

2023 ROCK COUNTY 4-H FAIR ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

The annual meeting of the Rock County 4-H Fair Association was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 in the Craig Center, Fairgrounds, Janesville, WI. There were 54 members present.

The meeting was called to order by President Ryan George,

Ryan introduced the board members, employees, Mary Check, and seasonal staff. Ryan thanked Mary for her years of service and the extensive knowledge she provides. We had two new invaluable county grounds workers for this year's Fair—Tim and Josh. A permanent grounds manager, Doug, was hired in August. Ryan expressed his appreciation for our electrician, Brian.

Ryan thanked all of the volunteers that help make the Fair run smoothly.

Secretary's Report:

The minutes from the 2022 meeting were available on the website and at the check in table. There being no additions or corrections, Carolyn Butts moved to accept the secretary's report as read, Courtney Frei moved to second and the motion carried.

Read and accept new members of the association, 10 new members.

1. Casey Waite
2. Kendra Faucett
3. Josh Lund
4. Lois Pennycook
5. Bobby Kopps
6. Jennifer North Herden
7. Jim Abey
8. Maria Femrite
9. Wyatt Fellows
10. Melissa Fellows

Carolyn Butts moved to accept new members as read, BJ Arnold, seconded, motion carried.

Fair dates were set for 2024: Tuesday, July 23-28, 2024.

Treasurer's Report:

Abbey Gasser, Treasurer presented the 2022 audited financial report for approval. Beth Burdick moved to accept the audited report, Kaitlyn Porstmann, seconded, motion carried.

Abbey presented the 2023 financial report.

Total receipts for 2023 were: \$1,655,601.

Total expenses were: \$1,515,853

Net profit for 2023: \$139,748.

Old Business:

Abbey discussed our positive financial status and the upward trend we are on for the last three years. 2023 was another profitable year. Sponsorship continues to be a huge factor to our bottom line. Preferred ticket sales for two of our mainstage acts contributed to profit. Attendance was similar to 2022, despite the extreme heat and thunderstorms we experienced during the 2023 Fair. The board is using the profit we have accrued to invest back into the Fair and our exhibitors. Our grandstand lineup was superb and diverse which helped drive high attendance numbers. The carnival mega pass was wildly popular and nearly sold out. Our contests continue to be popular and appeal to people of all ages. The Meat Animal Sale, Fur and Feather Sale, and Dairy Youth Auction were at a 10 year high for the exhibitors.

The board is continuing to try and increase exhibits.

The board has developed a reinvestment plan. \$500,000 in operating fund, \$600,000 to invest in longer term investments with the goal to get that fund to \$1,000,000.

Available capital left that the board is going to reinvest in our Fair now--\$169,674.

The goal is to have the reinvestment projects we choose to have a direct positive effect/experience for our exhibitors.

Suggestions from members: reduce the exhibitor fees and be cautious with funds in case we have down years.

Election: Bonnie Martin as chairperson for the election.

VICE PRESIDENT:

The Committee **nominated** Beth Burdick

Bob Arndt moved to close nominations for Vice President, Kaitlyn Porstmann seconded, motion carried.

Bob Arndt moved to cast a unanimous ballot for Beth Burdick for Vice President BJ Arnold seconded, motion carried.

Results of the first ballot for Vice President: Beth Burdick

TREASURER:

The Committee **nominated** Abbey Gasser

Barb George moved to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for

Abbey Gasser for Treasurer Beth Burdick seconded, motion carried.

Results of the first ballot for Treasurer: Abbey Gasser

First Director:

The Committee **nominated** Jeff Hodge
Chad Butts **nominated** Josh Firgens
Nicole Speich **nominated** Dana Powell.

Carolyn Butts moved to close nominations for first director, Robin Heath seconded, motion carried.

Each candidate introduced themselves.

Results of the first ballot for 1st. director:

Name:	Votes
Jeff Hodge	37
Josh Firgens	9
Dana Powell	7

The first director is: Jeff Hodge

Second Director:

Those names still on the ballot are:

Josh Firgens
Dana Powell
Kaitlyn Porstmann **nominated** Cathy Wendtland

Barb George Moved to close nominations for 2nd. Director, Kaitlyn Porstmann seconded, motion carried.

Results of the first ballot for 2nd. Director:

Name:	Votes
Josh Firgens	30
Dana Powell	14
Cathy Wendtland	10

The second director is: Josh Firgens

Third Director:

Those names still on the ballot are:

Dana Powell
Cathy Wendtland

Kaitlyn Porstmann moved to close nominations Josh Firgens seconded, motion carried.

Results of the first ballot for 3rd director:

Name:	Votes
Dana Powell	43
Cathy Wendtland	11

The third director is Dana Powell

Committee Reports

Advertising: Abbey Gasser reported

Advertising committee did some fun new things with advertising. Special thank you to Shannon Rusch on her TikTok video! It was massively popular. We grew our organic email marketing list to 7,000. The one email sent out prior to the fair generated \$9,000 in ticket sales. Our website generated 1.1 million hits. Our digital advertising is working and coming to our pages/websites.

Buildings & Grounds: Chad Butts, BJ Arnold, Reported The increased attendance provided some challenges—including increased garbage. County did a lot of plumbing and electrical projects in the last year. County also put a new roof on grandstand. The board invested in new goat pens. The grounds crew did a fabulous job this year. Special thanks to Josh and Tim from the county for stepping in last minute to make our fair run smoothly. Hats off to Brian the electrician for all of his hard work.

Clean Up: Laura Fuhrmann

Reported: Laura reported that clean up went well. Special thanks to Beef Producers for donating and cooking burgers and hot dogs for exhibitors and families.

Concessions: Maureen Fox Rusch reported Laura F gave report for Min. She thanked Mary and the board and the crew. 23 food vendors this year with 13 being local. Food are chosen with limited duplication

Craig/Blackhawk/Block Building Coordinator: Beth Burdick reported

This area of the fairgrounds is a focus and the board continues to provide resources for the superintendents on this end of the fairground.

Dairy Youth Auction: Chad Butts Reported

This was the 17th auction. Funds in the dairy youth auction account are \$80,000. The committee will be donating \$50,000 to the Fair to assist with implementing an educational milking parlor and updated wash racks. Special thank you to the auction supporters and multiple committee members.

Daytime Entertainment: Robin Heath reported:

Robin gave a rundown of all of the fabulous Daytime Entertainment acts at this year's Fair. Cow Town and Jump Pad were new.

Entertainment/Special Events: Beth Burdick Reported::

The board tried to provide a variety of entertainment options for families and fairgoers. We are always looking for new acts and ideas to best utilize budget. Special thank you to the Phalin family for all of their help backstage.

The multiple special events/contests were again very popular.

Five pies from the Pie Contest netted \$2,200 at the auction.

Photo contest had 78 entries.

Bundt Cake contest set up by WI State Fair. Top entry was exhibited at WI State Fair.

Charcuterie Board contest was very popular this year.

**Fairest: Robin Heath, Karen O'Leary
Reported**

Fairest competition had 4 candidates. Bella Ruosch was this year's Fairest. She will be representing Rock County at the WI Fairest Competition in January. Robin thanked her committee for all their help.

**First Aid: BJ Arnold, Laura Fuhrmann
Reported**

Thank you to QuietWoods RV for donating a trailer for use during fair week. We contract with Janesville Fire Department and several local municipalities to provide First Aid. A special thank you to Footville Fire and EMS for stepping up and providing three nights of first aid coverage.

Fur & Feather Sale: Robin Heath reported

This year's sale was a record-breaking year. A few changes to the sale caused a great response from buyers.

Total before scholarships \$136,925.

Scholarships added another \$6,100.

Meat Animal Sale: MAS Laura Jenson, Abe Arndt reported: 40 fewer animals were sold this year. \$651,261dollars were spent at this year's sale. The top buyers were: Woodman's, E n D Waterworks, Rock Co Beef Producers. Klitzman, Seneca, Clinton FFA Alumni, Johnson Tractor.

Special thank you to the committee members. We were grateful to have Sorg's back for the resale program.

Memorials: Karen O'Leary reported

Each superintendent was gifted a gift card to Culver's as well as a Fair tshirt instead of the superintendent dinner.

There were 5 memorial benches donated this year.

**Museum: Shannon Klassy, Teresa Reilly
Reported:**

Theme was 1960s. Many projects and pictures were displayed. Mary Check does a fabulous job creating a scrapbook after each year's Fair. The fair sold tumblers with the profits going to the museum.

**Premium: Beth Burdick, Laura Fuhrmann
Reported**

Superintendents submitted fair book changes.

Theme for 2024: A Treasure Chest of Rock County's Best

**Security: Beth Burdick, BJ Arnold
Reported**

Special thank you to Rock County Sheriff's Office for doing a fabulous job again this year. JPD also assisted. Sgt. Andrew Reed and multiple deputies assigned to first shift, and Sgt. Natter and Sgt. Peters and multiple deputies were assigned to second shift. The SIU unit installed six security cameras on the grounds to be able to always view the entire fairgrounds.

Sponsorship: Abbey Gasser

The sponsorship booklet and pamphlet generated \$73,000 in sponsorship. Special thank you to Ellen Hunter for her assistance on the committee!

New Business

Chad Butts reported that the board is entertaining the idea of implementing a beer garden at the Rock County 4-H Fair and possibly move forward with it.

Bob Arndt made a motion to have no beer at the 2024 Rock County 4-H Fair. Abbey Gasser seconded the motion.

Discussion on the topic was both in favor and against the idea.

Karen called for a written Yes/No vote on Bob Arndt's motion.

A "Yes" vote was in support of Bob's motion. A "No" vote was to explore the idea of having beer at the 2024 Fair.

Yes—11 votes

No—41 votes

"I Don't Care" --2

Any other business:

Special thank you to Robin Heath for all of her time and efforts in creating a beautiful fairgrounds full of flowers and planters.

Special thank you to Karen O'Leary for her 25 plus years of service to the fair board. A standing ovation for Karen!

Motion to Adjourn: Karen O'Leary