



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 Supplemental Meeting

Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 7:30 PM

President Ronnau called the meeting of the Lancaster Country Agricultural Society to order at 7:34 p.m. on a Zoom video conference. Ronnau reminded the board that Governor Ricketts issued an executive order (20-03) permitting public bodies to meet virtually and still be in accordance of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act. The Open Meeting Act laws were displayed to attendees on the screen, and notice was printed in and given to the Lincoln Journal Star. This privilege has been granted through June.

Board members present were Cooper, Doeschot, Dowding, Messick, Rawlinson, Ronnau, Rutt, Swanson, and Suing.

Also present were LEC fairgrounds team members Amy Dickerson, Hoyt Kraeger, Greg Rook, Lois Hartzell, Nate Dowding, Chas Skillett and Bruce Gubser; Ag Society Board Clerk Jess Nguyen; Lancaster County 4-H/Extension staff Karen Wobig, Tracy Anderson, Calvin DeVries, Kristin Geisert and Kate Pulec; Extension Board members Pat Heather and Trudy Pedley; and members from the public Judy Terwilliger, Julia Plugge and Jodi Cooper.

Approval of minutes – Doeschot motioned to approve the minutes from the May 21, 2020 regular monthly board meeting. Rawlinson seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

COVID Finance Committee Report – Dickerson gave a high level of EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loan). LEC was initially rejected because the organization was not seen as agriculture related. LEC is appealing that claim. Hartzell spoke about updates to the uses allowed for the existing PPP loan. The new rules give an additional 16 weeks for the money to be used. To qualify for full forgiveness of the loan, LEC must allocate lowered from 75 to now 60% of its PPP funds for payroll expenses among other rules. The new rules also extend the time to repay. Anything that is not forgiven can now be paid back in five years instead of two. LEC has about \$250,000 in the account left. The new rules will increase the

amount that is forgiven and gives more time to pay it back for LEC. Hartzell also touched on the bottom line for different fair scenarios. The bottom-line cost increase to have a physical exhibitor fair instead of an online fair is \$62,000. A little more revenue will be made with a physical fair, but it also costs more with labor, equipment use, utilities, and sanitization labor and supplies.

Fund Development Committee Report – Rawlinson reported that Kraeger has been reaching out to rodeo sponsors. Some have transferred their sponsorship from 2020 to 2021 due to the cancellation at LEC. Rawlinson also reported that \$7400 was raised for Give to Lincoln day. She would like to get the committee together soon to talk about more opportunities in the next few months.

Update from public health department – Dickerson was hoping to get feedback on the plan that they submitted for the NHSFR at the end of May, but the local health department made the decision that the NHSFR could not be modified sufficiently to not risk to the local health resources. The event was just too big. Bringing 1,500 contestants with families on the campground for a long time from all over the United States made it too immense an event to host. LEC still has contracts in place to host the NHSFR in 2021, 2026, and 2027. Dickerson has sent the health department LEC's exhibitor fair guidelines but hasn't gotten any word back on that for feedback. The proposed health modifications submitted for the fair to fit the latest Nebraska directed health measures (DHM) for Lancaster County and for fairs include: gatherings limited to greater of 25 people or at 25% of venue fire-rated capacity with hard cap of 3000 people through end of June, people separated into groups of 6 that can't mix (e.g. at tables, on a bleacher, group of chairs) with six foot physical distance between groups unless in the same household, fair staff/volunteers will be checked daily for health and temperatures, staff/volunteers will be required to wear a face covering, and face coverings are recommended for exhibitors unless on a horse or a six foot distance is maintained between household groups. Dickerson mentioned that the health guidelines by end of July, early August are unknown and can change right up to the fair opening date and there is always the risk of having to cancel if the pandemic conditions worsen.

Extension Report/Communications – Tracy Anderson started off the fair format recommendations by talking about the mission and pledge of 4-H. Extension created a survey and sent it to 4-H families, 4-H online, and its volunteers. The survey asked about preferences on having an in-person, virtual, or blend of in-person and virtual fair. They received 305 responses: Leader (51), Parent (190), 4-H/FFA (58), Volunteer (35), Other (8). The main takeaways from the survey were that static exhibitors were basically split on having a physical or virtual fair, and most livestock and horse exhibitors will attend if the fair is in-person but would not participate if it was virtual. Anderson also talked about fair vault which is a virtual fair platform feature through Showworks software that Extension already uses. Exhibitors can upload photos, videos, and supporting information related to their project. Judges are given a code for classes they are judging, and they can then download those materials. Judges can provide comments and determine placing. The cost is

\$0.80 per entered exhibit.

Calvin DeVries spoke in depth about the Show and Go Animal Shows format he was recommending for input from the LEC fairgrounds staff and Ag Society Board. Once an animal shows, it is dismissed from the fair. All exhibitors will wear masks. Bleachers could be taped off or exhibitors will bring their own chairs to maintain social distance. Canceled for 2020: stall/table decorating, herdsmanship judging, and rate of gain. There will be no contact judging meaning no handling of animal projects, no handshakes, and non-contact awards. There are two options for livestock check in & weigh in, either weighing in before for the show or having weigh-backs. For rabbit and poultry, no cages need to be provided. Exhibitors will keep their project in personal cages and social distance while waiting for class to be called. Dog shows will be the most difficult to do in-person as dogs hard for youth exhibitors to keep under control to maintain distance and will need extra volunteers and sanitation. A virtual skill-a-thon could be an alternative.

Kate Pulec reported that the superintendents of Household Pets and Cats have expressed that a virtual show would be doable. For horse shows, masks will be required unless mounted on a horse. They're looking into condensing the days and times that exhibitors are showing.

Kristin Geisert reported that the responses about static exhibits were mixed but superintendents want them to go virtual. The team is going class by class as to what photo angles wanted, video submission, how many, etc.

Regarding judging, Anderson said they will revisit judging contracts to reserve the right to not pay if a physical fair must cancel on short notice. Most judges are paid by the day, and most judges are comfortable with judging virtually as well.

2020 Fair Discussion/Decision for LEC fairgrounds usage – Ronnau wanted to hear from each board member on what their thoughts and wants for the fair were.

- Dowding: What they can do virtual, let 4-H do virtual, so it can be a blended fair. Livestock should be a hands-on thing. Things like static can be virtual if they can make it happen.
- Rutt: Agrees with Dowding and would like to see a blended fair. Livestock and horses should be done physically. Static, dogs, cats, and household pets should be virtual.
- Messick: Still thinks he will not be in town during the fair due to mother's birthday. Thinks having things as much virtual as possible is best. Animals can be done in a physical fair if possible.
- Ronnau: Safety is number one. Will be difficult to get animals in and out. Heat will be stressful on animals. Worried about putting staff and board in danger but wants the kids to have an opportunity to show. Encourages as much virtual as possible.
- Swanson: Still has mixed emotions about the whole fair due to COVID safety issues for all. If not cancelled, go virtual.

- Suing: Thinks exhibitors are ready to do what they need to do to showcase themselves. Thinks they are ready to get out and show their stuff even if that's over a computer. Said he would be available to help with static virtually.
- Cooper: Do a combination of physical and virtual. Keep it very minimal, scale it back a lot especially with the horse show, and maybe limit entries in livestock. Show up in the parking lot, bring the animal in, show, and then leave.
- Rawlinson: Loves the blended approach. Wants to be respectful of Extension's needs and wants, so she is 100% in favor of whatever Extension wants to do.
- Doeschot: Go virtual with what can be done. Animals in person.

Ronnau asked Extension "Are you getting direction from the state people to wait six weeks out from fair to finalize plans?" Anderson answered that they just need to do what is best for the county. It would be helpful for 4-Hers to know soon because the enrollment date is June 15. There is no mandate that Extension must wait for six weeks out.

Dickerson stated that given the size of the fair and being poorly funded, LEC would prefer to know sooner rather than later to raise money and get staffing and volunteers. The staff will have their hands full just keeping group areas clean. LEC has liability insurance that covers the virus to some extent as long as we follow all the local, state, federal health guidelines. She plans to keep working groups separated, especially in café if they open. Anderson says several parents would be interested in willing to help. LEC has a Signup Genius that Extension can collaborate on to get volunteers signed up.

Rawlinson motioned to move up agenda item #10, communication from the public. Dowding seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

Communication from the public – Jodi Cooper is a superintendent for the lamb show. She says that kids have been working hard with their animals since school was canceled. She thinks livestock folks would have no problem if horses had to stay over in stalls, and they prefer having a physical fair over virtual. A decision now would be good because kids would transfer counties if they could not do a physical fair in Lancaster.

Trudy Pedley from Extension Board and former Ag Society Board Secretary wanted to commend the board on the work they've done with this tough decision. She wholeheartedly supports a combination of virtual and physical showing.

Julia Plugge is a parent and superintendent of the bucket calf show. Has not participated in a virtual show but doesn't think kids get the same learning experience as if they were showing physically. She would be open for going in to show and leaving right after. Says the kids have been in their barns working hard, so some of the fair can be done virtually, but animals should be shown physically.

Pat Heather echoes what Trudy said. It is so important to make this work. Do we have to

weigh those animals, or is that something we could eliminate? Dowding and Ronnau said just the market animals need to be weighed, that is just the way you must do it for classes.

Anderson commented that a lot of surrounding counties are waiting for Lancaster to decide before they make decisions about their own county's fair.

Rawlinson motioned to continue to work with Lancaster Extension to host a blended virtual and physical 4-H and FFA exhibitor fair that follows all health guidelines.

Rawlinson then amended her motion to specify that static would be virtual. Livestock, including poultry and rabbits, would be show and go. Horse would be live and virtual with stalling yet to be determined, stalling will be limited in some way. Household pets, cats, and dogs would be virtual. Rawlinson added that this would all be subject to changes, cancellations, last minute adjustments, and in-person capacity limits. Motion modified to add poultry and rabbit contests to be virtual.

Wobig wanted to double check that the 4-H staff was okay with being that specific and wanted to know how this would be presented to the public. Dickerson said LEC and Extension would put out a joint statement early next week. After discussion, it was agreed that the motion did not need to be so specific.

Rawlinson retracted her amendments to go to the original motion. Bryce seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-0.

NHSFR Report – Rook confirmed the NHSFR will not be happening at LEC in 2020; however, construction is still moving forward as if it would still be taking place. Dickerson added that a grand opening will be held by mid-July when NHSFR was scheduled to move in.

Other Business – none

Adjournment - It was motioned by Cooper and seconded by Rutt to adjourn the meeting at 10:41pm. Motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully submitted by: Jess Nguyen – LCAS Board Clerk

Secretary Cooper

President Ronnau

Next regular meeting: Thursday June 18, 2020 at 7:30PM