



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.

MINUTES

Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2020 at 7:30 PM

Vice President Dowding called the meeting of the Lancaster Country Agricultural Society to order at 7:36 p.m. on a Zoom video conference. The Open Meeting Act laws were displayed to attendees on the screen, and notice was given to the Lincoln Journal Star. This will be the last meeting that is conducted virtually through Zoom in accordance to the executive order (20-03) issued by Governor Ricketts.

Board members present at the start of the meeting were Cooper, Doeschot, Dowding, Messick, Rawlinson, Rutt, Swanson, and Suing. Ronnau was not present at the start.

Also present were LEC staff including Managing Director Amy Dickerson, Lois Hartzell, Hoyt Kraeger, Greg Rook, Nate Dowding, Chas Skillett, Lisa Bunch, Tammy Samuel, Loretta Yerger, Ag Society Board Clerk Jess Nguyen, County Commissioner Roma Amundson, Lancaster Extension staff Karen Wobig, Tracy Anderson, and Calvin DeVries.

Approval of minutes – Messick motioned to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2020 supplemental board meeting. Rawlinson suggested for Messick to make an adjustment on page two where the total dollars fundraised should be corrected to \$4700. Messick agreed and Rawlinson seconded. Motion passed 8-0, Ronnau not present for the vote.

May Financial report and approval of checks – Hartzell reported that the auditor has had some delays, but they will have the audit completed at the end of the month. She then went through the financial statements and aging summaries. Rawlinson moved to approve the May financials, Messick seconded. Motion passed 8-0, Ronnau not present for the vote. It was moved by Rawlinson and seconded by Suing to approve the paying of the checks in the amount of \$365,142.44. Motion passed 8-0.

COVID Cash Flow & Grant/Loans Update, Capital Levy Proposal – Dickerson reported that LEC Financial Consultant Bruce Gubser was able to get LEC \$150,000 from the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) which will help LEC cover payroll and other key expenses to stay open through at least November, maybe even December. EIDL is paid back over 30 years at 2.75% which will end up being about \$600 a month to repay. Rawlinson made the motion for the EIDL loan to be taken out by LEC. Dowding seconded. Motion passed 8-0.

Dickerson mentioned that Jan Labenz, with Labenz & Associates, looked at LEC's past financials. She came up with new divisions to make the financials easier to follow for the entire LEC fairgrounds operation including: facility mgt., fair, events, NHSFR, non-event campground, and JPA bonds. This will help show what divisions have made money and what divisions are overhead that supports all divisions for other divisions to help cover.

LEC is working on a capital levy proposal for other funds. There is an opportunity through the county budget process to secure capital funds from the 15 cent budget that the County manages from property taxes. This is the portion of the county property taxes that support rural fire districts, the Railroad Transportation Safety District, the fairgrounds JPA bonds and a small subsidy for the annual county fair & fairgrounds maintenance which hasn't increased in 20 years. Bruce Gubser is working on the proposal. The funds could help pay off a significant portion of the \$3.6 million lodging tax grant, help cover interest from the lodging tax grant bridge loan after the loss of this year's NHSFR as well as create a capital reserve fund to have a stronger balance sheet as recommended by our bond rating agency. LEC would like to propose a one-time, one cent capital levy which would total to be about \$3 million. The team working on the proposal will first talk about it with the Chamber/CVB and county commissioners. The funds must be used for capital, but it can be accumulated over time, year to year. Doeschot asked what the timeline was, and Dickerson answered that it needs to be in front of the county board for a public meeting by the end of July. Rawlinson asked how the board could help gain support for the proposal, and Dickerson said it would help to have board members come with her and Bruce to talk with LIBA, the chamber, and County commissioners.

Accounting Staff Change – Dickerson announced that Lois Hartzell will be moving to Myrtle Beach, SC for a new opportunity where her significant other would like to retire near family. Hartzell will be with LEC until mid-July, and then she will be moving on. The new title for the position will be along the lines of controller or financial manager reflecting increased responsibilities and skills needed for this role as LEC continues to grow.

Officer & Committee reports – There were no officer reports.

Rawlinson and Doeschot reported that the COVID Finance/Lobbying Committee is seeing how they can assist in LEC fundraising efforts. At the federal level, they are reaching out to some of our Senators, Congressmen to get meetings organized. State Senator Suzanne Geist was receptive to lobbying to get State-held COVID or other funds for LEC and would be willing to write a letter in support.

Rawlinson reported that the Fund Development committee has a meeting scheduled for Thursday the 25th on how to move forward with fund development.

Ronnau updated the board that the rodeo was moved to Guthrie, OK. It's a scaled down version from what LEC would've had. The Rodeo Committee had a meeting about panels as they had hoped to have two years to pay off the panels from WW. The team emailed WW to see how they could make payments doable for LEC given loss of 2020 NHSFR to COVID.

Update from public health department – The governor announced Phase 3 of reopening on June 15. This update included: the limit on gatherings is now 10,000 people at certain percentage capacities, 8 people per group, and groups should still be 6 feet apart. LEC will be redoing plans and layouts in accordance to the loosening of guidelines.

2020 Fair Update – Cooper and Doeschot worked with Nate Dowding and Calvin DeVries to outline what Livestock Shows would look like. Livestock shows will run one species per day in one ring. Sheep and goats will be on day 1, cattle on day 2, and then hogs on day 3. Bedding will be to a minimum and nothing will stay overnight. Exhibitors will bring the animal ready to go, so essentially it will be a jump out of your trailer with your animal prepped offsite and show. Rabbits and poultry will be in their own cages and follow the same format as Livestock. The goal is to keep all setup costs and person-to-person interaction to a minimum. Calvin DeVries thinks superintendents will be ready to go to help show functions to run smoothly and that Extension will have enough volunteers. Cooper added that all animals that come in would be weighed into predetermined weight classes. DeVries will pre-make the classes. Dickerson would like the group to meet on-site to confirm details but not until June 30 as the office is working on reopening safely.

Cooper has worked with Chas Skillett and Kate Pulec on the Equine Shows. They are trying to reduce the show down some, so it's not such a huge financial burden and won't run as long. Pulec has eliminated some classes and streamlined others. There will not be any horses overnight and no stalls indoors. Some stalls will be outdoors, but there will not be any bedding and no overnight stays. Dickerson mentioned a paramedic would be available on the grounds during the show.

Tracy Anderson, Vicki Jedlicka, and Tammy Samuel have worked together on the Virtual Shows. Jedlicka, Samuel will work together on the marketing. Kristin Geisert will take the

lead on organizing the virtual shows. Anderson reported that they have already held a session for virtual entry with 40 people and are working to understand how to have all the materials ready for the judges with the electronic entries.

Ronnau reported on behalf of Susan Bulling about the virtual presentation of awards. She mentioned that Bulling talked with Peggy Brown who was ecstatic to learn she was being awarded. Bulling wondered if the award could be moved to the grand opening of the grandstand. It is possible to virtually show the award on Facebook. Dickerson briefly pulled up the financial scenarios for the fair. Event medical expense would be approximately \$1820, and LEC fairgrounds operations from rest of year would end up subsidizing \$38,000 for the fair.

NHSFR Report – Rook showed photos of a brand-new ticket shack which was built from an old snack shack. A handicap window was added to it for accessibility. New bleachers are being assembled. Gravel is down, but there are a couple of spots to work on for drainage. LEC baled 16 round bales of hay in some of the grass parking lots not mowed while LEC shut for COVID which made about \$900. Rook informed the board that he will be going down to Guthrie, OK for the second week of the rodeo.

Managing Director Report - Dickerson stated that LEC is planning to reopen the second week of July for horse shows. Rook showed the board that he and Skillett have been putting different proforma budgets together for a small horse show, a medium horse show, and even two small horse shows together to see the profitability. The added COVID fee is \$10/exhibitor/weekend. Since LEC will not be able to have the trustees from county jail to help, LEC staff will have to cover stall cleanings. Skillett talked about people spaces and show rings. They will be taking out bleachers and putting in round tables with public's own chairs or stacks of sanitized hard chairs instead to cut down on shared surfaces. Plexiglass will be put up at the General Store, staff will frequently wipe down tables and chairs, only one main café will be open, and they will be pushing online orders for shavings, mats, camping to avoid lines/check in interaction. Dickerson said the LEC office will reopen the first of July. In the meantime, the team is going through guidelines, processes, and procedures to reopen safely.

Nate Dowding spoke on LEC's COVID safety modifications, supplies, and processes. He said they are trying to find sanitizer dispensers available to purchase. They have been transforming soap dispensers into hand sanitizing dispensers. It's \$250 to buy a pre-built hand sanitizer stand, so the staff came up with option is to make ones out of scrap metal for much less. Right now, LEC has five large jugs of hand sanitizer on hand trying from UNL.

Kraeger and Samuel presented on the new special event series that is starting June 27. There will be a live, drive-in concert series as well as a food truck rodeo. Kraeger explained that one of the event series is a pop-up drive-in concept with Encore Live. LEC will receive a

recording of a concert to show to drive-in viewers. The information is posted on the event details on the LEC website. It will be a one day showing exclusive, and Garth Brooks will be the first in this series. LEC will have a pre-party to sell food and beverages. LEC will be the largest location to show in Nebraska because of the capability to have around 800 cars in the lot. Encore Live alluded to working with LEC in the future.

Samuel presented the logos for the event series and explained the schedule. She said Encore Live plans to have more events and will work with LEC to continue the concert series. LEC gave out a VIP package to three radio stations for more reach and get on air mention of the concert. All of the advertising is basically free through LEC's own channels of social media, and email blasts as well as using existing LEC trade dollars with radio stations. LEC is garnering free PR coverage as well.

Dickerson wanted the board to know that LEC is getting all kinds of calls for events that are looking for places that are bigger to be able to spread out, so the future is bright. The grand opening of the new grandstand outdoor arena and national event campground is planned for July/August.

Need to move July board meeting back to 3rd Thursday – Dowding motioned to move the board meeting originally planned for July 23 to July 16 because of the cancellation of the NHSFR. Rutt seconded. Motion passed 9-0. Dickerson reminded that this meeting will be back in-person.

Other Business - none

Communication from the public – none

Adjournment - It was motioned by Suing and seconded by Messick to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 p.m. Motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully submitted by: Jess Nguyen – LCAS Board Clerk

Secretary Cooper

President Ronnau

Next regular meeting: Thursday July 16, 2020 at 7:30PM
In person at LEC fairgrounds