

Benton County Agriculture Society  
P O Box 118 Sauk Rapids MN 56379 (320) 253-5649  
Minutes – February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**Call to order:**

Ted Prom called the meeting to order at 6:59pm

**Directors Present:** Ted Prom, Jody Prom, Troy Thiesen, Scott Morris, Eric Rothstein, Jimmy Zanardi, Sam Morris, Ken Bemboom

Not Present: James Trantina

**Other:** Cheryl Scapanski, Financial Support  
Ashley Willenbring, General Manager

**Ag Members Present:** MaryJo Kometz, Rob Tvedten, Vickie & Corey Molitor

**Guests Present:**

Rhoda Fagerland

Pantowners (Paul Schmidtbauer, Ralph Anderson, Randy Marchnt)

Heath Wilson - Pleasantview Elementary – tapping trees for syrup on grounds

Lacey Fontaine – Benton County Historical Society ([bentonhistorykeeper@gmail.com](mailto:bentonhistorykeeper@gmail.com))

Ann Olson - 4-H

**Guests/Public Comments:**

Rhoda Fagerland – Reported on MFCF Convention, Premium booklet: Theme for open class is “My Own Backyard”

Pantowners – Car show will be the 51st year with the Benton County Board. Event is held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in August. Discussion had on the rent for the grounds/buildings. This years theme is for military.

Lacey Fontaine– Benton County Historical Society – They are thinking of doing something for the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tornado of Sauk Rapids.

Heath Wilson Sauk Rapids Middle School – He would like tap the silver maple trees for a learning and science project for his students. Scott Morris moved to approve tree tapping for school teaching – Erich Rothstein Seconds – motion passed.

**Approve and add agenda Items:**

Scott Morris moved to accept the agenda, Jimmy Zanardi seconded, motion passed.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Chery Scapanski asked to have someone check records with her every 4 months. Looking for 2 volunteers from the Directors – She picked Scott and Kenny for the first time. She will look for 2 volunteers every time.

Ted Prom reported that anything over 750,000 is automatic audit – from convention.

Jody Prom moved to accept the treasures report, Ken accepted, motion passed.

**Secretary's Report:**

Erich moved to accept report, Jody seconded, motion passed.

**General Manager Report:**

Rackspace email – We are changing to google – to be more modern.

Dates for Desk Calendar – Please let Ashley know what needs to be added.

Huskies letter for donation, was sent to the Facebook messenger– board had unanimous agreement to not Donate.

Stearns County – Gabby: rent grounds for a textile drop May 18<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup>, 3-7pm (they emailed & called). Ashley is to email her back and ask the more questions, then email the board.

Benton county Economic partnership – came in the mail. From the invoice they were looking for membership, and participation. Rob Tveden said he is part of it and it would be very beneficial for the society to be members and attend the meetings. Jody Prom moved to pay the \$330.00, Jimmy Zanardi seconded, motion passed.

July 11<sup>th</sup> – Ashley vendor show. Ashley asked if she could participate in a vendor for per personal business on July 11<sup>th</sup>. The board checked the summer calendar and determined the office would not be open that Saturday, and it would be fine.

**Groundskeeper Report:**

Flag – is tearing. Scott Morris will replace the flag

**Monthly task list:**

Ashley Willenbring read list for March

**Old Business:**

March IAFE convention – Attending: Ted & Jody Prom, Troy Thiesen, MaryJo Kometz, Ashley Willenbring, Jimmy & Jill Zanardi – Eric Rothstein will be in & out

Clothing order – Jody Prom

Jody Prom reached out to local company for 2026 for new apparel - can be ordered online. Jody said the logo will be screen printed, due to the logo being too detailed and having so many stitches to it.

**New Business:**

MFCF State Lobbyist – Ted

Ted Prom got email – MFCF is asking for \$400.00 per fair, if every fair in the state would put in \$400.00 they would be able to cover costs. Discussion on what amount to be donated.

Erich Rothechien moved for \$1000.00, Ken Bemboom seconded, motion passed.

Summer help (Jody has 2 possible)

Gracie is studying abroad – will not be available

Kara is possible for part time – depending on her kids summer schedules.  
Deni – she would like part time (loved Martech) when she was summer help 2 years ago. Couldn't help in 2025 due to her husband having a medical issue. Still looking for a full-time & possible part-time as well to have 1 full time and 2 solid part time total.

**Rental House – Septic issue**

Ted Prom presented 2 different quotes for repair. House does get inspected yearly. Discussion from the board: Pros of the house staying up: She waters flowers, and he does sanitation. Eric Rothstein moved to tear the house, garage & carport down but get another tear down cost, Scott Morris seconded, motion passed. Ted will work with Lawyer and executive committee to move the renters out legally.

**Approval of Ag society membership form(s)**

Ken Bemboom moved to accept applications from Rob Tveden and Corey & Vickie Molitor, Sam Morris seconded, motion passed.

**New GM laptop (old one can be used in crows nest for grandstands)**

Jody Prom moved to get laptop for \$1500 with accessories, for fair use only – no person items on it – Erich Rothstein seconded, motion passed.

**Committee Reports:**

**4-H:**

Ann: they are working “Discover legacy that connects us 250<sup>th</sup> year of USA”, She is working with the Master Gardener to make patriotic planters for the 4-H kids planters.

Rocket launch will not be at the fairgrounds, and will happen prior to fair. The 4-H will cover the cost to repair the hole. Per Scott Morris Nick Dahler will be repairing the whole in the roof from the 2025 rocket launch damage.

Ann asked how often 4-H committee needs to attend fair board meetings. Scott Morris said he will reach out as needed to the contacts for the different committees and let them know they should attend the meetings.

Miniature horses – Kids come for show only on Wednesday. Now there is 20 horses. She would like to use the miniature show to draw attention, and have some all week for a couple days each at the fair for attraction.

Open class – She needs to talk to 4-H kids for staying for open class.

**Activity Area:**

**Ag Craft (Scott):**

Will be meeting soon

**Beer Garden/Beer Garden Stage (Jody):**

**Buildings/Grounds (includes Off Season Rentals):**

SAE - Ted requested cones, Jimmy wants barricades, SAE people are driving and parking on the grass, Scott will put up cones for no parking areas the following day.

Pantowners –Ted suggested \$3500.00 with a \$500 deposit and they can set up starting at Friday at noon and needs to be out before or by noon on Monday, set up cannot be before noon on Friday. Ken Bemboom moved to have the contracts be Friday noon to Monday noon \$3500.00 rent plus a \$500.00 deposit (refundable if everything is cleaned up) and if they are in day early/late they pay full published day rental pay, Scott Morris seconded, motion passed, Jody said nay. This deal is for 2026 only. Rate will be going up again in 2027.

Ken asked for move out date for winter storage. Jody reported it is April 11<sup>th</sup> 2026.

Cottonwood Stage:

Discovery Building (Sam):

FFA:

Finance:

POS system –Erich landed on Square because several board people are familiar with the system. Looking at approx. \$4500.00-\$5000.00 for POS points (need 16 stations)

Jody Prom moved to go forward with the POS and budget up to \$800.00 for hardware for system, Jimmy Zanardi seconded, motion passed.

Ted – things we learned at state – Verifying privacy is handled properly for documenting items with anything that has personal information on (address, phone #, social security #, etc)

Food Vendors (Jimmy):

Red Barn – Jimmy is working on figuring out who owns it.

Made-Rite - Eric said they will get back to us about selling video games – would be an additional \$250.00 to his vendor fee.

Grants (Ted):

2026 Proposed Feb 22 due

Ted Reported that the 2025 was re-submitted.

Vickie & Jody assisted Ted in submitting for 2026 grants – pens for pigs and poultry & rabbits. Legacy – for Alfie, Polka band, Kids Pedal Pull.

For the 2025 grant – Vickie is working on proposals and would like to be wrapped by April.

Grandstand:

Answer for Rodeo – MaryJo reported that the Rodeo is approved by the PRCA. We have to pay for several different aspects of the classes.

Sam is waiting on an answer for a Vet, MaryJo asking for an estimate for a vet. Vet is required solely for the rodeo during the performance. MaryJo is still looking into insurance. Rodeo will be arriving Monday afternoon – they will be looking for assistance for set up – approx. 3 hours. Rodeo is looking for hay donations (horse quality hay). They are also needing a

machine to lift 5000#. They will tear down Wednesday night – looking for help to tear down. Maryjo will clarify the power requirements needed. Discussion on ticket pricing.

Jimmy Zanardi moved to have rodeo gate pricing Adults 13+ \$20.00 presale online, \$25.00 at the gate. Ages 5-12 presale \$15.00, gate \$20.00, all other grandstand events would be at \$15.00 adults, \$7.00 for kids. Scott Morris seconded, motion passed.

Heritage Building (Sam):

Insurance:

Ted asked about special event insurance, MaryJo is looking into it.

Livestock/Poultry (Sam):

Ashley told Sam the livestock committee needs to meet to go over the premium book dates.

Marketing/Advertising:

Needs to meet

Social Media/Website:

Jody is trying to get Facebook to get an admin. She will draft up a letter and the whole board needs to sign it for us to send it to Facebook.

Jody said anything in blue on the white boards is set. Other colors are tentative

Midway (Ted):

Jimmy said they need to meet and talk about charging food.

Jody asked if we can get pricing so we can get advertising.

Scott asked if the fair can have bouncy houses. Ted will clarify with Randy.

Military (Scott):

Parking (Sam):

Parking behind VIP trailer - Production & bands/trailer - Jody would like length of fence to highline pole for the bands.

Handi-cap parking up front – Board had discussion on moving handicap parking to the outside of the fence, also having the outside be VIP parking.

Sam – carts? Jody put out a call and needs to fill out online – She wants to know how many we need. – Discussion said same # as last year.

Sam asked if he needs to call on Gators. Ted said to have Jody, MaryJo, & Sam meet and hash out who's calling who.

Policies and Procedures (Jody):

Premium Book:

Ashley needs to get few things updated yet and meet with Sam for livestock.

Sanitation (Jimmy):

Vickie asked if the 4-H should continue the club barrels. Open discussion says they are not needed.

Security (Jody):

Jimmy – the bill that was emailed from Techeck will be going away.

Sponsorship (Jody):

Ashley said forms are ready to go.

Sports Arena East (SAE):

Bill received – Ted has, printed and the board looked at it and discussed amounts billed. The director that attends the SAE monthly meeting will ask a few questions for clarification.

Vendors (Erich):

Erich showed new layout for SAE

Winter Storage (Jody):

Move out date is April 11th

Other:

Clothing order – follow up – Order whatever is needed, order need to be in by March 5<sup>th</sup>.

4-H clean up day – Do same as winter storage move out April 11<sup>th</sup> @ noon.

Adjournment

Sam Morris moved to adjourn, Ken Bemboom seconded, motion passed.

Reminder for Meet Raffles:

March 27<sup>th</sup> 5:30 – 7:30

April 24<sup>th</sup>

May 8<sup>th</sup>

June 5<sup>th</sup>