



Home of the



A nonprofit 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to growing community like yours, and proud home of the Super Fair

## Lancaster County Agricultural Society, Inc.

*A Nebraska 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation  
and quasi-governmental organization created under Nebraska law in 1870  
to promote agriculture, youth, and community  
through management of Lancaster's county fairgrounds  
and organizing the annual Lancaster county fair*

### MINUTES

#### Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Sandhills Global Event Center  
4100 N. 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln NE 68507  
Lancaster Room – 7 pm

**President Ronnau called the monthly meeting** of the Lancaster County Agricultural Society board to order at 7:02pm.

**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 Ronnau, Cusick-Rawlinson, Cooper, Hagan and Sump. Arriving later was Hardesty. SGEC staff present were Bowen, Rief, Dickerson, Harrison, Stara, Juengel, Bohaty, and N. Dowding. Attending in person on behalf of County Extension was Extension Board Member Phil Wharton and via online was Unit Leader Karen Wobig.

**Approval of minutes** - The minutes from the February meeting were presented. Cooper moved to approve the minutes and Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; the minutes were approved 5-0.

7:04pm Hardesty arrived.

**Officer Reports** - President Ronnau congratulated Cooper and wished him well on his candidacy for Waverly School Board. No other officer reports.

**Committee Reports –**

- **Fund Development**

Cusick-Rawlinson provided an update on the Lancaster County Fairgrounds endowment fund at Lincoln Community Foundation. Cusick-Rawlinson said that the Lancaster County Agricultural Society Fairgrounds is registered as a non-profit to receive donations on Give to Lincoln Day, May 30 with a new focus as approved by the board last month to direct all Give to Lincoln Day donations directly to the endowment fund. Cusick-Rawlinson asked the board for their thoughts on holding other events to provide information to the public on Endowment monies through planned giving in August and October. Board was supportive of proceeding to schedule around other LCAS events with SGEC staff.

- **NHSFR Lincoln**

Hagan updated the board on National HS Finals Rodeo (NHSFR) Lincoln Event Manager John Kaiser's progress preparing for this July 2026 event and reports that Kaiser is doing a lot of good PR work for SGEC. Dickerson reports that Kaiser is talking weekly to the NHSFR Denver office staff and will be in Lincoln in person April 15-17. Cusick-Rawlinson asked about future NHSFR dates after 2027 and locations, and when they are determined for which Kaiser will have update soon.

- **Premium Auction**

Ronnau discussed the way that other counties combine their premium auction with a meal and suggested this might be an option to consider for 2025.

**Extension Update** - Karen Wobig attended virtually on behalf of County Extension. Wobig shared that the fair book information has all be turned in on time by SGEC staff and will be heading to the printer in the next few days. Wobig reports that hiring has been completed and NE Extension in Lancaster County team is fully staffed now, which is helping things move forward more smoothly. Phil Wharton who is 4-H Council President and a Lancaster County Extension Board member was present in person. Wharton shared that the Extension Board budget was discussed at the last Extension Board meeting. Wobig added that it will be submitted soon.

**Communication from the public** - There were no other members of the public that commented.

**2024 Fair Update** - Dickerson stated that Fair Coordinator Sara Juengel had been hard at work on the fair book to have it ready by the deadline. N. Dowding talked about the Rabbit awards/meal late Sunday afternoon before moveout and stated that it was being moved to Currency Pavilion from Nebraska Room. Juengel explained that the all exhibitor closing celebration right before 7 pm animal moveout will now called "Exhibitors Highlight Show & Ice Cream Social" for all exhibitors is planned now for Nebraska Room on Sunday from 5-7pm instead of the Ag Olympics past couple years. A new photo slide show of the exhibitors from this year's fair will be shared in the Nebraska Room along with free ice cream with 23 toppings to celebrate 23 years of fairs at SGEC for exhibitors and their families. The rabbit exhibitors will also be able to join in this celebration after their meal/awards.

N. Dowding shared information regarding the updates to the hours that shavings will be available.

Dickerson answered questions the board had during the last meeting when she was on vacation regarding the new combination Fair Parking Pass instead of having \$3 fair gate tickets for each attendee plus \$5 parking passes. Dickerson stated that same day entry will be allowed as long as a

car still has their entry pass which is same as has been for years. Dickerson stated that parking/fair entry hang tags for 4-H, FFA, vendors, and volunteers will continue to be free as they have in the past. Dickerson stated that a multi-day pass could be a next step for the future, but the SGEC staff wanted to focus on one change at a time for both staff and fair attendees.

Dickerson stated that drop off fair attendees will be asked to pay the same price for fair entry even if the vehicle chooses not to stay and park. Drop offs on streets around the SGEC fairgrounds will be highly discouraged due to safety reasons. Staff are working on stricter enforcement of no street drop-offs especially at Gate 2 off Havelock. Overall enforcement of 15 & under children drop off or presence on grounds without a accompanying adult 19 years or older will continue to be strict by SGEC staff with support by LPD in Carnival and other Off Duty Officers throughout grounds. Dickerson confirmed price per vehicle is \$15 with a \$5 off coupon from gate sponsors makes it possible to bring an entire carload for \$10 per vehicle or \$15 without the gate sponsor coupon.

N. Dowding stated that there were some changes to the grandstand schedule as the Demo Derby and Figure 8 Races dates had to be moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays around officials' schedules. N. Dowding said that the NE Bush Pullers Tractor Pull is scheduled now for the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday, and discussions were ongoing to move the bull riding event to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday if possible, around new country concert recently announced at Pinewood Bowl on the planned 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday. N. Dowding shared information regarding holding a tractor pull versus a demo derby verses a bull ride during the fair. Ronnau stated that staff need to find out more information about tractor pulls and their admission numbers. There was discussion about the gate fee for a tractor pull. Cooper stated that he like the idea of having this event and wants to keep events schedule as full as possible in the AuctionTime Grandstand Arena during the fair.

N. Dowding suggested cutting down the size of the shade tent during the fair as sections of it go unused. Board asked him to research cost savings and discussion was had on inviting groups to use the tent before cut the size as LIBA, Chamber young professionals have in the past.

Juengel talked about FR8Star Pavilion indoor vendors/educational displays for the Family Fun Zone the first four days. Juengel continues to work on getting vendors and educational organization displays to fill this indoor area and asked if there were specific groups that she should reach out to about attending. The board members provided names of several entities that Juengel could contact.

**Financial Report** - Harrison introduced Hannah Stara as the new Assistant Controller. Harrison said that Stara will be leading on the Shovel Ready Grant budget and reporting to the State as well as supporting Harrison as Controller on Accounts Payable and eventually Payroll. Harrison will lead on Accounts Receivable, Financial Reporting, and Audit.

Harrison reviewed the financials for February and there were no questions from the board. Sump moved to accept the February financials as presented. Hardesty seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any additional discussion. There was none. A roll call vote was held; the motion passed 6-0.

Harrison reviewed the information provided regarding the Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable, fiscal year to date December to February budget and profit and loss statements. There were no questions.

Harrison presented the February checks totaling \$1,026,941.56 for approval. There were no questions regarding the checks. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to approve the checks for February; Hagan seconded the motion. Ronnau called for any discussion; there was none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 6-0.

Harrison talked about the Shovel Ready Grant draw request. Harrison reported that part of the request was to pay a down payment on replacing most of the 16 to 23-year-old garage doors. Bohaty talked about the poor working condition of the garage doors that were being replaced and the need to get a down payment made before the prices increase. Bohaty pointed out that the request was \$30,000 less than what was originally budgeted for this project. Bohaty explained that the doors will have single row windows and be consistent look across the buildings while the north doors will have extra bracing for wind. Bohaty also reviewed the replacement/upgrade of the original three electric panels for the Year-Round Section of the RVUniverse Campgrounds which have been failing during large summer events, the LED lighting upgrade for the Currency Pavilion to improve brightness and energy efficiency, and the new rock for Lot H north of Attraction Zone for better year-round use for largest events. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to approve the Shovel Ready Grant draw request #12 as presented for \$739,212.25 with \$460,597.00 for immediate disbursement for past work completed and deposits on future work while remaining disbursements to be authorized by Executive Board as work completed and invoices received per process with all grant draws; Hardesty seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there were any questions; there were none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 6-0.

**Operations Director Report** - Bohaty shared information on the planning for Shovel Ready Grant construction projects that is currently underway. Bohaty said that the projects completed over last 90 days included: upgrade LivestockMarket Pavilion and TractorHouse Pavilion LED lighting; installation of naming signage; start of roof and drywall repairs in the LivestockMarket Pavilion where it connects to the South Hall.

Bohaty said that research has begun on two Conex-based snack shacks for the Grandstand area, evaluation of the roof in the Currency Pavilion and FR8STAR for its ability to support a rooftop HVAC including new A/C, design estimates for reworking the front office space, HVAC replacement in Ag Society Hall, design and bid evaluation of the main restroom upgrades for the entire campus with the goal of having the Good Times Grill restrooms completed before the Super Fair, as well as the widening of Gate 4 and design and cost of a multi-site dump station for the National Event Section of the RVUniverse Campgrounds to better serve NHSFR and meet other national RV Rally requests. Cooper asked about the promotion of the updated camping facilities by sharing the information with camping groups once the designs are completed.

Bohaty said that several projects are planned for completion before the Super Fair including the replacement of the campground electric panels, replacement of the overhead doors on the entire campus, and replacement of the existing Wi-Fi and payment portal. Rief stated that the Wi-Fi equipment is nine years old and obsolete and no longer supported in many cases. Rief stated that a new system would be cloud-based, saving on hardware costs. There was discussion around different Wi-Fi companies and the options that might be available. Bohaty said that the new system should allow for Wi-Fi to the National Event Section of the RVUniverse Campgrounds to be completed after the Super Fair sometime. Bohaty said other planned projects prior to the Super Fair include adding safety lighting to the Year-Round Section of the RVUniverse Campgrounds, asphalt repair and maintenance to the entire campus, striping of parking stalls and fire lanes. He also mentioned the concrete repair and drain replacement on the north side of the Currency Pavilion due to moving a drain spout around the new north Currency Pavilion lit sign to be reimburses as part of renaming costs.

**Managing Director Report** - Dickerson said that Bohaty is working to recruit an additional Food and Beverage Manager using a new event-oriented recruiting web site.

Dickerson talked about the camping reservation software and stated that Rief is working to find a software that will work with the event and nonevent campground needs and is necessary as Momentus is no longer offering the campground booking software SGEC has been using.

J. Rief stated that Momentum event booking software upgrade is also needed but cannot be done until the new campground software is finalized.

Bohaty talked about ideas for an SGEC-run Christmas Village and/or food & beverage to coincide with the new Magical Lights event. Kathleen Orton on SGEC Event Coordinator team is researching possibilities and looking at business model.

Dickerson presented information regarding possible signage for the Ag Society Hall utilizing the wood-look design used across the facility starting with the 84<sup>th</sup> Street Digital Sign. There was discussion around the design of the signage and board asked to continue to refine the Ag Society Hall signage to be more distinctive. Dickerson also shared images of new driveway signage with "Welcome to the home of the Super Fair" message of which the board was supportive.

Dickerson updated Board about fundraising efforts. Dickerson stated that she was notified last week by the lobbying team that federal grant applications for next year were due soon and Dickerson was recommending to the board to ask for matching funds to build Pavilion 5 in the Master Plan due to multiple large event customer requests.

Dickerson described a larger community input and long-term development around the SGEC that she is working with our lobbying team to get kicked off this Fall. Ronnau stated that future growth needs to be defined in and around the SGEC fairgrounds as other development is closing in quickly around the property.

Dickerson stated that she needed formal board approval for the federal grant application for Pavilion 5 build-out funds. Ronnau agreed this is a needed step. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to authorize Dickerson to apply for the federal Congressional grants to secure funds to help build Pavilion 5 as planned with land set aside on the Master Plan and to become a part of the SGEC fairgrounds operations going forward. Hardesty seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was additional discussion. There was additional discussion around the idea of building Pavilion 5 and how it could be financed. Cooper stated that he is excited about the project but wants to be sure the board goes at it with open eyes. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was none. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 6-0.

Dickerson spoke briefly about the upcoming County budgeting process and stated that she would be moving forward soon with the conversation with the County Board about acquiring property tax funds to support the maintenance of the 23-year-old county fairgrounds. The board expressed support for these efforts.

**Other Business** - Dickerson thanked Bohaty for doing such a great job as SGEC's new Operations Director. Bohaty stated that there was great communication among the different departments in SGEC which makes the facility run well.

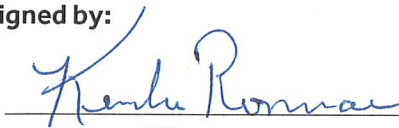
**Adjournment** - Hagan made a motion to adjourn; Cooper seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 9:44pm.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** as set forth herein on this 18 day of

April, 2024 Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN

THE STATE OF NEBRASKA. Signed by:

President Kendra Ronnau



Secretary John Cooper

