

Benton County Agriculture Society  
P O Box 118  
Sauk Rapids MN 56379  
(320) 253-5649

**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025; 7:00pm**  
**Benton County Fairgrounds**

The January meeting of the Benton County Agricultural Society was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, and was called to order at 7:00pm by Ted Prom, President.

**Present:** Ted Prom, President; Ken Bemboom, Vice President; Jill Zanardi, Executive Secretary; Erich Rothstein, Scott Morris, Vince Thiel, Jimmy Zanardi, Jen Dingmann, Jody Prom and Sam Morris

**Absent:** Mary Ostby, Treasurer, Nancy Zupan, Rod Bemboom, James Trantina, Karen Sakry and Adam Scapanski

**Guest:** Cheryl Scapanski, Bob Skuza, Brian Duchene, Randy Marchand

**Guest:** Brian Duchene was present to request use of the Fairgrounds on June 12<sup>th</sup> for a First Responder's Event. The event will be held from 4p – 8p. There was discussion regarding having food on site, as well as having kid-friendly activities. Brian asked about a kid's train, and Jimmy agreed to look into this for him. Scott made a motion to approve use of the fairgrounds on June 12<sup>th</sup> for the First Responder's Event, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed.

**Guest:** Randy Marchand, Pantowner's Club, was present to confirm the dates for the Car Show for 2025 and 2026, so that he can get a 2-year contract completed. For 2026, the car show is one week after the fair, and there are concerns regarding use of the office space, since we will still be finalizing things. Ted confirmed that the dates for 2025 and 2026 are approved and locked in. Use of space will be worked out for 2026. The contract can be initiated.

Ted turned the meeting over to Ken for this part of the meeting.

**Follow-up/Recommendation from Temporary Executive Committee:** Ken stated that the temporary executive committee, along with input from Ashley, agreed that there was nothing found to be of substantial matter that would require further action at this time. They are recommending that the complaints be filed and that the board needs to move forward. Yes, there was inappropriate actions and use of inappropriate language, but there is no merit to any disciplinary action. They felt it was best to put all of this in the past and move forward, with the understanding that this type of behavior is not acceptable or allowed. Ted stated that he is not sure what he is allowed to say; there are several board members not present, and there had been a threat of litigation against him if he did not step down. Ken reiterated that Ashley said there is not enough merit for any litigation. Jimmy expressed concerns that anyone could be threatened by this person, and he needed to look out for this family and business. Others agreed. Jody stated that in her letter, she had referenced Mary, since she had asked her how to approach another board member. Once she had seen all the letters, she recused herself. Ken indicated that since she had been named in a letter, she recused herself. Bob stated that it could be difficult to put this behind us, without all members here. Ken stated that it was the intent of the Temporary Executive Committee to review and resolve all complaints, and their recommendation is to put this behind us and move forward. Erich made a motion to accept the recommendation of the temporary executive committee that this issue has been resolved, the complaints filed, and that this cannot be brought back for discussion. This was seconded by Sam. Motion passed. Jimmy neighed, and Ted abstained. Erich made a motion, seconded by Jody, to dissolve the temporary executive committee. Motion passed.

There was discussion regarding the draft of the 'Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Policy' that Jill had presented at the last meeting. Sam made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Scott. Ted reviewed the violations listed on page 2, and Jody questioned if they could also be removed from the Ag Society. There were changes made to the violations. It was recommended this be sent to Ashley for review, and board members could sign the attestation page at the February meeting. Motion passed.

At this point, Ted resumed chairing the meeting.

**Approval of Agenda and Meeting Minutes:** Ted asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda. Jennifer asked to defer committee assignments to the February meeting. Jen made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed. Ted asked for any changes or corrections to the December 17<sup>th</sup> regular meeting minutes. Ken made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Scott. Motion passed. The minutes from the January 2<sup>nd</sup> special meeting were reviewed. Scott made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Erich. Motion passed. The minutes of the January 14<sup>th</sup> special meeting were reviewed. Ken made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Erich. Motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Cheryl Scapanski shared the report for December, 2024. The rebate was received from Xcel. The debit card account shows the bike purchases for 2025. There was discussion regarding payroll, and Stangl asking for a signature to continue to do our payroll. Ted asked about the status of the move to Quicken, and Cheryl indicated that she is waiting to speak to Mary. The question was also raised as to whether we are getting our money's worth from Stangl and Jaskowiak. Previously, Laura had done so much of the work. Is there anyone else that could meet our needs? Cheryl stated that no one comes to mind. Cheryl then stated that she can take over some of the duties, but we would still require a CPA. There was discussion regarding those who require a 1099, and Jen indicated she would get the information to Cheryl. At this time, we will not yet sign the agreement with Stangl and Jaskowiak. We will do some research on who we can get; Cheryl can do the payroll. Ted stated that Mary had previously indicated that the website account was discussed in December, and that the balance should be brought down to \$3,500. Jen indicated that there should be no more monthly expenses from Sapphire. The yearly fee has been paid. Scott made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed.

**Secretary's Report:** Nothing to report.

**Groundskeeper Report:** Nothing to report.

**Committee Reports:**

**4-H:** Nothing to report.

**Activity Area:** Nothing to report.

**Ag Craft Exhibits:** Nothing to report.

**Beer Garden:** Nothing to report.

**Beer Garden Stage:** Nothing to report.

**Buildings and Grounds** (includes Off-Season Rentals): Scott indicated that the SAE did plow, and there was discussion regarding how that will look when we get more snow. We are not sure if there will be issues for them. Brett Ogg did the plowing, and it looks good.

Request from Heath Wilson; 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Maple Tree Sap Project: An email was received from Heath Wilson, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Pleasantview Elementary. Last year, his class did a project with the trees, making maple syrup. He would like to do this again. Scott made a motion to allow him to move forward, seconded by Sam. Motion passed.

Request for use of Cottonwood Stage, 5/1/2025; National Day of Prayer: Jill received a call asking to utilize the Cottonwood stage on May 1<sup>st</sup> for the National Day of Prayer. Scott made a motion to approve this request, seconded by Ken. Jill was asked to contact them for their specific needs. Motion passed.

Jimmy indicated that he had inadvertently drove over the cement covering near the barns, and that we need to look at a different option to cover these openings. He has been in contact with Midway Iron regarding options; perhaps a metal lid that locks. More to come.

**Discovery Building.** Sam discussed his idea to have the Pleasantview 5<sup>th</sup> grade class make a display of their maple syrup project for the Discovery Building. This is a great idea. Jill will get Sam in contact with Mr. Wilson.

**FFA:** Scott will be getting more information from the Royalton FFA alumni group on the Pedal Pull event.

**Finance:** Nothing to report.

**Food Vendors:** Jimmy indicated that he would like to get the t-shirt guy moved away from the current spot by the Beer Garden. This should be a food vendor spot. He is not sure where, and Scott asked about putting him in the SAE. It was agreed that he will not be happy anywhere. Jimmy thought we could put him by the Ag Craft Building; he would have excellent visibility there. There was discussion regarding what he pays for a spot versus a food vendor. Nothing was decided at this time.

**Grants:** Nothing to report.

**Grandstand:** Vince stated that he and Jen are still looking for events for Tuesday and Sunday. There was nothing great presented at the Convention. He likes the idea of a lawnmower race, but Tuesday would not work for them, and Sunday would be a better day for the rodeo. There was discussion regarding a monster truck event, and how that would work. Also discussed were concerns with a school bus event and the space required, as well as issues there have been in recent years with a rodeo. More to come.

**Guest/Host Relations:** Nothing to report.

**Heritage Square:** Nothing to report.

**Insurance:** Nothing to report.

**Livestock/Poultry:** Nothing to report.

**Marketing/Advertising:** Nothing to report.

**Social Media/Website:** Nothing to report.

**Midway:** From the question raised previously regarding any income for the BCAS from the early armband sales, Ted indicated that Randy clarified that we did receive credit for these sales. Jimmy asked if Randy had said anything about an appreciation dinner; Ted will follow-up on this.

**Military:** The next meet raffle at Rollies will be held on February 28<sup>th</sup>; the other future dates are March 28<sup>th</sup>, April 25<sup>th</sup>, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, June 20<sup>th</sup>, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and August 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Parking:** Nothing to report.

**Policies and Procedures.** Nothing to report.

**Premium Book:** Jill is working on typing an updated book. Jen will be in contact with Martech regarding an update to the program and getting it on the new computer.

**Sanitation:** Nothing to report.

**Security:** Nothing to report.

**Sponsorship:** Nothing to report

**Sports Arena East:** Vince stated that the SAE is getting into their busy season. We would really like to move ahead and look at the contract. Vince will discuss with SAE representatives to try and get a date on the calendar so we can move forward.

**Vendors:** Erich indicate that they are looking at the contracts to update and get sent out.

**Winter Storage:** Jody stated that April 12<sup>th</sup> is the date for pick-up of items from Winter Storage. We need to discuss the rates for 2025 - 2026 storage and set up dates for drop off in the fall. This will be added to the February agenda.

#### **Old Business:**

MFCF Convention: Vince shared what he learned at the convention. This was his first year attending. He went through the trade show looking for possible ideas for the grandstand events. He was impressed by a Strong Woman show as well as a family-friendly acrobat show. Jimmy shared that there is a strongman show that would be incredible. He has seen him perform; he is very passionate in his work and he will be retiring in two years. Jimmy also shared that he gained a lot of information regarding service animals as well as emotional support animals, specifically what we can and cannot ask. The animal must perform a specific task for its owner, and if it does not, we should only ask or suggest that they leave. We should not 'push' them out. An emotional support animal can only be a dog or a horse. He also learned that we should stay away from THC drinks. Also, we should look through all of our pictures and submit some next year.

#### **New Business:**

IAFE Zone 4 Meeting, February 23-25, 2025. There was discussion regarding the IAFE Meeting coming up next month, and the price of the registration and hotel rooms. There is a lot of networking and comradery that happens after the sessions, so it is advantageous to stay overnight. The agenda was shared, and registrations are due by the 29<sup>th</sup>. Jill asked who wanted to go and how many rooms would be needed. The question was raised if there was a fee to attend just one day; Jill will look into this. Jody made a motion that for the 2025 IAFE Meeting, the registrations and rooms should be paid for by the BCAS. This was seconded by Scott; motion passed. Vince opposed. We also need to create a centerpiece that will be judged, with a theme of "Rocket to the Top". Jill and Jen volunteered to work on this, and Ken said he would help.

#### **Other:**

Team Building. Vince asked Ken what Barry does; management or team-building. It is not sure if something can be scheduled before the IAFE meeting.

Posters. The State of MN employment posters are outdated. Jill will start looking for what is available for free.

**Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting of the Benton County Ag Society Board of Directors will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, at 7:00pm the Fair board Office.

**Adjournment:** Sam made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Scott. The meeting adjourned at 9:24pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Zanardi  
Executive Secretary