

Benton County Agriculture Society  
P O Box 118 Sauk Rapids MN 56379 (320) 253-5649  
Minutes – January, 20<sup>th</sup> 2026

Call to order: Called to order 7:01

Directors:

Present: Ted Prom, Erich Rothstein, Troy Thiesen, Jody Prom, Jimmy Zanadri, Ken Bemboom, Scott Morris, Sam Morris  
Ashley Willenbring – General Manager  
Cheryl Scapanski – Executive Treasure  
Not present: James Trantina

Ag Society Members:

MaryJo Kometz – Ag society Member  
Vickie Molitor – Ag society member

Guests/Public Comments:

Rob Tvedten – Was Faribault County (previously) sit in meeting and see how he can help the ag society.

Approve and add agenda Items:

Several items added verbally.  
Scott Morris moved to approve agenda items, Jimmy Zanadari seconded motion, motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Given by Cheryl Scapanski.  
Erich Rothstein moved to approve report, Ken Bemboom seconded the motion, motion passed.

Secretary's Report:

December 16<sup>th</sup> minutes, Jody Prom moved to approve minutes after a few corrections we made, Jimmy Zanadri seconded motion, motion passed.  
December Special meeting December 29<sup>th</sup> Erich Rothstein moved to approve minutes with corrections, Ken Bemboom seconded, motion passed.

General Manager Report:

Central MN Farm show (email)  
Discussion: Used to have a booth, and staff Greeters. Ashley said she was not ready to do so this year. Plan is to do a booth next year.  
Mail: (liability insurance, spectrum) Discussion of what to do with them. Create file for the liability insurance forms – might be needed for vendors. Spectrum mail, invoices go to Cheryl, other "sale" mail goes in the garbage.  
Barn for non profit usage – Kristi - Sept 26-27, 2026. Send email to Sam.

#### Monthly List:

Jody Prom read February

#### Groundskeeper Report:

Ted Prom had snow removed by the propane tank for Dooleys. It was done and Dooleys was able to deliver fuel.

Jimmy Zanadri– get other propane tank picked up from Gas Services.

#### Old Business:

#### New Business:

Convention reports – do under committee reports

Ted Prom attended business meetings, and was disappointed in cancelations of a few sessions.

Jimmy Zanadri– Attended electrical update – was geared towards the vendors not the grounds themselves. Other classes were the same as previous years

Jody Prom – asked everyone to please do the survey, she noted schedule was delayed getting put out.

Jody Prom & Troy Thiesen got certification for alcohol certification.

Vickie Molitor – Thanked the board for the opportunity to participate. She and Cory attended livestock & animal management with board of health. She would like approval to take to 4-H board for quarantine plan before the fair starts. In discussion – that plan comes from the vet/state, and whatever it is, it needs to be followed. She attended a Jr fair board class – good mix of lifestyles.

Ashley Willenbring – attended a variety of sessions, found them informative.

MaryJo Kometz – attended a variety of sessions, she reported on sessions “Entertainment is and investment” and “Signage”.

Troy Theisen– Attended the same session as few others, brought up the Fair Passes and how we need to accept it from the other fairs and make people aware of what it is at gates.

IAFE convention registration, March 15-17 – Holiday Inn St Cloud

Sam Morris moved to the board to pay for rooms for those attending, Ken Bemboom seconded motion, motion passed.

#### Committee Reports:

#### 4-H:

Next year (2027) 100<sup>th</sup> year of 4-H – 4-H would possibly like the use of the discovery building for a barn dance.

#### Activity Area:

A&D Pony rides email, it is in discussion if they will be retuning, or if it will be someone else.

Thorni Ride Exotics (from convention) – possible option. Committee will need to decide if we want them and Jurassic Kingdom (if we have room), or if they will be an option for next year.

Jurassic Kingdom / exotic animals (from last year) –  
Erich Rothstein moved to approve \$10,000 for Jurassic Kingdom if that is what the committee decides (for full Jurassic) second by Jimmy Zandari, motion passed.

Mechanical bull is set – Jimmy says he needs to supply his own 50amp cord. Jody is going to communicate with him regarding the cord.

Ag Craft:

Beer Garden/Beer Garden Stage:

Jody Prom & Troy Theisen are certified in alcohol.

Mason Dixion is booked, and day of week is picked.

Some new band in the works – all will be new, except for Mason Dixion

Bloody Mary has 3 sponsors.

Jindo is booked for 4 days (daytime) 3-6 Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 3-5 Friday.

Buildings/Grounds (includes Off Season Rentals):

4-H needs to get the hole repaired from the rocket launch during the 2025 fair.

Cottonwood Stage:

Discovery Building:

Jimmy Zanadri suggested an antique tractor parade and the tractors can be displayed in the discovery building. Sam Morris took note.

FFA:

Finance:

POS systems –Erich to look into take cards on ground and get all of our charged in to a POS system for money tracking. Saffire contract for ticketing though 2027

Plan is to get 2026 fair on a POS system – except grandstand ticket for this year.

Food Vendors:

Food directional signs – Jimmy, signs on grounds in a few locations – discuss details in workshop or committee meeting.

Grants:

Jody & Ted sat in session at MFCF

2 grants available

Agri-grant \$10,500 (needs to go the barns/pens)

Legacy \$4710

Vickie Molitor has a few proposals for the new pens for pigs, sheep, goats, and llama for a few companies. She will work with Ted on the proposals.

#### Grandstand:

Pit entrance (driver) fee raised \$5 - approved at special meeting in December, forms needs to be updated, MaryJo is working on updating /creating new forms.

Pit pass fee: Scott Morris moved the pit pass fee go up \$5. Jimmy Zandari seconded the motion, motion passed.

Rodeo – MaryJo Kometz – app is in, they need to accept us first. It's on rush – will hopefully know this week. Need to have ambulance and vet on site for rodeo only. Sam Morris will talk to Craig Gapinski for vet. Ambulance will be in further discussion.

#### Heritage Building:

Sam Morris reported Lacey could not make it tonight, They are thinking Sauk Rapids cyclone 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Heritage Building.

#### Insurance:

#### Livestock/Poultry:

Quarantine plan – Need coordinate with the Vet, and the Ag society.

Barn cleaning – how clean do the barns need to get between move out, and before the fair starts. Do we wash the barns or just blow them out.

#### Marketing/Advertising:

#### Social Media/Website:

Google page – working with Jen to get her not the owner – currently on Ashleys personal gmail account to become the owner

Saffire update – Erich Rothstein reported we need to use them for grandstand ticketing though the 2026 fair.

Jimmy Zanadri said we need to get a letter/note to place companies and say Jen Dingmann is off board.

Jody Prom asked those with Facebook react to Facebook posts and keep our feed live Ashley Willenbring suggested invite your friends lists.

#### Midway:

#### Military:

Meat Raffle – Next is Feb 13<sup>th</sup> 5:30 – 7:30

March 27<sup>th</sup>

April 24<sup>th</sup>

May 8<sup>th</sup>

June 5<sup>th</sup>

#### Parking:

Signs – MaryJo Kometz is going to contact a few on quotes for signs.

It was suggested that the handicap parking outside fence and not inside grounds.

Committee will need to discuss.

Vickie Molitor requested uniform police officer on Thursday during load out to direct traffic. She was told to take it to the committee for further discussion. Ted mentioned that during the week of the fair the board the “control” of traffic control for up to 2 blocks around the grounds at the same level the Police would have.

#### Policies and Procedures:

#### Premium Book:

Ashley met with Rhoda during convention, and updated a few things in the book. Premium Book will need updated more after all events are planned for Grandstand, Beer Garden Stage, and Cottonwood stage.

#### Sanitation:

Ted Prom got in touch with John Sweedmen – Redwood county (Garbage cans on grounds) John submitted a proposal. Was discussed.

Erich Rothstein moved to accept Johns final quote – pending its close to the verbal quote. Troy Theisen seconded. Motion passed.

#### Security:

Jimmy worked with Chris Hagestrom to get a down camera taken care of, and to get a bill to the Ag society and get paid.

#### Sponsorship:

Updated form

New level: “friend of Fair” \$50-\$99

Ashley presented the 2026 form, committee needs to have conversation about packages, after more research. Sponsorship package to 15%

Jimmy Zanadri moved to have 15% package of goodies back to the sponsor – Sam Morris seconded, motion passed.

#### Sports Arena East (SAE):

Ashley had short conversation with Matt Demege- He asked talk about barriers getting moved back 10 feet to have more parking. They would like to leave the boards in over summer because they are a pain to put back in place. Per Matt there would still be the same # of booth spaces if the board were left in and the drape would cover the boards.

Board discussed he request and general consensus are the barriers need to stay in place where they are, and the following years they will move forward and make it street only. The boards need to be taken out.

Vendors:

Signs like food vendors, will be a committee discussion.

Winter Storage:

Other:

Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted

Ashley Willenbring

General Manager