

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

Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 18th, 2025; 7:00pm
Benton County Fairgrounds

The March meeting of the Benton County Agricultural Society was held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, and was called to order at 7:02pm by Ted Prom, President.

Present: Ted Prom, President; Ken Bemboom, Vice President; Jill Zanardi, Executive Secretary; Scott Morris, Erich Rothstein, Vince Thiel, Jimmy Zanardi, Jen Dingmann, Jody Prom, Karen Sakry, Nancy Zupan, Adam Scapanski and Sam Morris

Absent: James Trantina

Guests: Cheryl Scapanski

Approval of Agenda and Meeting Minutes: Ted asked for any corrections, changes or additions to the agenda. Jody asked to have 'April 12, take-out day' added to Winter Storage and Vince asked to have 'Flowers for Tony Hommerding funeral' to Other. Jimmy made a motion to approve the agenda with changes as stated, seconded by Erich. Motion passed. Ted asked for any corrections to the minutes from the March 18th meeting. Jen stated that on page 3, under Grandstand, it should state \$17,500, not \$17,000 and that it should read 'Robosaurus', and not 'Robots'. Jen made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ken. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Cheryl Scapanski shared the report for February, 2025. She stated the money in the old checking account will be moved; QuickBooks and tax payments will now come out of the new checking account. Expenses from the new checking account and debit card account were reviewed. There was discussion regarding funds from the meat raffles and funds earmarked for Tribute to Serve. Jody has more information on this. Nancy made a motion to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Jody. Motion passed.

Secretary's Report: Jill reported that she is going through all of the monthly lists to make sure that everything is on the correct month. Nothing new to report.

Groundskeeper Report: Scott indicated that the mower needs to get to Midwest. There is garbage around the grounds that needs to be picked up.

Old Business:

Complaint. This was tabled from the last meeting; it has since self-corrected.

Llama's – Insurance. There is insurance through the State. The animals will be kept on the north side of the grounds. Adam indicated that someone will be with the animals at all times; waste will be picked up as they move about. Ken stated that there should be boundaries identified for them to adhere to.

At this point, Nancy handed out documents regarding the schedules for the Activity Area and the Cottonwood Stage. She then handed in her resignation as a Director to Ted and left the room. Ted read her letter to the group. She stated that she is done with the board and does not want to be part of any committees. Scott made a motion to approve her resignation, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed.

Director Resignation. This item was under New Business however, Ted shared it at this point. He indicated that Mary Ostby wrote an email to resign as the Treasurer/director. Erich made a motion to approve the resignation, seconded by Ken. Motion passed. Ted initiated discussion regarding duties of the Treasurer. In the past, the responsibilities have defaulted to the President. We can appoint, but we cannot re-cast the executive committee. It was stated that we could proceed without a treasurer in name, since Cheryl has been taking care of the financial duties.

Committee Assignments. The current committee assignments were reviewed and discussed. Ted stated that although Mary had resigned as Director/Treasurer, she intends to take care of the Schoolhouse and Heritage Buildings. Each committee was reviewed, and membership was updated. Scott motion to delete 'Guest/Host Relations' as a committee, seconded by Ken. Motion passed. Scott made a motion to approve the committee assignments, seconded by Adam. Motion passed.

Code of Conduct Policy. Ted stated that several members were absent at the last meeting when the new Code of Conduct policy was approved. Those members reviewed and signed acknowledgement of the policy.

New Business:

Fall Event. Ted initiated discussion regarding a proposed fall event at the fairgrounds. Randy Forcier, from Gopher State Expositions, reached out to hold the event here, rather than Crossroads parking lot. It would be held the weekend of September 20th, and this is in the very preliminary planning status. Randy would bring in eight rides and gear the event towards children. There is a meeting planned for tomorrow evening if anyone would like to attend. Michaela from Anoka County will also be there to share her experience with this type of event. There is no requirement to attend; anyone interested in helping out can be there. The financials as of yet. Jimmy shared that he would like to bring in several food trucks, perhaps changing from those who have been at the fair. These trucks would run their own generators, so power is not an issue.

File room Boxes. Jen stated that several members have been going through all of the boxes in the utility room. They have been sifting through all of the documents to see what needs to be saved. At this time, there are many boxes full of documents that need to be destroyed. They will be loaded into Jen's trailer and be destroyed. Sam made a motion to have Jennifer destroy all of the documents, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed.

Ice Sales during Fair. Jimmy initiated discussion regarding selling bags of ice during the fair. He has talked to Mike at Precise Ice, who is willing to donate a trailer. In the past few years, there have been requests from food vendors to be able to purchase ice on the fairgrounds. He would charge us \$4.50/bag (20 lb. bags) and we could sell for \$6.00/bag. The trailer holds 200 bags, and he would stock the bags as needed. There are no liability issues for the BCAS and Jimmy volunteered to be the contact person. Scott made a motion to approve the ice sales as indicated, seconded by Jen. Motion passed.

Emergency Plan. Ted indicated that we need to update our Emergency Preparedness Plan. The one that is in place is outdated. The last plan is from 2018. Jody emailed Kristen with Emergency Services; she is responsible for our area. She is willing to meet with us and walk the grounds and needs a few dates to choose from. Jody suggested that the entire board be part of this process. We should probably do this prior to the next meeting. The Security Committee will meet with Kristin first and then schedule a walk-through with the board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Winter Storage: April 12th is the date for removal of items from winter storage. Jody is asking who will all be available to help. Jimmy, Scott, Ken and Ann, Tom, Grant, Tony, Vince, Sam and Ted. Ted stated that Warren should be here. Jill will be here if possible. They will start taking items out at 7:00 am.

Vendors: Erich indicated that he met with Nancy and all contracts have been sent out.

Sports Arena East: Vince stated that SAE is trying to figure out a year-round training facility. Members would like to meet with the fair board regarding the feasibility of this. He had set up several dates with Jason, but they fell through. They are not looking to meet April 8 or 9. They also asked what we would like to discuss besides winter parking. It was suggested we add communication and a wish list. Ted and Ken will also meet with them; no time has been set yet. The 2024 invoice has also not yet been resolved. It was also stated that Mike Kemp is retiring at the end of April. He had informed us that there is a circus June 5 and 6; we will need more details about this event.

Sponsorship: Jennifer indicated that the forms are on the website and the deadline is May 1st.

Security: Nothing to report.

Sanitation:

Republic Bid. Jody shared that she received a bid from Republic for garbage services at \$7,900. She has the bid in writing, and the 'overflow' charges have been removed. It was stated that we would like a 4-yard container a couple of

weeks before the fair, and this is included in the contract. Ken made a motion to approve the bid from Republic for \$7,900 for garbage services, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed. Jill will assume responsibility for this next year.

Porta-Potty Bids. Jody stated that she received a bid from Wruck Sewer & Portable Rentals for porta-potties. She received a bid of \$2,855 for the exact services we had last year from Nelson, where we paid \$5,400. They also have four smaller ones that are designed for kids. Jody stated that they are asking for a 3-year contract. She would like to at least have a one-year probationary period. Jimmy asked what would happen if we needed to go back to Nelson. This is unknown. Jen made a motion to approve Wruck for porta-potties, with a one-year probationary period, seconded by Adam. Motion passed.

Premium Book: Jill indicated that she has been working with Rhoda on all of the updates to the Premium Book for Ag/Craft. She will be sending out the Livestock section to Adam and Sam for review. Ken asked about volunteers assisting in this area to get credit for hours worked towards the scholarship program. Jill will speak to Rhoda about this. Erich indicated he is getting bids on printing; it will take 5-6 days to print.

Policies and Procedures. Jody stated that she will be re-writing the policies and procedures, and that we need to get the information out to those who need to know.

Parking: Nothing to report.

Military: The next meet raffle at Rollies will be held on March 28th. After that, the dates are April 25th, May 22nd, June 20th, July 4th, and August 1st. There was discussion as to whether we could hold the August 1st raffle in the beer gardens. There was also discussion regarding the 'Moving Wall'. This must be reserved at least a year in advance. The 'Towers to Tunnels' is being booked for \$14,000 in 2026. Also discussed was the Ghost Army and a possible silent auction.

Midway: Ted had talked to Randy. He would like to try Tuesday night for an additional armband night from 5 to 10pm.

Social Media/Website: Jen stated that the website is getting updated. Nothing will be added to the website without a signed contract.

Marketing/Advertising: Jody indicated that she and Erich met with Erin from Townsquare Media. Nothing will be promoted without a signed contract.

Livestock/Poultry: Sam stated that on June 6 and 7, the Central MN Swine Show will do a pig show. They would like a contract signed. This would be like a 4-H show, with only pigs. They would use the hog barn and show arena. How would we charge them? Scott made a motion to allow them to use the arena and hog barn for the event, seconded by Karen. The current off-season rental fees were discussed. It would be \$200/day for the hog barn, plus \$100 set up fee. The total charge will be \$500. Motion passed. Jill will get a contract drafted.

Adam discussed the MN Holstein Association District Show, which is schedule to be held the week of the fair. This will be on Saturday. There was discussion regarding parking. Adam will know more by the next meeting. Karen questioned the status of the bird flu. Sam said that it is not an issue so far. Scott said that they will be expanding the show arena inside the building after everything from winter storage is removed.

Insurance: Nothing to report.

Heritage Square: Nothing to report.

Grandstand: Jen and Vince met with Andy regarding the demo and auto-cross events. They are eliminating one class and adding a new one – lazy man. Going this route will save \$1,200 in payouts. This will also help grow the sport and event. Scott made a motion to eliminate the 'limited weld' class and add the 'MWFA' class, seconded by Ken. Motion passed. Jen indicated that she is working on getting a group for ticket sales.

Grants: Nothing to report.

Food Vendors: The food vendor contracts are on line, and we have started receiving contracts. There are also new food vendors that have applied. There was discussion on moving Pimpin' Wear, and having a food vendor in that spot. Jen made a motion to move Pimpin' Wear to wherever the Food Vendor Committee sees fit, seconded by Scott. Motion passed.

Finance: Nothing to report.

FFA: Nothing to report.

Discovery Building. Nothing to report.

Buildings and Grounds (includes Off-Season Rentals):

Golf Cart Quote. Jen stated she received a bid for golf carts, including having them on site for an additional ½ week, of \$3,000. Last year, we paid \$1,700. Without the extra days, the fee would be \$2,400. She also stated that James Trantina donated a cart to the fairgrounds. Jody made a motion to accept the bid with the same number off carts and days for \$2,400, seconded by Jimmy. Motion passed. Jen is also working on the boom lift.

Flowers/Planters. Scott initiated discussion regarding flower planting this year. Ken stated that his groups are interested in doing more this year. Scott will also ask around.

Grounds clean-up/prep. It was stated that we should coordinate grounds clean-up with the winter storage take out day. Jody stated that we could have food/ice cream for the kids. Jimmy and Erick will coordinate the food.

Show arena. Scott asked if we could add A/C, and would someone be willing to donate and install? This is tabled for now.

4- H Lunch stand/Summit Bill. The bill from Summit for the work on the hood in the 4-h building has not yet been resolved. Ted will look into this.

Grounds Rentals. Jody shared a proposed updated contract for use of the grounds. She reviewed what is done at other fairs. The one we had been using is very out dated. Jimmy made a motion to accept the updated contract, seconded by Jen. There was discussion regarding how to proceed with events this year. Should they be grand-fathered in, or increased by 20%, etc. Motion did not pass; Jen, Vince, Sam, Adam, Scott, and Ken voted no. Jen made a motion for these rates to go into effect 10/1/2025, and that anything already booked should be charged an addition 20% to the current rates. This was seconded by Scott. Motion passed. Vince voted no.

Beer Garden/Beer Garden Stage: Jody initiated discussion regarding bingo that the Lions does, and would there be a conflict if there was music bingo in the beer gardens on Friday and Saturday. People could participate by scanning a QR code and participate. We would need to come up with prizes. It would be \$800 for two days.

Ag Craft Exhibits: The question was raised regarding having two people in the building at all times. Jill has been working with Rhoda on the update to the premium book, and she will discuss this with her. Ken asked about the duties of this assignment and if the older 4-H kids could do this. Jill will get this information as well.

Activity Area: Nothing to report.

4-H: Nothing to report.

Other:

IAFE Meeting. Reports from attendees is tabled for now. Ted did state that he learned that Steele County holds eight (8) meetings per year, and that quarterly, there is a workshop night that is held to get things done. There are no minutes and no voting on that night. This is something to think about; we would need to update our bylaws.

Farm Bureau. Jill stated that she received a call from Marilyn Kaschmitter. She stated that there will be no scavenger hunter this year, as interest has decreased significantly.

Sanitation. Ken stated that he has a group that is interested in helping with garbage or parking. He provided the information to Jimmy.

Flowers. There was discussion regarding the funeral for Tony Hommerding, who passed away recently. He had served for many years on the Sauk Rapids Fire Department. Scott made a motion to spend up to \$100 for flowers or a plant, seconded by Erich. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: The next regular meeting of the Benton County Ag Society Board of Directors will be held on Tuesday, April 15th, 2025, at 7:00pm the Fair Board Office.

Adjournment: Adam made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Sam. The meeting adjourned at 10:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Zanardi
Executive Secretary