

-Benton County Agricultural Society
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Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 14th, 2025 – 7:00pm
Benton County Fairgrounds

A Special Meeting for the Benton County Agricultural Society was held on Tuesday, January 14th, 2025 at 7:00pm at the Benton County Fair Grounds Office.

Present: Ted Prom, President; Ken Bemboom, Vice President; Jill Zanardi, Executive Secretary; Mary Ostby, Treasurer; Jennifer Dingmann, Karen Sakry, Nancy Zupan, Jody Prom, Adam Scapanski, Jimmy Zanardi, Erich Rothstein, Scott Morris, Rod Bemboom, and Sam Morris

Absent: Vince Thiel

Guests: Bob Skuza; Ashley Bukowski, Attorney

President, Ted Prom, convened the meeting at 7:13pm, and informed all present that the meeting was being recorded.

Conflict Resolution: Ted indicated that this meeting was called to hear from the Temporary Executive Committee regarding a recommendation for resolution to the Code of Conduct issues discussed at the last special meeting, held on January 2nd, 2025.

Ashley Bukowski reviewed why we are here, and according to Article IV of the Bylaws, those complaints must be kept in strict confidence. There were several complaints made regarding the inappropriate language and lack of adherence to a code of conduct. We may need to update our bylaws to include how these instances should be handled.

Ken stated that he, along with Scott and Rod met numerous times, and that they asked Jill to write a draft Code of Conduct Policy. As a policy, we would not need to amend the bylaws. Jimmy questioned what we are doing here tonight, since we are not able to hear or see what the allegations are. Jody questioned if the tape of the December 17th meeting was made available to those who were not in attendance. Ashley stated that we are here to discuss the actions at the December 17th meeting, and that it would not be productive to listen to the tape at a board meeting. Others present questioned why we are here and what we can do. Ashley indicated that it is recommended to adopt a general statement regarding a code of conduct, agree that additional policy is needed, and that a team building exercise be scheduled to help the board learn to work better together as a team. Jen questioned if there was recourse on what happened to those involved from the December 17th meeting. Ashley indicated that the events do not count as serious enough to warrant disciplinary action.

In frustration, Jimmy and Jody left the meeting at this time, indicating they want to resign.

Ken stated that he is disappointed that this has not yet been resolved. If members of the Board see something different, he does not want to be part of it. Rod agreed and stated that we are here to put on a fair, and Ted asked how we can move forward without knowing what will end up happening. He stated that he heard that an individual may pursue legal action against him for allegations made if he does not step down from being the President. Ashley stated that she had not heard of this. She also stated that more information has come to light that needs to be investigated.

Jill shared a draft of a Code of Conduct policy with all those present, and directors were asked to review and let Jill know of any recommended changes or additions.

Erich asked about those scheduled to go to the MFCF Convention later this week. It was agreed that since the money was already spent, those scheduled to go, should go.

At this point, Nancy asked to make a statement. She stated that she made a mistake and apologized for her actions at the December 17th meeting. She is trying to learn to think before she speaks or responds. Jen stated that she appreciates her apology. She asked Nancy if she apologized at the January 2nd Special Meeting, and stated that this could have gone a long way. Nancy stated that she chose to keep her mouth shut at that meeting.

Ashley stated that there were written complaints made, and that more information was received in the last 24 hours that needs to be investigated. She stated that the Board can take action at the end of the month, regarding the investigation. The question was raised regarding the next regular meeting, scheduled for January 21st, and how we can move forward without any resolution. It was stated that we have to try, and Ted questioned if we are to hold that meeting next week. Rod answered, yes.

Bob Skuza asked that with everything going on, are we still on track to put on the 2025 Fair. Ted answered that everything is on pause at this time. Ken agreed, and stated that we are not behind, but we are also not ahead.

Adjournment: Jen made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Erich. Meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jill Zanardi
Executive Secretary