



WYOMING STATE FAIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wyoming State Fairgrounds
State Fair Office, Conference Room & Via Call In
400 W Center Street

Douglas, WY

October 28th, 2023

10:00am MST

Call In Information: 877 278 2734; pin #795536

I. – 10 am - CALL TO ORDER 10:14

II. - ROLL CALL

- A. Introduction of Guests—no guests present
- B. Shawn Steffen, Steve Price, Diana Berger, Laurie Boner, Dan Barks, Vicki Haley, Courtney Conkle, Sara Doyle, AJ Deines, Kota Provence, Becky Podio (on phone:) JD Sater, Doug Miyamoto, Devin Finson, Joe Bridges

III. - APPROVALS

- A. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Diana Berger Second: Steve Price

- B. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Dan Barks Second: Laurie Boner

IV. - PUBLIC COMMENT

Please note that public comments are limited to 5 minutes per person.

V. - GENERAL MANAGER REPORT – Courtney Conkle

Report is included in written form. Got together with Jim Magagna. Stock Growers are willing to host us on Feb 20 at their reception. Governors Prayer Breakfast is the next morning. Director Neylon said State Parks could host us for a board meeting. Discussion on time ensued. 11 am was suggested. Mr. Miyamoto will find us a spot for the meeting. Director Bridges did not feel it was appropriate for us to contribute as a Fair to offset the cost, but we can do so individually. Director Berger will get us included on the Stock Growers donation mail out.

We did have a sex offender that moved onto grounds. He has since vacated the property. Sater helped us get things in order. Going forward we will require disclosing from new residents. We may have another offender (for check fraud) who has warrants, so we may see law enforcement on grounds this weekend.

Staff openings. We have two full time, the open “assistant manager” and one in facilities. We are re-imagining the office position. The biggest change is that Ms. Doyle’s and Mr. Finson’s positions will no longer be reporting directly to this position. This will help us find the person with the right skills for the job requirements and our needs. This position will now be a Sponsorships/Partnerships and Events position. We are ready to post, but we got an email saying we have to update the JCQs before they will post. We have already been

working on them. In the future, Ms. Conkle will go through all JCQs directly, for right now, she is making updates as requested. She will have Director Steffen sign off on her JCQ.

Director Barks wants to ensure that Ms. Conkle's JCQ reflects that she reports to the board.

Ms. Conkle also added that she has been spending 15-20 hours a week covering the duties. She is going through the succession plan, it is well rounded. She will modify to reflect the shifted expectations.

Ms. Conkle reported that we have good news on an economic impact study. These are expensive and time-consuming. Director Shoher connected Conkle with WORTH (UW).

As we go into legislative schedule, we are all technically executive branch and we cannot lobby. We can educate, answer questions, help them know our challenges and opportunity. But we cannot directly ask for support. Conkle asked if Sater had anything to add. Sater will get the memo out to the board members that gives some guidance on how to go about that and comply with the governor's directive. The policy applies to the legislators. Director Barks asked if we can talk to the governor. Sater will check. Ms. Conkle reported that Secretary Gray will be here at the event tonight.

Ms. Conkle included a one-page Silver Arena talking points, along with the budget outline. This is a tool to use so we are on the same page. It counters some of the misconceptions we have heard. It lines out the why behind the project. If directors get asked other things, please let Conkle know so she can address them. We did add how this supports education, as that was one area that we hadn't talked about much. We have to be able to address both mindsets—the youth supporters and the business-minded/return on investment groups.

Conkle also included the narratives that were submitted for the new positions. Especially dropping the "assistant" terminology. It talks about how each of these rolls benefits the organization. We tried to focus on guest experience, retaining events, and less about minimizing overtime.

Ms. Conkle will be out of country next week. She will be online for Joint Ag session. She has her presentation outlined and can share that if anyone is interested. Director Barks asked if the links can be sent out, yes, Conkle will send it out.

Director Berger asked if Silver Arena would have bucking chutes. Yes, the plans include chutes.

Ms. Conkle shared that she ran into the designers of Pepsi Center, and they are very interested in the project. They seem like they would be interested in bidding.

Director Barks asked about the outcome of Drug Testing. Conkle shared that we had one positive for a substance that was not approved. Conkle attempted to call the exhibitor. We then sent a letter. The father finally called and connected and had a good conversation on

why this became a disqualification. The sentiment from the family was that they hadn't done anything to have this substance in the animal. They requested that the fair look into barn closures as they were concerned about sabotage. Conkle believes that neither the fair nor the board wants to defame anyone's reputation. We did what needed to do based on the rules. We are not issuing a press release or anything publicly against the exhibitor. Discussion ensued. Director Haley asked about our procedure for contacting if something isn't market-worthy. Conkle explained we contact the county fair to notify the buyer. Director Berger shared that if we hear chatter to direct that back to Conkle.

VI. - OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR REPORT – AJ Deines

Deines shared that the team has been busy trying to get things winterized. The Douglas Youth Hockey Club has been moving into the Show Center. He showed some numbers in his report. Winterizing takes different steps for various buildings. Some don't have heat, some require draining all water, etc. There are 8 buildings that we winterize, 6 that we have to as they are without heat. Chris Becher has taken point on that. In the Campground, we have "Frost Free" hydrants, but not heated. We take care of the heat tape and insulation ourselves. Becher took care of all that this year. We try to keep several insulated ones available for overnight, and we do more as needed. Becher is doing a good job with it. Frank Gorch has focused on repairs, building change overs, and general maintenance. He took down Ram Sale, has Ford set up for the Harvest Party on Monday. The Harvest Party is a great community event that is well attended. Once that is over, we will flip Ford after that to build the roping arena. The county helps us move the dirt in for the arena flip. It is then on us to build the arena and bucking chutes. Gorsuch was gracious in moving some of his time off to make sure that he wasn't leaving the rest of the team in a lurch. Deines wanted that to be recognized.

Deines is doing what he can to cover the vacant position on his team. He works on getting upper campus set up, he is working early and late to keep things getting done. Some of the things that take time (like the pressure test for gas lines) he is doing after hours. Conkle added that we hired someone in April, they were injured in July. The communication from that individual was very spotty. He gave a verbal resignation. We spent two weeks trying to get a written resignation. We eventually had to terminate because the individual would not provide a written. So Deines has been on his own essential since July. It is very important that moving forward we hire the right person to take on this role.

Deines referred back to his report. Some of our big events coming up include the Harvest Party, Black & White Ball, Sportsman Ball, and Cowboy Christmas. Cowboy Christmas continues to grow. They are in four buildings this year. They are almost the entire upper campus. In the next few years, it might be a full upper campus event. We do the set ups for them (charged). It is the equivalent of having 2-3 event rentals in one week. We also have Noel's Giving event. Last year they helped over 140 families. It's a great event with a lot of volunteers.

Report concluded.

VII. - 2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. State Fair – Director Miyamoto

Miyamoto reports the committee met on Oct 10. One of the priority issues was Admissions. The recommendation of the committee is to make it contingent in the contract for the data we need, and payment won't be issued until we get that data. The committee recommended that Conkle have discussions about ADA and facilities. They have some recommendations about barn shut downs, logistics on that. We need more lighting and cameras around the barn. They will try to meet again in the next few weeks.

B. Ad Hoc Endowment Auction – Director Price

Director Price reported that we have our big kickoff tonight. To date, since fair, we have about 30,000 raised for the Endowment. We have hopes for 30-100,000 tonight. Rindy West has put in a lot for the event tonight as well as a golf tournament in the spring. We will also have the endowment auction is the 4th Monday of June, 2024. There are some items there that the committee will go over, see what needs to be changed. They may eliminate some of the things that don't sell and replace them with things that do.

Director Steffen mentioned that we should do an auction earlier so it could count for the match. Maybe something that isn't tied to Fair (ie, parking spaces). Director Price asked for any ideas to be shared, they are open. Conkle mentioned that Ms. Podio has been looking at a gun raffle, it may be able to be done as a standalone. The 2023 auction also goes to the matching fund as well. Director Berger was able to visit with Cade—director of Cowboy Joe club, they are willing to help, they may be able to donate items for auction. She has put Ms. West in touch with him. Director Price mentioned that Weatherby's is based out of Sheridan. We should get with them, maybe have a special gun made. Director Steffen mentioned there is a group in Denver that has veterans making guns.

Director Bridges shared there is a guy in Cody that also does custom stuff, GunWorks. According to Mr. Miyamoto, they get a lot from WBC so that might be easier for them to put something together. Director Haley asked if Freedom Arms is still in business. They might have some interesting calibers.

C. Facilities – Director Bridges

Director Bridges reported that the committee met a few times. The main topics are the issues in the RV park, electrolysis. We are having issues with what services we can provide. It may be a spot by spot thing, it is more the Red and Yellow sections. We may have to consider a complete overhaul depending on the cost. We may need to consider relocating the park to a more conducive spot. It is in process, just wanted to bring it up to everyone's attention.

We have a lot of major maintenance requests in to get done before 2024 fair. Ryan Scranton is helping on these. Ft Laramie and Bridger plumbing are the major ones. A lot of this is due to age, not because it's bad, just old. We want to make sure the dorms are ready. We only had partial plumbing for 2023, so we would like to have that fixed.

The committee would like to put together a list of upcoming projects so that everyone is aware, major maintenance and capital expenditures.

Conkle added that they would like to do a short overview for the entire board on how major maintenance works vs capital construction to help everyone know before we go through another master plan.

Director Barks asked if Conkle had visited with the folks in Caspar on the issues. Conkle said the plumbing is almost ready for RFP. The RV park will be on the next round for 2024.

D. Finance/Budget – Director Barks

Director Barks shared they meet monthly. Conkle and Julie Cook have started a line item of revenue. It would take effect in the next biennium budget. Currently everything is looking well.

Ms. Conkle added the other thing is creating true revenue protocols. The department uses a standard operating procedure. We need to refine it to give it more teeth and really protecting our revenue streams. There is still a lot of cash handling, as well as things with reconciliation. It would line out expectations for everyone who touches money. The SOP gives a date in March for final. We would like it to be moved up much sooner. That depends a lot on clean reconciliation. We could then have a CPA help us prepare it for the Department of Ag.

1. 0801 Executive Summary
2. 0801 State Fair Budget FYTD through September
3. 0850 State Fair Board Budget FYTD through September
4. 0803 Non-Fair Budget FYTD through September

E. Personnel/Rules – Director Boner

Director Boner added to the reason we couldn't post the maintenance position was due to the lack of written notice. Conkle shared that the letter of termination was sent. The termination was done in tandem with the Department of Ag. Director Barks asked about Unemployment claims. The State pays in on it.

F. Marketing/Promotion/Planning Events – Director Shober

Ms. Provence shared that we are working on award submissions. IAFE and RMAF are completed. Nov 1st is the WAF deadline. We have had at least 4 outlets pick up the story about Small Rodeo of the Year sent out via Press Release.

G. Youth Show Committee – Director Berger

Director Berger shared that the committee met Sep 27. Discussed breed verification, looking for funding for travel, reaching out to judging coaches. Early release discussions. We will continue to look at those. There will be a survey about how schools/clubs are doing entries/credentials. Talked about judge selection briefly. Drug testing expansion, testing more animals. Also having templates for disqualifications and warning, Conkle and Sater are crafting those.

VIII.- OLD BUSINESS

Director Berger would like to have an updated committee list. Just having staff members listed on the lists instead of names, so if we have turnover the specific member named. We need to show who is a voting member and who is not. Staff representation is non-voting. Conkle asked if want to use titles for board members or just staff. Just staff. Titles, not names, for staff.

Director Steffen recommended putting Director Neylon as vice-chair for Endowment. Director Barks motioned, Director Berger seconded, that Director Neylon be made vice chair of the Endowment Committee. Motion passed.

IX.- NEW BUSINESS

We won Small Rodeo of the Year from Mountain States. Ms. Podio thanked the board for all their support. The rodeo has come a long way, and we now get to keep it up. Board, FAIR Posse, and Director Berger thanked Podio for all her work and undertaking. The board concurred. Podio shared that most of the rodeos in the Mountain States group are small rodeos.

Director Berger asked about signage for entry ways that are clearer. Deines said we could work with the city for the digital signs to help direct. Conkle shared that we will be getting Ms. Podio a token of recognition on behalf of the Wyoming State Fair.

X.- ADJOURN

Adjourned 12:02