



**NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD**  
Nebraska State Fair Office Board Room, Grand Island NE  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 16, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, April 16, 2021, at 1 p.m. Public notice of this meeting was published in the April 9 & 10 issues of the Grand Island Independent newspaper and posted to the Nebraska Public meeting calendar website from April 5, 2021 and on the Nebraska State Fair Website. The public and press were invited to attend via Zoom due to Covid-19 social distancing recommendations.

Roll call was read with the following members present: Dawn Caldwell, Vice Chair; Bob Haag, Secretary; Ryan Hasebrook; Kevin Jorgensen; Beth Smith, Chair; Boyd Strope, Treasurer; Steve Wehrbein; Kathleen Lodi; Tom Schellpeper; Jeff Kliment; Tom Dinsdale, via zoom; Chris Kircher via zoom and Lanna Hubbard via zoom. Others in attendance at the board room were: Bill Ogg, Executive Director; Jaime Parr, Deputy Executive Director; Gary Kubicek, Director of Marketing; Vaughn Sievers, Director of Agriculture; Scott Yound, Director of Operations; Tish Eckstrom, HR; Laura Hurley, Experiential Partnerships; Judy Trent, Office Administrator/ Board Liaison; Holle Evert, Director of Sales; Sales Deputy; Mark Fahleson, Rembolt Ludtke; Kent Zeller; Joe Stump, AMGL; Jeff Bahr, Grand Island Independent; Lindsey Koepke, 1868 Foundation, via zoom.

Smith announced the meeting had been properly advertised as an open meeting and informed those in attendance of the posting location of the Open Meetings Act.

**Approval of Consent Agenda**

Motion made by Tom Dinsdale to approve the consent agenda.

Second by Steve Wehrbein.

Discussion: No discussion.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of March Financials**

Joe Stump and Jaime Parr reported on March Financials.

Motion made by Boyd Strope that the financial documents through March 31, 2021 be approved by the Board as presented:

1. Balance Sheet
2. YTD Income Statement
3. YTD Income Statement vs. Year-to-Date Budget
4. YTD Statement of Revenue
5. YTD Statement of Expenses

Second by Dawn Caldwell.

Discussion: No discussion.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

### Executive Director's Report: Bill Ogg

- Bill addressed the public and all those interested in the Nebraska State Fair "This is a great time to be part of the fair! I am so humbled and proud to serve this board. There was energetic, engaged, and thoughtful committee meetings all morning. I am truly appreciative of your work and of your sincere engagement."
- Bill commended Joe Stump of AMGL for researching and finding opportunities that are legitimately available to the Nebraska State Fair and for proactively encouraging the Nebraska State Fair to apply and take advantage of those opportunities.
- Bill commented "It is indeed fun to be surrounded by great staff. We got a lot of work to do but I think the team is getting in a place to get it done and I am confident in the staff".
- Nebraska Association of Fair Managers are starting district meetings this week. There are 7 districts throughout the state and in the past Nebraska State Fair has been available to represent the fair. There have been 4 district meetings of to date and staff have represented the Nebraska State Fair at each of these meetings. Bill stated "Our message to the county fairs is a sincere one of support and appreciation. The stronger they are the better opportunity the state fair has to grow and to exhibit the highest quality of qualifiers, particularly from our youth programs that can attend the fair". District 5 will be coming up soon and Nebraska State Fair staff will also be attending that meeting.
- Fonner Park comments:
  - Bill Ogg was invited by Fonner Park to attend the announcement of Fonner Park's selected casino operator a week ago. Elite Casino Management was selected. Their presentation was very professional, very progressive and they will certainly be a good partner for Central Nebraska.
  - This construction does impact the Nebraska State Fair's footprint, but we are confident there is good cooperation and consideration, and that the casino operation will not negatively impact our important and prestigious Nebraska State Fair.
  - There have been discussions with Chris Kotulak about maintenance of the facility and preparation of fair.
- GILCA comments:
  - This summer is going to be busy with GICA events.
- Fair Preparation comments:
  - Staff will report in depth in each department.
  - Excited about concert announcements coming soon.
  - There have been some events announced such as Bull Fighting, Horse Nations Indian Relay, Antique Tractor Pull, 3 outdoor concerts, Demolition Derby, activities on the east side, Older Nebraskans Day, Bill Marshall Volleyball tournament, 4-H Dog Show, Classic Auto show, craft show, Pedal Tractor Pull, and Veterans Day.
  - Schedules for competitive events will be coming soon.
  - There will be something to do every day of the fair with many vendors and fair food.
- Beth Thanked Bill for all his time working on the fair, working on partnerships, and reaching out to all the communities. It is making a positive impact for the fair.

### Deputy Executive Report: Jaime Parr

- Nebraska State Fair will continue with weekly flash reports to the Executive and Financial Committees.
- Weekly conversations with the extended staff team have been occurring. The Nebraska State Fair has secured managers for our vendor Exchange office, Gates, Box Office, Beverage, Operations, and Security.
- Participated in the Competitive and Equine Superintendent meeting.
- Working on insurance renewal for general liability insurance for the organization.
- The Volunteer Banquet will be held on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with announcement of new milestones.
- Jaime stated that she attended the District 2 meeting.

### Department Reports

- Agriculture and Aksarben: Vaughn Sievers
  - Introduced 2 new hires Amy Kelley and Lynn Gordon.
  - Competitive and Equine Superintendent meetings.
  - Discussions on Agriculture Education areas. Working on registration for the Largest Classroom.
  - Nebraska Largest Classroom, AG-tivity acres, Family Fun Zone and 4-H Dog Show will be happening in 2021.
  - Open class will be having one on one meetings.
  - Working with the budget and staying with in the budget.
  - New Equine events will be team roping and breakaway.
  - The High School Rodeo will be coming back to the Nebraska State Fair on Monday during the State Fair.
  - The targeted time to have schedules ready is around May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
  - Aksarben is working on the livestock challenges.
  - Talking with superintendents and committees to hire judges.
- Events: Hank Parker
  - Meet with events committee this morning.
  - Applications are being added to the website.
  - Entertainment application form is posted on the website and email was sent to past participants.
  - The Nebraska Sport Council will be coming to the Nebraska State Fair.
- Marketing & Sponsorship: Gary Kubicek & Laura Hurley
  - Sponsorship Laura Hurley
    - The 402 Sale: Sold 264 bundles for \$10,612.00.
    - Apparel RFPs were sent out for apparel for the Nebraska State Fair.
    - Working with NRG radio and they have archived Nebraska State Fair jingles to use during the fair announcements and radio tags.
    - Working with Fonner Park on a day for the horse races party on August 28<sup>th</sup>.
    - Bill Marshall Volleyball Classic has 16 teams to participate on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
    - Five Point Bank Day will be on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
    - Older Nebraskans Day will have a Hippie theme.
    - Tree Bombing will be announced soon, and the theme is Nothing more Nebraskan.

- Hospitality Chart is coming together with the help of department meetings.
- Working with Sponsors for Nebraska State Fair and Aksarben. Have \$675,200 for Nebraska State Fair and \$164,300 for Aksarben.
- Marketing Gary Kubicek
  - Working with media buy and Swanson and Russell.
  - Finalizing Billboards with the Grand Island Independent.
  - Meeting with NTV regarding the media times at the fair.
  - Working with Vaughn for sponsorships for Aksarben.
  - Determining on how to use the Kiosks.
  - Jimmy Rash is the official photographer for the Nebraska State Fair.
  - Legacy will be the livestock photographer.
  - Tiffany Peace will be the photographer for Equine.
  - Attended the NAFM District 1 meeting.
  - Banners that were given to county fairs are needing change of dates.
  - Aksarben still has opportunities for someone to be a sponsor.
  - Did have to replace a steer for the calf challenge.
  - Lamb and Pig challenges are coming up next.
- Operations: Bill Ogg
  - Ticket booths are all redone.
  - Cleaning and staining of all rock bottoms in the livestock area.
  - Working on repainting panels in 5 Points Arena Showroom.
  - Shuttles have been repainted.
  - Replacing ATV and side by sides.
  - Replacing 2 skid steers.
  - Received 6 competitive bids on the skid's steers and ATV.
  - Extending the public sidewalk on Stolley Park Road from Gate 3A to Gate 4.
  - Procurements are being done for capital program.
- Sales: Holle Evert
  - Finalizing space offers.
  - Indoor marketplaces are filled.
  - Outdoor market has a few more spaces.
  - The Layout will be different in the 4-H FFA building. E Sports will be using part of this building.
  - E Sports is bringing a lot of attention, hopefully this will bring in more foot traffic.
  - Sustainability pavilion.
  - Attending CCC earth day events.
  - Discussed 4-H and FFA giving presentations on the sustainability stage, to get our youth involved.
  - Attended Antique tractor meetings.
  - Sending out for Older Nebraskan trade show and Aksarben Trade Show.

## Fair Board Committee Reports

- **Agriculture: Jeff Kliment**
  - Vaughn introduced the 2 new hires to the committee.
  - Committee discussed new events.

The Nebraska State Fair Board approve the Transition Agreement in Cooperation with the Knights of Aksarben Foundation and the Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority and authorize the board chair to sign on behalf of the board.

Motion made by Jeff Kliment that The Nebraska State Fair Board approve the Transition Agreement in Cooperation with the Knights of Aksarben Foundation and the Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority and authorize the board chair to sign on behalf of the board.

Second by Boyd Strobe.

Discussion: Bill Ogg explained Aksarben had multiyear agreement with the Knights of Aksarben Foundation and a very binding verbal contract, but this will document and record what the intentions were with all the involved parties.

Beth agreed that there is a good relationship with Aksarben and feel that GILCA is re-engaged in Aksarben and excited in making it a great event.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

- **Events: Steve Wehrbein**
  - Important for staff to come to NAFM meetings.
  - Banners were initiated in 2019.
  - Grand Marshall applications have been sent out.
  - Opening Ceremony will be held on two days. Short ceremony will be on Friday at 10 am with ribbon cutting and on Saturday with free attendance at 5 Point Arena at 10 am with the Governor participating.
  - Discussed Motor Sports and the events.
  - County Fair Day and Veterans Day and Board alumni dates.
- **Facilities Planning: Dawn Caldwell**
  - Discussion of buildings and facilities.
  - Invited Chris Kotulak to monthly meetings.
  - Chris Kotulak assured the committee those are artistic renderings of the Casino. They are not firm contracted architectural drawings.
  - Fonner assured the company they have chosen wanted unique drawings for this facility for the announcement. More discussions to come before the finalization of the construction at Fonner Park.
  - Working on the Master Plan initiated by the 1868 foundation.
  - Discussed the coordination of Fonner Park and State Fair for cleaning and maintenance.
  - Beth discussed the importance of having Chris Kotulak part of the meetings.
- **Finance: Boyd Strobe**
  - Boyd Strobe expressed "We are where we are today because of staff".
  - Financial have had a major turnaround.
  - Finances are well under budget currently.
  - Working on reserve policy. Joe has a rough draft at this point. Goal is to start out with a 6-month plan first.
  - Joe Stump has been able to investigate a cash reserve with 5 Points Bank.

- Executive: Beth Smith
  - Discussion on Casino Plans.
  - Master Planning Discussion and take place next fall.
  - Nebraska Lifetime pass program.

The Lifetime Membership program which is approved by the Nebraska State Fair Board in June of 2016 be amended to the Lifetime Pass program as its presented in the documents.

Motion by Boyd Strobe for The Lifetime Membership program which is approved by the Nebraska State Fair Board in June of 2016 be amended to the Lifetime Pass program as its presented in the documents.

Second by Tom Dinsdale.

Discussion: Bill commented that this a very prestigious recognition that the board has participated in for years. There was a documentation of the program in 2016. The intent is just to in vernacular clean that up a little bit and put a little bit more structure to it, so it was so ambiguous to who deserves this. To clarify the mechanics of how the Fair board would make that selection and recognition for those folks that are not immediately attached to the Fair Board or the Foundation Board.

This will go from here on into the future and giving more detailed criteria for receiving the pass.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

The mileage reimbursement approved by the Nebraska State Fair Board April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 be rescinded and we replace that mileage reimbursement not to exceed \$.50 per mile.

Motion by Dawn Caldwell the mileage reimbursement approved by the Nebraska State Fair Board April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 be rescinded and we replace that mileage reimbursement not to exceed \$.50 per mile.

Second by Bob Haag

Discussion: Boyd Strobe explained why the mileage was cut back. Bill suggested that the State Fair is in better position to bring it back up to a fair amount for judges and superintendents. Dawn reinitiated that this amount is still lower than government rate; however, understand how potentially judges and superintendents where definitely having some troubles, so this brings it up to something more reasonable.

Upon roll call vote, motion passed unanimously.

### 1868 Foundation Update

- Lindsey Koepke reported on the 1868 Foundation.
  - Foundation board met with endowment investment policy.
  - Annual donors and membership renewals have a great response.
  - Working on grants.
  - Working on Board Member recruitment
  - Annual meeting of trustees
  - Steve Wehrbein challenged everyone on the board to donate to the 1868 foundation.

**Other Business:**

No other business

**Future Nebraska State Fair Board Meeting Dates and Locations (tentative)**

May 21, 2021 Nebraska State Fair Board Room, Grand Island, NE

June 18, 2021 Nebraska State Fair Board Room, Grand Island, NE

**Adjournment**

Motion made by Dawn Caldwell to adjourn the meeting.

Second by Boyd Strobe

Upon raise of hand, motion passed unanimously.

Time adjourned: 2:36 p.m.