beckstrom to increase capacity in booking 200 events and fielding dozens of event inquiries. She will also work on Event Sales to fill any holes in our booking calendar, act as Ticketing lead for eTix online spectator events as well as being the lead for Volunteers. Bohaty shared that the search for a second Food and Beverage manager is underway with nine candidates already. Bohaty said that they have been working with a new recruiting web site/software focused on the event industry that does a great job of matching people with appropriate skills to open positions as well as broad marketing in online job sites. Bohaty shared that Dickerson is continuing the search for a Marketing Manager and Sponsorship/Advertising Manager upon her return. Bohaty reports that there is already one strong candidate for the Marketing Manager position.

Bohaty talked about his key focus as Operations Director in the next few months. Bohaty stated that this will be leading the \$10M Infrastructure Modernization construction planning and building teamwork. Bohaty shared that he is enjoying the position and the people on staff. Bohaty said that he is excited about the direction that SGEN is heading and feels that the future is looking bright.

Bohaty shared information about the Shovel Ready Grant Construction. Bohaty said that LED lights had been installed recently in TractorHouse Pavilion with Currency Pavilion to follow shortly in addition to LivestockMarket Pavilion last November. New rock has been added to Lot H north of the Attraction Zone which is a key improvement for large events such as the Super Fair, trade shows and NHSFR. Bohaty said that the rock will be rolled to flatten it out and a new slope created to improve drainage. Bohaty stated that he would like to also add rock to the north side of the Grandstand parking lot. Bohaty said that a new proposal for widening gate 4 to four lanes and adding a multi-dump station in the National Campground which will be presented at the next monthly board meeting. Bohaty also stated that staff are working on a wireless fix for the campground to provide better bandwidth for large camping shows and the ability to connect from the Announcer Stand out to the campground. Bohaty said work is ongoing to upgrade the service to the electrical panels in the year-round campground front section from 800 to 1200 amps each and to add more light poles. Bohaty stated that the team is getting quotes for food & beverage stands at the Grandstand with air conditioning for staff with the intention of having them done by fair time. Bohaty explained that the team plans to use the month of July to do a lot of construction projects for this year. Bohaty reminded everyone that the postponed due to weather team holiday party is coming March 1st and invited the board to attend.

Managing Director Report - Ronnau stated that Dickerson was on vacation at this time. Bohaty said that he shared all updates on her behalf.

Other Business - There was no other business.

Adjournment - Cooper made a motion to adjourn; Suing seconded the motion. Motion passed without objection. The meeting adjourned at 9:29pm.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED as set forth herein on this 21 day of

March, 2024 Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN

THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

President Kendra Ronnau



Secretary John Cooper



