



Benton County Agricultural Society
1410 3rd Ave S / PO Box 118
Sauk Rapids MN 56379
(320) 253-5649 / 320-241-8311

www.bentonfairmn.com / info@bentonfairmn.com

Minutes, April 21st, 2026

Vice President Sam called the meeting to order at 6:58pm on April 21st, 2026.

Directors Present: MaryJo Kometz, Ken Bemboom, Jimmy Zanardi, Jody Prom, Troy Theisen, Erich Rothstein, Sam Morris, Scott Morris

Directors not Present: James Trantina, Ted Prom

Other: Cheryl Scapanski (Financial Support), Ashley Willenbring (General Manager)

Ag Society Members Present: Corey & Vickie Molitor, Rob Tvedten

Guests Present:

4-H: Ann Olson

4-H Horse: Teresa Heck, Jen Larsen, Eden Keegan

Rabbit Show: Kristin Best, Lyla Beehler

K&B Concessions: Kris & Bruce Waytashek

Little Red Barn: Russel Beauchamp

St Cloud Shriners: Casey Omalley

Sauk Rapids Sportsman's: Jeff Dieh

Guests/Public Comments:

K&B Concessions –

Eric stepped outside the building for the conversation. They would like to serve vanilla bean gelato, thinks there is a conflict of interest with the directors on the board making decisions. Kenny stated there were other vendors here that were serving soft serve before K&B added it to the menu. Jimmy said that K&B is late to the party – someone else already has it, they have served hard scoop for 17 years, and now they would like to change to soft serve which is already on the grounds. Kris asked if anyone has tried gelato, several directors responded no, and they were going to try it last year, but it was never served by K&B. Jody read last year's (2025) minutes. Bruce said he's not mad, but he will get even, then stated their 10 minutes were up and left the meeting.

Little Red Barn –

Russ stated he is the owner of the building; says he's on the grounds during fair, he's just not in the building. Jimmy said the building cannot be sub-leased per the contract. It was approved for 1 year – per the 2023 minutes. It is still being subleased 3 years later. Jody read the contract with the line stating the buildings cannot be sublet. Russ said Ted gave an offer, and was asking what he should tell Christine, and doesn't want a director calling Christine. Jimmy said the board would not be calling Christine about it.

4-H/WSCA Horse show for May 3rd

Ann reported that she misunderstood what the 4-h horse fundraiser was. She thanked the board for the \$ for the stalls last year. Show is not just a "Horse Fun

Show” (4-h insurance would cover that), and the 4-h insurance would not cover an “open show”. Sam asked Vickie about the hogs show insurance – Vickie said they bought “event insurance”. MaryJo said they will need special event insurance – and there are specific event insurance items that need to be gone over. Contact any broker. Jody asked what buildings need to be rented. Ann stated all that would be need would be the bathrooms in the show arena. Scott reported that water might be on, waiting on the city to get the meters installed.

Kristin best – State Rabbit Show – September 25th-27th

Reported who she was, and what the Benton 4-h rabbit group is doing set up. Jody asked what time on Friday, Kristin said 1pm and asked about the table rental. Vickie asked about age of exhibitors. Kristin said all ages, and event is open to the public.

Jason Omally – Shrine Club / Circus June 20th

Jason asked questions about what he needs for licensing for food - Jimmy said he would get him a contact. Jason asked about getting an electrician – he was referred to Rob with ESI. Jason ask about foot print/seating for – was referred to talk to SAE. Jason asked about camper plug ins – Jody & Jimmy said yes. Jimmy told him to get his stuff/questions put together in a list, and to meet with our grounds committee. Jason asked for space available for rent – for food prep – like popcorn and a few other items.

Sportsman’s (came later around 8pm) Jeff – President of Sauk Rapids
Sportsman’s

Brought gambling license to be signed for the pull tabs. Jody asked if we get a portion of it – Jeff said they can “donate” it back, but we cannot be in a written legal agreement due to the state gambling rules. Jody asked about the exotic zoo – Jeff said the exotic zoo wanted \$6000.00 – but Sportsmans would not be able to pay it. Jody said the board could pay it if the Sportsmans would share the building. Jeff said they would be happy to help. Jody asked for a call to have further discussion. Sam said he needs to know what animals go in there for animal permits.

Approve and add agenda Items:

A few items were added. Jody moved to accept the Agenda, Jimmy seconded, motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report:

Cheryl reported. Jody moved to accept the treasures report, Ken second, motion passed.

Secretary’s Report:

Jody moved to accept the report, Scott Second motion passed.

General Manager Report:

Office Cell Phone: 320-241-8311 – please try to use this one for fair communications, vs my personal

Who needs a name tag - pin style Scott & Jimmy. Magnet style MaryJo, Troy, summer office staff.

Winter storage move out – Fill out volunteer form and have director sign off

Groundskeeper Report:

Scott reported the boulevard trees going away. The list is being worked on for grounds needs. Scott will be gone the whole month of June & first week of July

Monthly duty list:

List for May was emailed out – please ask questions as needed – or let Ashley know what tasks are completed

Old Business:

Summer Help – Interviewed before meeting – Jody reported on the interview. Jimmy moved to hire Stacie, Erich seconded, motion passed. Kara would be a re-hire. Scott moved to hire Kara for a second year, Jimmy seconded, motion passed.

Camera Purchase (Scott)

Jody read what Shyanne had sent her with a price quote. Jody moved to purchase camera for office/fair use only, from Best Buy with bag & 2 lenses for \$900.00 for the camera and supplies, Jimmy seconded, motion passed.

Membership Dues – there are members that have paid ahead for a few years at the \$5.00 rate. Board had a unanimous agreement they need to pay for remainder of the \$30.00

New Business:

Garbage quotes

Ashley presented quotes. Jody moved to accept West Central Management, Jimmy second. MaryJo said verify contact end date, we need to send a certified letter before 100 days before terminating contract. Motion passed.

Shuttle Bus Quotes

Ashley presented quotes from Voigt and Trobes. The board has used Voigts for many years, and they quoted us last years rates. Board had unanimous agreement to stay with Voigts.

Golf Cart Quotes – Gresser

Ashley presented quotes from Gresser and Versatile. Also let the board know that there are less places for rental due to liability. Board had unanimous agreement to stay with Gresser.

Garage Sale – Jody reported: no fee this year, spread the word. General discussion set the hours for the sale as: Friday 7am-6pm, Saturday 8am-1pm, Deposit of \$50, if you clean up you get your deposit back. Food vendors for the event, Jimmy said bring in a coffee truck. Vickie said food for the sellers that the 4-H could open lunch stand use it for a fundraiser. Ashley will make a sign-up sheet/application, and get it on the website.

RJ Kern 2025 picture

Ashley read the email with RJ regarding price of a print. Unanimous choice from the group to not order the print. RJ did send the low-resolution photo for website and Facebook use.

Luxemburg St Wendell church picnic tables last week in July. (Jody)

Jody said they would like them free. Scott said he feels non-profits should be able to use things for free, especially if they do the work themselves. Scott moved to let the church use the tables for free, Jimmy seconded, motion passed

Mileage Reimbursement for “You Make the Difference” in Little Falls, April 13

Group discussion said yes turn in your reimbursement form.

Basketball Challenge (email – Tommy Gettlinger)

Ashley read notes from an email for a basketball event for activity area. Board said no due to contract with Midway – Gopher state

Rapid River Days Parade (email)

Ashley reported there was an email received with a parade application. Board unanimously said no.

Cricut (Jody)

Jody said the Cricut that is in the office is old and outdated. Jody moved to spend \$800 or less, Troy seconded, motion passed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

4-H (Ken):

Ann – reported that they will pay \$20,000 pen, Centra-Sota will add in \$6000.00. The horses need a horse specific vet. Jody said the horses need to get their own. Board will back the vet's choice on animals, Fair Vet has final say if an animal stays or goes.

Scott asked to get rid of the pens that are broken, and old. Corey and Scott will go through them.

Ann said they will stall miniature horses on the south east of dairy barn Thursday - Sunday. Ann asked if they could leave early on Sunday. Jody said they need to stay till 5 pm. Ann said they might/could do a “mini show” after beef show on Sunday in the show arena.

Activity Area (Scott):

Scott said the extraction is coming in, K-9 would need to be earlier or in a different location due to glass from the extraction. They will have a committee meeting.

Machinery hill Vendors are good with being moved back on Tuesday. They will move items forward on Wednesday morning.

Jody reported they are working on getting a Fire simulator and it would go near butterfly house.

Ag Craft (Scott):

Rhoda question: Can the people doing the seminars for Made in the Shade – can they have business cards to give out (example – Backwards Bread) – Board says yes as long as they are not selling product.

Beer Garden/Beer Garden Stage (Jody):

Ticket Sellers – Troy present quotes on ticket machines.

We have no ticket seller groups. It would take a few years to re-coup the cost of the machines.

Jody asked Erich if we can also have the POS system at the bar. Jody and Troy will get with Erich to further talk about details on the POS for the bar.

Erich moved to purchase 4 machines plus tickets for them up to. Jimmy seconded them. Corey asked about how quick of service can we get on them. Troy said the machines are very simple and the bill reader is easy to clean. Motion passed.

Buildings/Grounds (includes Off Season Rentals):

State Rabbit Show in September – List of questions were emailed out

Ken moved they pay \$1400.00 for the 2 buildings, add another \$100.00 for 1/2 day and picnic tables equaling \$1500.00 total, Scott seconded. Jody and Jimmy said nay, motion passed.

Police training

Ashley reported they would like the grounds and a few buildings this year again. It was asked in the email if it could be free again. Board said He can come look at the buildings, we will be charging. Ashley will follow up with him. 30th will work, and other date needs to be before storage move in.

Cheryl followed up on bill for SAE that is still not paid, Jimmy said he's working on it.

Monster Truck Event June 27th

Ashley reported the 3 options of payment for the Monster truck event. Scott moved we charge \$5000.00, Jody seconded. Motion passed.

Cottonwood Stage (Jody):

Discovery Building (Sam/Cheryl):

Cheryl reported she has 12 president's cutouts ordered for a phot op. Sauk Rapids school social studies is making a timeline; they will have a "prize" for the best section done. The Social studies class is asking for the cut outs after the fair. Board agreement they could have them. Cheryl received an email for a Declaration of Independence where the fair goers could sign it, she is looking into it more. She is going to purchase 5 patriotic lawn chairs, drawing a winner for a chair each day for Wednesday – Sunday.

FFA:

Finance (Ted):

Sales tax from 2025 fair (Jody)

Jody asked Cheryl if we used it. Cheryl will look it up and let Jody know the amount. Needs to be improvement to the property/buildings.

Food Vendors (Jimmy):

Jimmy reported that contracts/invoices are out, checks are coming in. Shannon from Kelches will not be returning first time in 40 years. St Cloud hockey is not doing their booth and he is still looking for a couple vendors.

K&B concessions:

Jody moved to have an executive director contact the lawyer on terminating the application for the 2026 fair with K&B concessions. – Ken seconded. Motion passed. Jimmy and Erich abstained from the vote.

Little Red Barn –

Scott moved to offer Russ \$10,000.00 if he says no, then he needs to remove the building. Ken Seconded. Motion passed.

Grants (Ted):

Vickie read text from Ted – 2026 grant is funded for Agri grant.

Grandstand (MaryJo):

MaryJo reported we are still looking for rodeo sponsors, especially the big ones. Vet is full green light for PRCA. Ken stated he will cover hay for the PRCA.

Andy with demo is getting close to getting rules out

Rob looked at the grandstands for PA system speakers. Brought quotes. \$35,000.00 (some used), or 39,000.00 (all new). Scott asked if they would do yearly maintained. Rob would check them every year for 5 years. Jody asked how quick to install. Rob said it could be done within a month. – This is tabled to next meeting or a special meeting.

MaryJo said they are adding an auto cross with the demo on Sunday.

Heritage Building (Sam):

Jimmy said he needs to meet with Ernie.

Jimmy told Sam he needs tell the people set up in the heritage they cannot park on grounds near the budling. Need to park in the designated parking areas of the grounds.

Insurance (Ashley):

MaryJo is working on looking through everything.

Livestock/Poultry (Sam):

Ken said he met with Pioneer welding about carts.

Marketing/Advertising (Erich):

Erich said he met with radio people. And will finalize details next week.

Jody said she will work on billboards.

Social Media/Website (Jody):

Midway (Ted):

Jody reported Midway is the same as last year for everything on the board.

Military (Scott):

Ashley reported April 24th Meat Raffle – 5:30pm. We are still on for the summer ones; Karen is still working on finding someone. Cheryl reported that the Tinville Lions were not doing the summer one from the meeting the night before, and Karen was not present. She will let Karen know and confirm that.

Parking (Sam):

Ken got a hold of Rod Bemboom to get some information on parking to give info for Sam to get info to the group for parking this year. They sell 8am-8:30pm

Use ally way for the rental house, and use space for parking after it is torn down. Possibly use the rental house space for vendors or employees. Get vendor signs for parking in there.

Policies and Procedures (Jody):

Jody read through a few changes in the policies – based on the bylaws. Jody asked if there was anything else that needed to be added. Jimmy moved to accept the changed on the policies and procedures, Soctt seconded. Motion passed.

Premium Book:

Ready for print, need to see proof.

Sanitation (Jimmy):

Satellites/Bathroom cleaners needed

Jimmy cannot get cleaners. Looking at adding more satellites instead. Not having to pay cleaners it would be less \$.

Security (Jody):

Jimmy said after storage we need to go through cameras again and add a couple. Jimmy moved to move forward with phase 2 of cameras for \$37000.00. Jody seconded. Motion passed.

Jody reported the security building will be security only with first aid. No longer a senior building.

Sponsorship (Jody):

Shirt design –

Ashley presented the shirt design that Jody had, unanimous agreement from the board to use it.

Sports Arena East (SAE):

Vendors (Erich):

Jimmy will help Ashley with billing out vendors next week.

Ashley reported that the large vendor booths in SAE are \$1200 for a 36x23, and we have no commitments yet.

Winter Storage (Jody):

Jody reported it was very smooth this year. Jimmy said there are 2 items left. Troy said there was a lot of fluid leak out this year. Jimmy said get the large car trays that go under the engine and trans, not the small ones.

Other:

4-H Horse fundraiser

Scott moved they will have to pay the rent for the horse arena. Second by Ken, motion passed.

Fair Schedules

Ashley asked the board to look at the handed-out schedules, report your thoughts.

Pantowners – Jody noted they were charging electric to the food and regular vendors on the app, but they do not pay for the electric to the Ag Society. She said it will need a board conversation when the contract comes back.

Adjournment:

Jody moved to adjourn the meeting, Ken seconded, motion passed.

Reminder for Meet Raffles:

April 24th 5:30 – 7:30

Respectfully Submitted
Ashley Willenbring – General Manager