



Home of the



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## 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*

### DRAFT MINUTES

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting  
Lancaster Room - Sandhills Global Event Center  
4100 N. 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln NE 68507  
Tuesday, July 16, 2024 – 7:30 pm

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

**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, Suing, Dowding, Hagan, Rutt, Cooper, and Sump. SGEC staff in attendance included Bowen, Rief, Bohaty, Stara, Juengel, Bunch, Perez, Nathan, Dragoo, Skillett, and N. Dowding.

**Approval of Minutes** - The minutes of the June meeting were presented for approval. Sump made a motion to approve the June minutes; Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 7-0.

**FY 23 Audit Review** - Ryan Burger, CPA and Martin Schultz, Audit Manager from GBE CPA of Seward presented information about the 2023 fiscal year audit. Burger stated that the audit has been filed and is on time. Burger explained that there were a few differences in the numbers from past years. Burger said these differences in income were due to the ARPA grant funds and naming rights monies.

7:37pm Cusick-Rawlinson arrived.

Burger said there is nothing out of the ordinary for operating increases or decreases. Burger stated that one or two days were missed in the parking record true-up for fair last year, but this problem has been solved for 2024 through changes in the parking process. Burger said that he feels the changes will allow for easier tracking for the next audit. Burger also stated that the fiscal year ends with an increase in net assets. Burger stated that this increase will support an improvement in the bond rating. Ronnau asked when the new bonding rating will come out. Burger said that he expects it by late summer. Burger said that as of November 30, 2023, no significant problems were noted. Burger stated that the balance sheet is in good shape and the financials look great. Burger stated that there were no significant errors or issues noted in terms of finances. Burger stated that the summary included the statement that there are not enough accounting personnel to separate duties appropriately, which is a fairly standard statement for smaller entities.

Cusick-Rawlinson moved to accept the FY 23 audit as presented by LCAS auditor, Ryan Burger CPA. Suing seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion; there were none. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 8-0.

**FY 25 County and State Budget Process Update** - Ryan Burger, CPA of GBE CPA of Seward shared information about the fiscal year 2025 budgeting process. Burger said that he recommends a modest 3.5% increase from last year, as a reasonable request. Burger stated that the county needs to know by August 1 what is being requested for support. Burger explained that if the requested amount is approved, the budget will be discussed for approval at the September Ag Society and JPA meetings. Ronnau asked for questions. Dowding asked what date the budget will be approved by the county. Burger said that it should be done by late August but had no exact date. Ronnau asked for additional questions, there were none.

**Officer Reports** - Ronnau introduced new staff members including Traci Drago, who will be wearing a lot of hats, Gina Nathan who is focusing on marketing, and Kathleen Orton who is working on sponsorships and ticketing. Ronnau said that a lot of exciting things are happening at this time and fair prep is incredibly busy.

There were no other officer reports.

**Committee Reports** - Hagan provided a NHSFR update. Hagan stated that he talked to John Kaiser at the High School Rodeo finals last week. Kaiser says he has had good meetings around the upcoming event, but nothing specific to report as everything is moving along well. Skillet mentioned that Kaiser would like to come down in September for a few days to visit. Ronnau shared that Rodeo architect Charlie was in town and stopped to touch base. Ronnau stated that he was also pleased with how plans are moving ahead.

No additional committee reports were made.

**Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County** - Karen Wobig, Tracey Anderson, and Phil Wharton were in attendance on behalf of County Extension. Wobig said that 4-H staff are gearing up for the fair. Wobig reports that as clover college ends, fair prep begins. Anderson shared that clover college had 55 workshops over just a few short days. Anderson said that LCAS board member Suing taught an exciting 4-day workshop on rocket building and thanked Suing for his volunteer work. Anderson said that

extension is continuing to reach out to youth through programs at Roper and Randolph schools as well as a few others.

Anderson reports that the State 4H horse show is going on now. Anderson said it is a hot show but has been a lot of fun.

Wharton said that he wanted to remind everyone about the Chicken Dinner on the first Friday evening during the fair.

**Communication from the public** - Several members of the public were in attendance. It was stated they wanted to attend to wish the board well. No additional public comments.

**2024 Fair Update** - Juengel said that she has spoken with several board members about where they will be working during the fair and confirmed those roles. Ronnau stated that they are often moving around the facility putting out fires so not to be surprised if board members move out of a planned area. There was some discussion around how days should start and what will need checked by board members. Ronnau talked about procedures for marching band presentations and the need to do several announcements with plenty of warning for animal and horse people to prepare.

Juengel shared information about signed vendors and the planned layout. Ronnau asked about the ax throwing booth and how it will be kept safe. Juengel said that the ax throwing is housed inside of a trailer so there should be no safety concerns to those not participating.

Dowding said that LFR is bringing a fire truck to put out depending on their availability.

Juengel discussed the family fun zone. Juengel said that she has combined child and parent attractions so that everyone will find something fun to do while moving through the different attractions. Juengel talked about chosen placement of a few different attractions and why they were placed as the map shows. N. Dowding said that there are a few spots still open for additional attractions that may come up.

Ronnau asked about where the dog races will be held. N. Dowding said they will be in the Tractor House Pavilion to allow for more seating for spectators.

Questions were asked about ordering ice and watermelons. Ronnau stated that the team has asked several public officials to come help with the watermelon feed as they have in the past.

N. Dowding stated that carnival has requested they be allowed to bring a carnival act with fire. N. Dowding stated that the carnival had safety measures planned. There was discussion around this request, and all agreed it would be allowed if the carnival had safety measures in place.

N. Dowding reports that the mulch for cattle is all on grounds at this time and that generators and other equipment is all ordered for the fair.

Ronnau asked if class entry numbers have been reported. N. Dowding said that Extension has reported those numbers to him. Ronnau told Anderson to be sure that the new extension employees and interns know that they can reach out to board members if they have questions or need help.

Orton reported that the number of fair tickets sold is ahead of the 2023 numbers. Orton talked about new promotions and how they have boosted early sales. Nathan encouraged everyone to like and share Super Fair related posts on Facebook. Orton says she has added the Watering Hole, and Mi Tierra Restaurant as new Super Fair sponsors and encouraged everyone to visit these businesses.

**Operations Report** - Bohaty reported on the July facility updates. Bohaty shared that the Airplane door is being installed at this time. Bohaty said that it opens straight out and can be used to provide a sun canopy for people. Bohaty provided a list of completed projects including the survey work for drainage and sewer upgrades. Bohaty stated that a proposal is being worked up for the new dump station. Bohaty said that the signs are all in and that installation and lighting are almost complete. Bohaty reports that work on the snack shack is in process and materials have been gathered to complete the design when the building arrives. Bohaty said that the restroom updates are almost done in the Good Times Grill area, with a few small upgrades that are on back order. Bohaty stated that the team is working with the Overhead Door Company to get the doors all installed before the fair. Ronnau asked if Hampton is staying on top of the door replacements. Bohaty said that there seems to be some delays in moving forward. Ronnau asked Cooper if he would join Bohaty in a conversation with Hampton to keep the door replacements on track. Cooper confirmed his availability. Bohaty reported continued work on laying rock and spraying weeds in the camping area and stated that lighting panels will be added soon. Rief said wi-fi work will be completed the first week in September.

Dowding left the room at 8:46pm.

Perez shared information on the proposal for the Good Times Grill update. Perez explained that pick-up and order specific areas have been created in the new design to make the lines easier to manage. Perez talked about the addition of a beverage/bar area in the Nebraska Room that can handle buffet services and create new uses for the Nebraska Room. Bohaty talked about the flow for the Good Times Grill floor plan. Cusick-Rawlinson asked about the ice machines. Perez and Bunch talked about the new ice storage as was provided by Coke. Bunch said that Coke is going to change some machines out that may have different methods of delivering drinks. Bohaty talked about the additional workspace that has been added. Perez talked about the new freezer that has been added, doubling the freezer space available. Bohaty stated that the team would like to move ahead with design 2 as presented for the Good Times Grill. Hagan moved to go ahead with design 2 for the Good Times Grill. Rutt seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any additional discussion. There was none. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 7-0.

Bohaty shared information about changes to the office remodel plans. Ronnau asked Bohaty to send the information and drawings to the board for evaluation. Cusick-Rawlinson asked if the square footage is the same as the previous proposal. Bohaty stated that it gives around 120 square feet more. It was discussed that this is not a good time for the office update. Ronnau suggested the that the board should look at the proposed layout thoroughly as updates will need to be made in the future. Ronnau stated that a committee should be created after fair to look closer at the proposed office layout.

8:58pm Dowding returned.

Nathan provided naming options for the new snack shack. Nathan talked about signage and color theme possibilities. Bohaty reminded everyone that the snack shack will arrive next week and will be assembled ASAP after arrival so that it will be ready for use by the Super Fair.

Skillett reported on the trip that he, Bohaty, and Huss made to Texas to evaluate the stall options that were being considered for the new stalls. Skillett shared photos of the stalls that they were considering. Skillett reported that the stalls they evaluated had been in use for years and were in good shape. Skillett reported that all stalls will have stud walls at the back with open bars along the top, between the stalls. Suing asked about wood as opposed to plastic boards. Bohaty said that the stalls they inspected were more solid than wood and had held up well to kicking and wear and tear. Ronnau asked about the final quote. Bohaty said that once the quote is submitted, it is his recommendation to replace the stalls in the EquineMarket Pavilion and the LivestockMarket Pavilion but not those that would be used in the Currency Pavilion. There was discussion about how current stalls could be adapted when needed in the Currency Pavilion.

Rief reported that the new south side of the 84th Street message board is about halfway complete.

**Financial Report** - Stara reports that the June financials will be presented next month. Stara shared information on the reserve fund balance and updates on the State Shovel Ready Grant. Stara said that the plan is to have the shovel ready invoices and proof of payment entered next week to submit the proof of recording.

Stara presented information on the June checks for approval. Ronnau asked if there were any questions. Cusick-Rawlinson and Cooper asked about a check. Stara shared the information about the item. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to approve the payment of the June 2024 checks totaling \$233,379.93. Sump seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any discussion; there was none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

**Managing Director Report** - Nathan talked about several marketing opportunities within the Coke partnership including a large sticker on the back of the Coke delivery trucks, at no additional charge. Nathan suggested a simple design with a QR code sending people to the SGEC website. There was discussion around the benefits of this promotion for larger events. Cooper said that he sat in a meeting with Coke and was very please with how helpful the Coke people were. Ronnau said that the team needs to keep in touch with Coke and keep moving forward on these exciting advertising ideas.

N. Dowding talked about the implementation of the 2025 contracts. N. Dowding reports the contracts are out and some have already been signed and returned including the Farm Show, Home and Garden show, and a few other big shows scheduled at the beginning of the year.

Bohaty provided a summary of the Verizon modification request to the cell tower. Bohaty said ATT is now added to the tower. Verizon has requested to add additional antennas. Discussion was held around negotiating this request. Ronnau asked if someone could reach out and talk to T-Mobile to see if they are interested in adding to the tower. Cusick-Rawlinson said that she will reach out to T-Mobile and see if they are interested. Bohaty stated concern that adding too many providers will be a wind and load concern for the tower. Ronnau said she will touch base with legal to look through the Verizon contract and their request.

Bohaty stated that he has met with LPD to discuss safety at the carnival. Their suggestions included fencing changes and signage changes. Rutt asked questions regarding the clear bag policy. Discussion was held around how to manage the clear bag policy recommended by LPD. Suing suggested that messaging be updated to include warnings about clear bag use. N. Dowding said that contact was made

with the carnival about procedures for implementing bag searches. Ronnau said that conversations need to continue with staff on how these suggestions could be implemented and what changes should be executed. Cooper talked about the struggle of balancing the requests of the police department, the needs of the fair, and the safety of the facility.

Ronnau commented that paid security should be moving around the entire facility and covering all areas on the grounds including the barns throughout their shifts.

Discussion was held around the age of children in the pits at the motor sports events. Bohaty stated that in the past 12 years old was the minimum age. Rief said that other fairs do not have an age requirement. Discussion was held around how to handle this. Bohaty shared that he spoke with the insurance company who stated they were ok with whatever is decided as long as those in the pits have signed a waiver. The decision was made that there would be no age minimum if children are accompanied by adults and waivers are signed.

Sump congratulated the team on the work they have done over the last few weeks and stated that he has noticed their cohesiveness and ability to jump in and help each other to problem solve and make this year the best fair ever. The board members agreed and thanked the staff that were present for their hard work.

**Other business** - Sump moved to go into an executive session for personnel issues. Cusick-Rawlinson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, the motion passed 8-0. The board moved into an executive session at 10:07pm.

Executive session ended at 10:47pm.

Sump made a motion to transfer money from the reserve fund to the operations account, in the amount of \$344,000. Cooper seconded the motion. Ronnau asked if there was any discussion; there was none. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 8-0.

Bohaty stated that Westgate Bank is working to issue credit cards as previously discussed.

Cusick-Rawlinson stated that the board has done a great job reassessing needs and looks forward to an exciting future.

**Adjournment** - Hagan moved to adjourn; Suing seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 10:52pm.

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

President Kendra Ronnau \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary John Cooper \_\_\_\_\_