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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  
Thursday, October 17, 2024 – 7:30 pm

**President Ronnau called the monthly meeting** of the Lancaster County Agricultural Society board to order at 7:33pm.

**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 Hagan, Dowding, Ronnau, Suing, Rutt, Cooper, Hardesty, and Sump. Arriving later was Cusick-Rawlinson. SGEC employees attending in person were Orton, Juengel, Dowding, Bohaty, Bowen, Rief, and Stara. Attending remotely representing Lancaster County Extension was Karen Wobig.

**Approval of Minutes** - The minutes of the September 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 8-0.

**BMG Accounting Report** - Representatives of BMG Certified Public Accounting firm shared details from the July profit and loss statements and balance sheets.

7:37 Cusick-Rawlinson arrived.

BMG CPA Firm representatives detailed a plan to train additional staff on payroll and other accounting duties. Ronnau stated that the variety and number of different areas for income and expenses has been a learning curve for BMG but these entries continue to be updated.

**Officer Reports** - Ronnau stated that working with BMG has been good and they have been able to provide thorough financial information. Ronnau shared that staff have recently been able to use the down time in events to use their vacation time.

Ron Dowding shared information from the Midwest Messenger stating that the Lancaster County Super Fair was the runner up for the best County Fair in Nebraska. Ronnau suggested that board members and staff should take time to visit other County Fairs to see how they are run and if they have competitions or events that would work for the Lancaster County Super Fair.

**Committee Reports** - Bohaty stated that John Kaiser will be in town and will visit during the next board meeting.

Dowding said that he attended the livestock better fair meeting and that the premium auction was discussed. This was discussed in greater detail later in the agenda.

**Extension Update** - Karen Wobig was in attendance on behalf of County Extension. Wobig stated that Extension members have received their Save the Date invitations for the Blue Jean Gala and many will be in attendance. Wobig shared that County Extension is in the process of replacing two open seats on the extension board. Wobig said a new artificial intelligence (AI) club has been established. Bohaty asked about information on meetings or events that SGEC staff could attend to help with promoting 4-H. Ronnau asked about the "planning for a better fair" meetings and suggested holding them during times that are outside of daytime working hours so that more people can attend.

**Communication from the public** - No members of the public were in attendance.

**Fair Manager Report** - Stara talked about the challenges of cash management at the Lancaster County Super Fair and suggested the idea of going to a card paying system for parking. Staff safety and tracking of cash procedures in the current processes were discussed. Stara said that a benefit of credit card payments would be the ability to track sales, higher sale times, and other reports that could benefit all areas of SGEC planning. Stara stated that the downside to card only payments would be that card readers would need to be purchased. Ronnau stated concern for WiFi continuity with card readers. Rief stated that the machines would have the ability to continue sales without WiFi. Cusick-Rawlinson talked about the UNL Stadium going to credit card payments only and the problems that have been involved. Hardesty and Cusick-Rawlinson both stated that an option will need to be available for those who have cash only. Ronnau asked about increasing the number of cash pickups at the gates. Hardesty asked about pre-purchase for parking. Bohaty stated that issues involved in pre-purchase would be copying a pass once it is printed. Ronnau suggested that information be acquired regarding purchasing additional machines so that an informed decision can be made at a later date. Cusick-Rawlinson asked Stara to look at credit card processing fees and how to get these reduced in the research.

N. Dowding stated that staff would like to move the Demo Derby to the first weekend and add the garden tractor pull to the traditional tractor pull. N. Dowding said that the Hispanic festival planning is

underway as well as figure 8 racing and two nights of bull riding. Ronnau asked which of the events made money for the fair. Stara said that BMG is still working on those numbers. N. Dowding said that contracts are now going out, but none have been returned to date. Rief stated that he has been involved in negotiations with the promoters. Ronnau asked about feedback from the promoters and if there was anything that needs changed for next year. Rief and N. Dowding stated that everything seemed to go well and no requests for change have been made. Bohaty stated that they have Gana Trucking committed to help with hauling cars out again.

Dowding stated that he had attended the livestock 4-H Better Fair meeting. Dowding shared that some conversations occurred about the premium livestock auction at this meeting. Dowding said that it was suggested that livestock numbers are down due to the auction. Dowding said that he and Cooper are not included in the premium auction committee (booster) meetings. Ronnau asked Karen Wobig to let Tracy Anderson know that Dowding and Cooper need to be included in these meetings so they can stay current in conversations about the premium auction. Cooper shared thoughts on working with 4-H recruitment and education to increase 4-H livestock enrollment.

Bohaty stated that SGEC staff wants to have a RibFest type event during the 2025 Lancaster County Super Fair and they are looking for support from the board. Bohaty shared information about a proposal for bringing this event on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of the second week of the fair. Various details were discussed including tying the event to the bull riding. Cusick-Rawlinson suggested that the event not be attached to the bull riding as the bull riding might move dates and that should not influence the RibFest attendance. Orton asked for opinions on the RibFest name. Discussion was held around this question. Cooper moved to authorize the SGEC staff to move forward in negotiating a performance-based contract for a RibFest event, that will be held during the Lancaster County Super Fair. Hardesty seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion there was none. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 9-0.

**Blue Jean Gala update** - Juengel stated that the information regarding Wilma Nipplemeyer's Hall of Fame nomination has been acquired and a head shot has been made. Juengel reports that the plaque for the Aksarben Farm Family has been received.

Rutt made a motion to recognize Mary Grabowski as the 2024 Lancaster County Super Fair Super Volunteer. Hagan seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for discussion or other nominations; none were presented. This motion passed without objection. Juengel stated that invitations will be coming out soon.

**Operations Report** - N. Dowding reports that the Currency and Ag Society Hall restrooms will be done in the next week or two with the Fr8Star restrooms next on the schedule. N. Dowding reports that after many delays, the work on the overhead doors is finishing up.

N. Dowding said that the campground lighting poles are up and should be completed and working within the next week and then work will begin on changing them out.

Bohaty stated that staff are optimistic that a path to bringing WiFi to the campground has been found.

N. Dowding reported that the concrete in FR8Star is now being hauled out and all new concrete should be poured by Nov. 11 with carpet laid soon after for the Farm Show.



Bohaty reported that the sidewalk on 84<sup>th</sup> Street has been flagged and concrete should be poured in the next week. This sidewalk will provide wheelchair access to the SGEC grounds from Walmart.

N. Dowding reports that AT&T will start adding receivers on the tower soon.

Bohaty talked about the information researched and presented to the board in writing, by Skillett. Discussion was held around the new stalls that will be installed and the value of these to show promoters. Sump made a motion to adopt the stall fees as presented without column C pricing. Cusick-Rawlinson seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion; there was none. A roll call vote was taken; the motion passed 9-0.

**Financial Report** - Stara talked about the accounts receivable and accounts payable information as was presented in writing to the board. Stara stated that this information should be in line with the information presented by BMG.

Stara presented information on the September checks for approval. Ronnau asked if there were any questions. Cusick-Rawlinson moved to approve the September checks totaling \$1,101,894.41. Cooper seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for discussion; there was no discussion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 9-0.

Stara reported that there were no current updates to the 2025 operational budget process and that accounting procedures are being updated and new procedures put in place.

**Naming Committee Report** - Nathan reports that the campground sign is up at the entrance of the campground and that new door stickers have been replaced and are all installed. Bohaty said that the trailer wraps are being printed. Bohaty said that the I-80 Rover pass camping sign has been delayed. Nathan said that the Magical Lights signage will be starting soon. Cusick-Rawlinson asked if there were more payments coming from Sandhills for the naming contract. Bohaty stated that everything is current with the Sandhills contract so there would be only some minimal reimbursements forthcoming.

**Interim Managing Director Report** - Bohaty shared a map with possible resolutions to the current congestion in the SGEC office. Bohaty stated that the new estimate includes furniture and HVAC. Hagan made a motion to move forward with the building cost estimate for the office expansion including furniture and HVAC at \$1.2 million from the Shovel Ready Grant funds. Suing seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion. There was no additional discussion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 9-0.

Bohaty reported that new HR processes and policies are being created with more detailed information at future meetings. Bohaty stated that he is gather information on possible changes that could be made in the next insurance process to find better benefits and lower premiums for employees.

Bohaty discussed information provided to the board in a playground packet. This playground would be placed by the campground. Bohaty stated that there is a grant available to help pay approximately 50% of the playground cost. Ronnau stated that this would be a great addition to the camping facilities. Dowding moved to go forward with the playground proposal. Hagan seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for additional discussion; there was none. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 9-0.

**Other Business** - Hagan moved to go into an executive session, Suing seconded. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 9-0. Moved into executive session at 10:03pm.

Suing moved to leave the executive session, Hagan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 9-0. Executive session ended at 10:31pm.

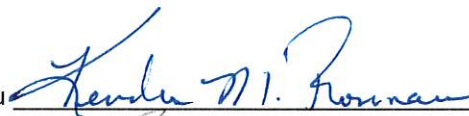
Suing moved to appoint Ron Bohaty as permanent managing director. Hagan seconded the motion. Ronnau asked for discussion. There was no additional discussion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 9-0.

Ronnau reminded everyone that the next meeting would be on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> in the Ag Hall at 7pm with photos to be taken before the meeting.

**Adjournment** - Cooper moved to adjourn the meeting. Cusick-Rawlinson seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection. The meeting was adjourned at 10:43pm.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED as set forth herein on this 19<sup>th</sup> day  
of November, 2024. Submitted by the LANCASTER COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA.

President Kendra Ronnau



Secretary John Cooper



