



**NEBRASKA STATE FAIR BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Friday, December 20, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Nebraska State Fair Board was held on Friday, December 20, 2024, at 1:00 pm at the State Fair Administrative Offices in Grand Island, NE. Public notice of this meeting was published in the Grand Island Independent newspaper on December 13 & 14, 2024; posted to the Nebraska Public meeting calendar website; and on the Nebraska State Fair website. The public was invited to attend in person.

Roll call was read with the following Board members present: Jeff Kliment, Chair; Boyd Strope, Vice Chair; Lanna Hubbard, Treasurer, via Zoom; Tom Schellpeper, Secretary; Dawn Caldwell; Tom Dinsdale, via Zoom; Ryan Hassebrook, via Zoom; Kevin Jorgensen; Alan Kahle; Brett Lindstrom; Kathleen Lodl; John McKeever, via Zoom; and Beth Smith.

**Others in attendance:**

Jaime Parr, Executive Director; Tammy Baker, Business Administrator; Joe Stump, AMGL; Courtney Glock, Marketing Director; Nicki Stoltenberg, Sponsorship Director; Keaton Irwin, Sales Director; Karli Schulz, Events & Entertainment Director; Tina Thuernagle, Operations Director; and Vaughn Sievers, Ag Director.

Jeff Kliment 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 Boyd Strope for Approval of Consent Agenda, which included Regular Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2024.**

**Second by Kevin Jorgensen.**

**Upon roll call vote, motion to approve consent agenda passed unanimously.**

**Financial Report by Joe Stump and Jaime Parr**

**Beth Smith moved to approve November Financials as presented.**

**Second by Boyd Strope.**

**Upon roll call vote, motion to approve passed unanimously.**

**Board Committee Reports**

**Events Report**

- Talent Buyer's RFP, in review and consideration.
- Musical/comedy entertainment acts
- Discussed Dirt and Motorsport event options, working with promoters to fill the series with fun and exciting events.
- Karli & team presented with Pull of the Year Award by drivers.

**Facilities Report by Tom Schellpeper**

- Brian Frederichsen and Matt Elsbury discussed ARPA scheduling change orders.
- Cindy Johnson presented Good Life District updates, proposed business model for GILCA, and impact studies on Heartland Events Center.
- Tina discussed bids for new HVAC providers.

### Agriculture Report

- Met with an exhibitor regarding animal at show
- Ribbon system will not change in 2025.
- Applications & interview scheduling for open Livestock Manager position.

### Finance Report by Lanna Hubbard

- Full agenda made time short to discuss the 2025 Budget in detail. Separate meeting will be held in January to review 2025 budget details. Will seek consideration to approve at January meeting.
- Brett created and shared first draft of investment policy to be considered in January. Handouts distributed.
- Acknowledgement of new GILCA business plan, work in progress.
- Cindy Johnson gave report on Good Life District.
- Discussed Master Plan update, potentially investing in a second opinion to validate responses.
- ARPA 1 is finishing up. ARPA 2 – the contract is signed. We'll need to seek funding support for some projects in ARPA 2.
- Didn't have enough time to discuss budget thoroughly. Will reserve time in next committee meeting for more detailed discussion before asking for consideration at January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Land purchase update – looking to close around January 6.

### FFA Report by Ryan Hassebrook

- Preparing for 2025 show
- Few updates in premium books, etc.

### 4-H Report by Kathleen Lodl

- County Fair Books – drafts out for review
- Livestock changes underway, thanks to Vaughn for his leadership.
- University of Nebraska commencement (tomorrow)

### Executive Report by Jeff Kliment

- GILCA plan in progress
- Brunks property purchase details

### Human Resources Report by Beth Smith

- 100% participation in Executive Director evaluation by Board and Staff.
- Jaime also completed a self-assessment, which the Executive Committee reviewed.
- Good annual process for Board, staff, and Executive Director
- All appreciate and are grateful for the amount of work Jaime is putting into Nebraska State Fair.

### Staff Department Reports

#### Marketing Report by Courtney Glock

- Updating website, clearing out 2024, starting 2025
- Holiday sales - 11 days
- IAFE Convention
- Maintaining social media
- Budget – advertising allocations (billboards, OTT media (internet), CTV (anything on tv), demographic impacts)
- “Fair Share” newsletter
- Thank you to Jaime, Board for allowing staff to attend IAFE (idea sharing, networking).

#### Sponsorship Report by Nichole Stoltenberg

- Staff team, partners – fundraising
- Details of meetings with sponsors

- Aksarben Stock Show Advisory Committee met via Zoom
- Partnership with 501c3 and 501c5 designation – potential national fundraising opportunities

#### Sales Report by Keaton Irwin

- 2 – 3% turnover rate for 2024 Nebraska State Fair (including vendors, sponsors, partners)
  - Retaining core vendors
  - Not a lot of room for new and unique vendors
- Bringing back Craft Fair – opportunity for vendors to come for a few days or full 11-days
- Team collaboration on potential utilization of concourse area – networking at NICA and IAFE conferences to gather ideas.

#### Events Report by Karli Schulz

- 2024 Pull of the Year award from Nebraska Bush Pullers
- 4 Concert/ticketed shows confirmed, tickets to go on sale in March.
- 2 Dirt Events and 1 Motorsport Event confirmed.
- Offers out on all remaining concerts & events – waiting to hear back.
- New motorsports event (Figure 8 Racing) in 2025 should bring in new crowd.
- Talent Buyer RFP – going back to some of the bidders with questions, then will meet with Venue Works before making any decisions on talent buyers.
- Grounds entertainment lineup for 2025
  - Free stages/local and regional entertainment will open up in January.
  - 2025 Goal – add strolling opportunities outside of Pinnacle Bank Expo building
  - Hope is to have performers in:
    - Family Fun Zone
    - Grand District
    - South marketplace towards Gate 2
    - Still keeping one or two closer to Event Center (where they’ve always been)
- New events (will share at January meeting)
- Most events will start accepting registrations at the end of February.
- IAFE Convention
  - Offers on concerts
  - YP steering committee
- Upcoming presentation opportunities
  - Karli speaking to past presidents of NAFM about concert timelines
  - Olivia and Karli to present at NAFM on inclusivity at your fair
  - Karli hosting workshop at Zone 5 – Burning Questions in the World of Concerts
- Working toward IAFE Management grad degree to be completed in April 2025.

#### Operations by Tina Thuernagle

- Closed out 2024 with favorite memories of past year
- GILCA update
  - AGR Prospect Show (Brent’s first show as lead, did a great job)
- 2025 Operations planning – working on department project lists
- ARPA meetings
- Bi-weekly director’s, weekly staff, and director/operations meetings
- Also Thursday ops meetings to discuss workload, projects, and safety protocol
- New operations truck purchase

#### Agriculture Report by Vaughn Sievers

- Morning committee meeting
- Livestock Manager opening position – application and interview process

- Restructure of department
- Hiring judges/sending out contracts
- Equine area – Working with Bureau of Land Management
  - Exhibitors will have opportunity to break horses and bring back to NSF
  - Forever Branded will put on educational show in Bull Riding Arena
  - Equine department restructured, now rebuilding
- One more show in the works
- Because we're bringing on new person and restructuring, we'll table Livestock program improvements until next year.

#### 1868 Foundation by Jaime Parr

- Budget and fundraising goals – closing out 2024
- Foundation Board member, Matt Gundersen used to run Aksarben Stock Show, had great insights to share regarding scholarships and premiums.
- Useful information Jaime and Nicki can share with Knights of Aksarben Foundation, end of January

#### Executive Director's Report by Jaime Parr

- 1:1 Directors' meetings every week and Director's group every other week
- Regular staff meetings every week
- Aksarben Stock Show – will know more in February
  - Scholarship conversation
  - Presenting sponsorship
  - Exploring marketing opportunities & outreach to all 14 states
  - Thanks to Lindsey (1868 Foundation) for support in grant exploration
    - Courtney & Nicki worked together on grant submission to Visit Nebraska, which could result in some increase in marketing opportunities throughout the state.
- Fair planning
  - Firming up bigger spacing and layout issues on campus
  - Discussing Plan B depending on status of ARPA – hoping whole South Marketplace will be complete and ready for Fair. If not, Plan B is being considered.
  - RFP's this month – HVAC, 2026 golf carts, soft drinks (complete), decorator RFP (complete), Talent Buyer RFP in progress. Making sure Nebraska State Fair is ensuring competitive providers (best value).
  - ARPA 1: All that's left is underground work in North parking lot and Family Fun Zone.
  - ARPA 2: Contract is signed. Brian and Matt came for update today.
- Brunks: January 6 is estimated closing day.
- IAFE Annual Convention – 6 directors, 1 manager (scholarship), 3 from State Fair Board participated.
  - Livestock Drug Testing Workshop
  - Everyday Ag Workshop
  - Safety & Security meeting and tabletop exercise
- Tabletop exercise at NSF on February 20<sup>th</sup>
  - Have invited local emergency responders, security, emergency management, 911 call center, representatives from each of the local hospitals, campus stakeholders (Elite Casino, Venue Works, Fonner Park), the Mayor and City Administrator.
  - All morning. Lunch will be served.
  - Emergency Action Procedures scenario
- Nebraska Association of Fair Managers (NAFM) in Kearney – January 24
  - Committee meetings
  - Regular Board meeting (2:00 on Friday, Jan 24)
  - Trade Show booth: ribbon systems information

- Workshops
- Networking
- Fun
- Please apply to any registrations and hotel needs
- **Zone 5**
  - February 28 – March 2<sup>nd</sup> in Kansas
  - Theme: Follow the Yellow Brick Road
- Jaime thanked Board for committee participation in meetings, ARPA, GILCA, budget; and their leadership to her as Director of Nebraska State Fair.
- Thanked Staff Team for all their work planning and executing two major events.
- Thanked 1868 Foundation: Terry, Lindsey, Matt.

**Other Business**

- None

Jaime and Staff Team distributed holiday gift bags to Board members.

**Dawn Caldwell moved to adjourn.**  
**Second by Boyd Strope.**  
**All in favor. Meeting adjourned.**

**Minutes of December 20, 2024**  
**Nebraska State Fair Approved:**  
**Date: January 24, 2025**

**By: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Tom Schellpeper, Board Secretary**