



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, May 21, 2020 at 7:30 PM

President Ronnau called the meeting of the Lancaster Country Agricultural Society to order at 7:35 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 which was recently extended through June 2020. The Open Meeting Act laws were displayed to attendees on the screen, and notice was given to the Lincoln Journal Star.

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

Also present were LEC Managing Director Amy Dickerson, LEC Business Development Manager Hoyt Kraeger, LEC Operations Director Greg Rook, LEC Accounting Manager Lois Hartzell, Guest/Community Relations Lead & Super Fair Coordinator Susan Bulling, Lancaster Co. Fairgrounds JPA Member & County Board Commissioner Roma Amundson, Extension Educator 4-H Youth Development Tracy Anderson, Lancaster County Extension Leader Karen Wobig, Extension Board Member Pat Heather, Ag, Society Clerk Jess Nguyen, and Todd Henrichs from the Lincoln Journal Star.

Approval of minutes – Doeschot motioned to approve the minutes from the May 7, 2020 supplemental board meeting. Messick seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

Financial report – Hartzell reported that LEC is still in the middle of its audit, so changes have not yet been made to the balance sheet. Changes to the balance sheet will be made after the audit. The audit is going slowly because everything is being done remotely. Looking at the P&L, no profit was made for the month. Alcohol is still up for sale to the public. Payroll and utilities are the highest costs for LEC during the COVID pandemic shutdown since mid-March. Hartzell explained that three accounts are on the monthly check listing: capital, operating, and the fair account; the PPP money will also be an account

on this report next month. It was moved by Dowding and seconded by Rawlinson to approve the paying of the checks in the amount of \$191,687.00. Motion passed 8-0; Cooper left the meeting before the motion was made. Rawlinson moved to approve the April financials, Messick seconded. Motion passed 8-0, Cooper absent. Cooper returned to the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Hartzell went through the PPP breakdown. New information was released on forgiveness for the PPP money. Since LEC is currently operating at 60% of payroll, the maximum forgiveness may be 60%. With estimated \$250,000 of forgiveness out of \$410,000 PPP loan would mean the final loan would be lowered to \$160,000. Hartzell also touched on cashflow scenarios. The first scenario has LEC running out of money in October with paying all of its payables. The other scenario with running the rodeo would have LEC running out of money in August. Cash flow scenarios are updated weekly as information changes, contain the most conservative assumptions (lowest possible revenue, highest possible expenses) and multiple efforts on additional funding in motion.

Officer and Committee reports – Rawlinson gave an update for the Fund Development committee. The LEC staff is working with sponsors for the rodeo and fair. Give to Lincoln Day is on Thursday, May 28. It is an opportunity to tell more people LEC is a nonprofit and not a government agency, so it is more of a fundraising approach. We are not expecting many donations with the current economic situation and based on past several years due to lack of awareness of LEC fairgrounds as unsubsidized non-profit.

COVID Health Guidelines / Process Update – Dickerson talked about the governor's press conference earlier in the day. The governor has added the rodeo as a no-to-low contact with humans sport that can take place starting in June. Lots of guidance on gatherings was also given. Most counties in Nebraska including Lancaster County will be allowed gatherings the greater of 25 people or 25% of the room's official occupancy capacity not to exceed 3000 people. In addition people must be organized in groups not to exceed six people with six feet distance between groups. Small and medium LEC horse and people shows may be possible under these restrictions if the shows agree to help implement the health regulations and guidelines. Any group over 500 in most counties including Lancaster County would also have to go through their local health department to get clearance for the event. Doeschot reported on recommendations from the Department of Agriculture for livestock shows and sales, livestock should be brought in and leave immediately following showing. Face masks are encouraged for exhibitors while judges must have temperatures checked and wear masks. All volunteers must wear face masks.

Extension Report / Communications – Wobig shared that Extension follows science and the facts and is processing the facts while they change all the time. Quite a lot of guidance from the University has been given, and Extension needs to process these guidelines and come up with thoughts to what the fair can look like. Extension would be much better suited to give a recommendation in the next couple of weeks with the guidance and training that comes from the University. Anderson added that they are fortunate to have a Nebraska 4-H team that has worked hard to provide what a virtual and other options to modify exhibitor fairs could look like. They are working hard to participate in Zoom

trainings. No decision has been made yet because there is a lot to consider. They will definitely have more information in the near future. Ronnau reminded the group that the number one goal is still the safety of the kids and allowing them the experience in some way, shape, or form. Wobig also introduced Pat Heather, an Extension board member.

2020 Fair Update – Dickerson reviewed the COVID health practices that LEC fairgrounds was reviewing with the health department which include face coverings required inside unless mounted on an animal or outside when can't maintain 6' distance. We would be putting everybody in danger if we did not have everyone wear face covers. Dickerson said that per legal and insurance counsel to LEC that following all the governmental health regulations and recommendations would be necessary to protect LEC from legal liability for staff and guests. She reported that she has Nate Dowding looking at the free space in the exhibitor fair layouts previously presented to the board for the fair. A people capacity limit will be in place in each building which may lead to limit on how many family members can come with each exhibitor at a physical fair.

Ronnau presented her research for options for the fair. She brushed on guidelines that the President of NAFM (NE Assoc. of Fair Mgrs) gave which are similar to local guidelines. The fair can be physical, virtual, or a blend. Many of the surrounding counties are waiting to see the directives that are coming out in June. Our local health department's number one concern as talked through all the summer's large events on recent LEC visit was the fair because the age of the children and the number of people in attendance. The poor hygiene and distancing practices of children, and the kids are constantly touching things would be problematic in a pandemic. Kids will also go back to school right after the fair ends after mixing with kids from many different school districts which could increase community spread across the county just as school trying to begin. Parades, carnivals, beer gardens, dances were all prohibited in guidelines given in governor's press conference for June. Wobig mentioned that fairs will look different all over the state. There is not one direction on whether to have a physical fair versus a virtual fair. Ronnau mentioned that a few local parents have reached out to her and were excited about being able to do the fair virtually. Some have also said they are wary about physically volunteering.

Ag Society Hall of Fame Nominations & Farm Family update – Bulling updated the board on the Farm Family awards. There is one Pioneer and one Heritage application each. Different this year, the awards will be sent by AkSarBen to the local farm to be presented due to all the uncertainty surrounding all the county fairs. The local farm bureau will contact the families and we'll coordinate with them to publicize online in 2020 and in person hopefully in 2021 at the VIP Luncheon.

As for Ag Society Hall of Fame Awards for 2020, they will be highlighted on social media and will be included in next year's VIP luncheon. The two nominations for the 2020 Hall of Fame are Peggy Brown and Bobby Muhlbach. Ronnau asked the board for any more verbal nominations. Rawlinson moved to induct Peggy Brown and Bobby Muhlbach into the Lancaster County Ag. Society Hall of Fame in 2020. Dowding seconded, motion passed 9-0. Bulling will order the awards.

Decision to hold additional board meeting on June 4, 2020 – Before a decision was made on if/how any 2020 exhibitor fair may occur at the LEC fairgrounds, Ronnau wanted to know what each board member was hoping for the fair. Dowding would like a physical livestock show, bring one species at a time, come in the morning, and leave that same day. Suing thinks being a virtual judge would be a challenge but thinks it would be fun and is

up for a challenge as a long-time static judge. He would not do a physical fair because of age, witnessing too many people who do not want to abide by the rules. Rutt would like to see a blended fair. Doeschot is looking forward to see how the board can find creative solutions. Rawlinson sees where there might be a need for some online components and knows there is a lot of work to put on a virtual fair. Most horse folks would prefer live events even with restricted access. She is ready to hop in and help. Messick is abstaining as he plans to be in Pennsylvania for his mother's 100th birthday when the fair would be taking place. If he were to give comments, he would want some kind of live event – haul in, haul out. His real concerns are with keeping kids separate. He's not a big fan of the virtual stuff. Thinks the fair will need to give very concise guidelines to keep things fair for virtual events. Swanson agrees with Suing. At the age he is at, he doesn't feel comfortable being there physically. Ronnau is concerned that if it is a live in and out show, they will have to limit spectators because there will not be enough room. It will be difficult to police people. She is also worried about the precedence it sets for next year's fair, making it harder to hold all the animals/exhibits for the full first four days of the fair to help with ag education with the public. An online fair would have to have distinct rules set. The team will need a lot of help. Cooper commented that there's no right answers right now. Every day that passes helps the board make a good decision. Swanson motioned to have an additional public board meeting, in two weeks, on June 4, at 7:30 p.m., via Zoom. Dowding seconded, motion passed 9-0. Dickerson will send out an agenda and zoom link.

NHSFR Report – Rook reported that construction is continuing as usual. They are finishing projects. Some extra money is in some of those lines and being moved to maintain the contingency as a few lines have gone over last estimate. The grandstand is close to being done. The crew is doing well. Estimated completion date is up in the air due to weather. July 16 is the move in date for NHSFR. As for the operational side of rodeo prep, they have finished a bunch of forms for the high school rodeo contestant registration among many other tasks.

Managing Director Report – Kraeger reported that rodeo vendors have been given an extension for their applications to be approved due to the COVID uncertainty. LEC have let rodeo sponsors know that they are in a holding pattern, so they haven't communicated with them in a while. He's been trying to contact fair sponsors. All are extremely understanding of LEC's circumstances and knowing the decision needs to be about the kids. He's talked with U-Stop and West Gate Bank who are big fair gate ticket sponsors. LEC is looking for ways to include them in virtual pieces if the fair goes virtual. Flowers from Waverly FFA were delivered around the community, and the fair ticket sponsors were on the signage.

Bulling continued about the Waverly FFA flowers. They delivered all flowers on Wednesday, May 20 five elder care facilities. Everyone was very appreciative to have the flowers. They will be delivering more flowers next week to more facilities. Residents will be planting the plants as an activity. Each delivery of flowers was accompanied by a "Bringing fair flowers to you" sign with fair ticket sponsors on the sign.

Rook reported on that the cleaning team has been working diligently to keep everyone safe. They are sanitizing showers in the campgrounds in addition to the bathrooms. They are also working on construction projects like numbering campsites. As for food and beverage, they have continued cleaning out the café and equipment. Lisa has shifted gears to work with food vendors to get ready for NFHSR.

Dickerson added that there will be a drive thru light up inflatables event in Pavilion 1. LEC is trying to get a vendor or two in the Lincoln lot for food for this last-minute new event. LEC will reactivate some café team members who were furloughed as head into rodeo and reopening with small/medium horse shows as health department approval is confirmed. The rest of the office team is still working remotely but is starting to prepare to move back in the office slowly as COVID health guidelines loosen up and LEC potentially opens up to events. In terms of NHSFR, Dickerson mentioned that it is likely that there would not be room for public to attend in 2020 on top of the 1500 HS contestants and their families given the likely COVID guidelines. The team is still planning on getting more medical consulting on the guidelines that LEC has written for horse shows and the rodeo. They will also be looking for more financial support for the rodeo because of impact of the coronavirus since just March has significantly lowered NHSFR Lincoln revenues (tickets, food & beverage, trade show vendors) and increases costs (cleaning supplies, staff, monitors, wage rates, more staff than volunteers).

Rawlinson asked about having different pricing for new events with something like a coronavirus surcharge. Dickerson said yes, LEC is starting to do something along those lines, but they don't know the final cost yet. One idea with rodeo is opening up is having new sponsorship categories: branded masks, disinfectants, services and supplies to safely have an event.

Other Business - none

Communication from the public – Roma Amundson commented that LEC has stepped up to take on many things. The floods of last year, COVID-19 this year, and the facilities have always helped the public through it all. The paradigms are going to be shifting, and we are doing things in different ways. One thing does not change, and that is that LEC is happy to help to serve the public, especially the kids and young folk. She said with the future new capital budget coming from the LEC fairgrounds, that the County might not be able to provide LEC with funds that it seeks. Where there really is an impact is the care that we will have to put into cleaning things and how to keep people safe. That will be a significant cost to use in the next budget.

Pat Heather brought up that the Loft Community Theatre in Manley is hosting drive-in movies. This could be an idea to somehow project the rodeo live on a big screen out in the parking lot to watch from the car. Ronnau says Dave Livingston is looking into finding some equipment to see if this is a possibility.

Executive Session – Dowding motioned to enter an executive session to discuss NHSFR & WW panels contracts. Messick seconded, motion passed 9-0. The board entered executive session at 9:33 p.m. Dowding motioned and Cooper seconded to move out of executive session. Motion passed 9-0, the board moved out of the session at 10:18 p.m.

Adjournment - It was motioned by Rutt and seconded by Messick to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 p.m. Motion passed 9-0.

Respectfully submitted by: Jess Nguyen – LCAS Board Clerk

Secretary Cooper

President Ronnau

Next additional meeting: Thursday June 4, 2020 at 7:30PM
By Zoom link TBA