



# WYOMING STATE FAIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

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

Douglas, WY

April 11, 2023

10:00am MST

Call In Information: 877 278 2734; pin #795536

## I. - 10 am - CALL TO ORDER 10:02

## II. - ROLL CALL

- A. Introduction of Guests: Dennis Sun, Joe Rankin, Waive Shepperson, Donna Vold Larsen, Gay Bolin, Becky Constantino, Russ Dahlgren, Becky Podio  
Shawn Steffen, Courtney Conkle, Joe Bridges, Amanda Marney, Jill Tregemba, JD Sater, Julie Cook, AJ Deines, Kota Provence, Diana Berger, Darin Westby, Dan Barks, Laurie Boner, Steve Price, Kris Mitchell, Sara Doyle  
VIA PHONE: Vicki Haley, Amanda Marney, Diane Shober, Stacy Broda.

## III. - APPROVALS

- A. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Director Barks Second: Director Tregemba passed

- B. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Director Tregemba Second: Director Price passed

## IV. - PUBLIC COMMENT

Waive Shepperson and Donna Vold Larsen wanted to know where the Ranch Rodeo stands. Ms. Conkle explained that will happen in the State Fair Committee will review, but the floor is open for anything to share prior to that discussion. No other public comment.

## V. – 2023 COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. State Fair – Director Miyamoto, presented by Julie Cook. SFC met March 8. They discussed Ranch Rodeo: is this recurring, soft costs, control over sponsorships, fees and admission. This committee recommended hosting the Ranch Rodeo with WSF retaining gate fees/admission. Cafeteria was discussed. It was recommended to continue as is for this year. Discussed advertising and making sure the menu is clear daily, along with boxed meals. Recommended the cafeteria stay as is for 2023. Discussed Stock Contractor rotation plan. Would like to specify that they cannot be primary for another PRO rodeo.

Ms. Conkle explained that the Ranch Rodeo presented a counter offer of 50/50 gate fees up to \$5,000, then 70/30 after that point, with RR keeping 70%. Director Bridges asked who sets prices, Director Westby said it is set at adults \$10, kids 12 and under free. Director Barks asked about estimated attendance. Conkle said the proposal hoped for 600-750 grandstand tickets. Amounts were discussed. Director Haley asked about past attendance. Director Bridges reported it's about 500. Director Haley then asked about our out of pockets. Ms. Conkle reported it is \$8,500 (Security, admission, janitorial ambulance, etc.). Director Haley asked if this should be looked at. Conkle explained she usually doesn't

include them as we would have to have them for any grandstand. We just want all events to be aware of the financial expense we incur. Director Barks asked other committee members if they want comment on the counter offer. Director Steffen asked the cost of the ambulance, it is about \$500. Director Price said they thought 100% gate, they felt we were losing money so wanted to do something that would gain us. These folks stepped up and took a lot of the headache, so with their counter of 50/50, 70/30, he thinks it could be a win/win. But it's something that we are not taking the risk for, so we can bring it back, if it works, great. That was the thought process. Director Barks asked the Ranch Rodeo committee their thoughts.

Ms. Shepperson feels if we do this it will be easier in the future as we have the ground work. Dennis Sun said it's the first year, thinks it will bring in 400 more people than it wouldn't without the event. Encouraged leniency to work together. Would like to do it and consider the cost after. Director Price expressed that we aren't going to lose what we have in the past, and he thinks we ought to try it. Mr. Rankin expressed that the board has done a great job, and we want to encourage the tradition. He suggested moving it to the prior weekend to help teams be able to compete. Ms. Shepperson agreed that we should look at improving it for next year. Agreed that a Sunday would be better. Director Steffen expressed that a weekend would be great but then the soft costs increase because it would be outside fair time. Suggested we move forward as the cost is reduced. Director Shober asked if the format would be the same. Ms. Vold Larsen said yes, it will be the same. They are trying to get it as a qualifier. Ms. Vold Larsen asked if there would be a fee to get in plus gate. Yes, \$8, \$5 and kids under 3 free.

Director Barks moved that we move forward with the Ranch Rodeo, accepting the counter proposal for 2023. Director Boner seconded. Director Haley asked about budgeted rodeo secretary, is WSF doing the office work. Ms. Mitchell explained no, we will just pass it on. Director Tregemba asked about liability. Ms. Conkle explained we need to know the contract holder, liability and indemnification will be established in a contract, vetted through AG office. Director Tregemba expressed an appreciation for the citizen engagement and thanked them for that. Director Barks' motions included that the staff would follow through with appropriate paperwork to cover liability and all other factors. Director Bridges thanked the Ranch Rodeo committee for their work. He did ask as we set the ticket sales, does the \$10 follow in line with our ultimate goal for grandstand events? Does it match our price structure? Ms. Conkle expressed that this event is based on supply and demand. We could charge more for the demo derby and people will pay. For a Ranch Rodeo, people want to support the event. Conkle thinks that it is in line with demand and popularity. We will just have to work on OUR messaging on why the price structure is as it is. Director Bridges wondered if the price was too low, dropping from \$20 to \$10. Do we want to entice a little bit but not double seats? Director Steffen said with it being new, a lower price point is giving the event every opportunity to get the sales and see if we can get the crowd. Ms. Conkle asked the Ranch Rodeo why they set it at \$10? Ms. Shepperson said they were asked to think of the family, the cost of coming, bringing large families, on top of entry fees. They wanted to make it more user friendly. They want to go for a big, full crowd. Ms. Vold Larsen added that they want to give one free ticket to each participant, but they all like to bring the family. They are trying to involve every ranch cowboy, mom and dad, to give them something they can all attend. Looking at the family aspect over the financial.

Director Westby clarified that the ticket is \$10, but did we do gate and ticket together at \$20? Ms. Conkle explained it was only done one year and it wasn't big. She recommended not doing it together. Director Tregemba clarified it is gate and ticket. Yes. Gate is \$8 for an adult, and then you would buy a ticket for \$10. Ms. Conkle has concerns about doing a combined incentive ticket as then it only cost \$2 to get into the rodeo. Ms. Conkle explained the up-sale and combos deeper. It could be done as a

partner rate, like a \$15 ticket at the gate for both fair and rodeo, but she would not do just the ticket price as the combo rate. Director Westby asked why we would take some of their profits if gate admission covers the soft costs. Ms. Conkle explained the board was hired to maximize revenues. She does try to offset soft costs. The losses from the RR do not include the soft costs. So in renewing this, if we don't have the split, we are maybe not losing money but we won't be making money. The committee would prefer to be in the black rather than just break even. Director Steffen expressed it is a shared risk. Director Barks called for a vote. Director Haley asked about the Calcutta, how proceeds will be given. And will they use stalls. Donna said they will just tie the horses to the trailer, but it could be addressed in the packet. They generally don't stay long enough. Ms. Mitchell said PRCA is required to stall if they stay overnight. We have superintendents to help them get paid for. Ms. Shepperson said 100% back on the Calcutta. Director Tregemba asked to clarify, that the gate admission is clear. Ms. Conkle recommends that the Ranch Rodeo ticket is listed at \$10. Adult admission is \$8 for fair. A \$15 online or at gate ticket for \$15. Director Barks said that changes things. Director Steffen said since it's the first year, let's keep it at \$10 and \$8 for this one, we can look at a partner ticket next year. Motion carried.

Joe Rankin asked if the Mutton Busting will happen at this event. Conkle said it will be on Thursday with PRCA.

Director Steffen asked if any other discussion on the committee report? Ms. Conkle recommended to have the report accepted.

Director Bridges moved to approve the committee's recommendation for the cafeteria and stock rotation, Director Barks seconded. Director Shober wanted to make sure it was brought up that box lunches would be available to superintendents and judges, to help ease that for those people and get more use of the cafeteria. Director Bridges said we could have a "wagon" to help get them out. Director Haley said the Horse show has done it, they head count in the am and order. Motion passed.

- B. Endowment Auction – Director Bridges They met and had quite a few ideas on how to move forward. Also looking at other options such as raffles, maybe get hooked into an auto dealer for a new vehicle/percent towards a vehicle, gun raffle. There are some hurdles that will need checked through AG office. As it is, we have the chance to raise they money to get money from the State. They didn't have anything that needed Board action at this time. Director Bridges did ask if everyone on the board would be "all in" being a raffle ticket seller, how does everyone feel about that? Director Berger said she is for it. Director Steffen said it helps make it an all in participation. Director Westby said he's not good at it but would give it a shot. Director Price wanted to show the legislative committee that we are trying to raise the money and put forth the effort. Director Barks asked if they had got to prices, Director Bridges said no, they hadn't got that deep yet. Director Bridges said we haven't approached any, we want to assure we want to go down that path.

Director Steffen asked on limitation with PRCA. Ms. Podio said it is about signage, she is more than happy to help set up raffles with online components. She also suggested looking at an insurance for a "hole in one" sort of challenge. If someone wins, the insurance company pays it. Director Barks asked cost. Ms. Podio said it was around \$2000 for an \$80000 prize (approx. from one she's seen). That cost is covered with the ticket sales. You just have to make the challenge tough. Director Berger suggested adding to the auction some items for the Ranch Rodeo to help them (like parking for trailers) might be a good item. Director Barks asked to clarify on action options. Director Steffen expressed that the will of the board would be to show the legislature that we are trying, but maybe get some other ideas. Ms.

Podio said if we limit tickets and do online, she can help make sure we don't oversell. Director Bridges shared that they did an elk hunt raffle, it was a big money maker with a limited ticket and people will give more if they have a higher chance. AG Rep JD Sater asked Director Bridges, if they gun idea moved forward would we buy or get them donated. Director Bridges said that was one of the questions for Sater. Sater thought it would be easier if it's donated, but he would have to look into it. Director Bridges said it would be easier if they are donated as we don't have ready money. Ms. Podio shared that FFLs hold the item and give directly to the winner, so the endowment wouldn't have to hold. Director Tregemba said the "dice game" idea might be great to draw new midway activity. Director Barks asked if Sater's question was just for guns or anything that might be dangerous. Sater clarified it was mostly guns in questions. Discussion ended

- C. Facilities – Director Westby presented we have a lot of good projects going on. We have some improvements. Looking at 2025-2035 Master Plan expansion. They are putting money in the major maintenance budget to keep the MP fresh and at the top of the mind. We were successful to get 500,000 with a 100,000 to activate from the legislature. That is a good reflection on doing what we were tasked to do. Keeping the master plan fresh is a key. Projects earmarked for one-three years could use that match money. Level I is a basic feasibility assessment, Level II is basic design to get cost estimate, this goes out for funding, Level Three would encompass the construction of enclosing the arena. The Silver Arena will have to go into a Facility plan as it's too big for major maintenance.

Level I/Level II for the Dairy Barn. Ms. Conkle was asked to give an update. Ms. Conkle said it isn't as bad as we thought but it's still an issue. The middle of the building is critically outdated. The other two sides are useable. We need to make the center part safe for the next couple years, but it will need a complete demo. The initial approach was to facelift from 7-10 years, but we've gone deep into it. Now recommending that we don't do cosmetic and just get it habitable and pursue the Level I/Level II funding now to get the improvements. \$160000 to make it safe to go in. We can use that from major maintenance. The area has drainage issues. Ms. Conkle recommends we don't put a lot of money into the structure but make it safe and habitable and then get the funding to redo it. This would be Capitol Construction. Director Tregemba asked about trim and aesthetics. Ms. Conkle doesn't think we should invest a lot of money to make it look nice while going after funding to replace. But we do need to have something we can take pride in. So we could use a little major maintenance for that, but priority is to make it safe. Director Westby explained how funding works for Level I/Level II. Director Barks asked for action. Ms. Conkle would like to see the recommendation approved so they can get it started with WDA. Director Westby said the committee recommended they go forward with the list as presented. Director Barks moved, Director Bridges seconded that they moved forward with the recommendation as presented. Motion carried.

- D. Finance/Budget – Director Barks reported they meet monthly. He passed it to Ms. Conkle. She directed them to the summaries in the packet.
- 0801 Executive Summary though February
  - 0801 State Fair Budget FYTD through February
  - 0850 State Fair Board Budget FYTD through February
  - 0803 Non-Fair Budget FYTD through February
  - Fiscal Policy

It was in the rules a few years ago that we had to adopt a fiscal policy. This one meets the expectations for those rules. Ms. Conkle asked for any comments and questions on the reports. Director Barks asked if there was any "alarming" lines. Ms. Conkle said there is some in 0801 that we will see transfers in the next month or so, but they will be corrected before next meeting. She wants the budget to be as

accurate as possible. We have not seen the full deposit hit the 0801 from 2022 fair. She is working with Ms. Cook on that. Director Westby reiterated, we are trying to get those negatives out of the balance line, but we are working to get a better idea for next budget and know what we are starting with in a cleaner manner. Director Bridges added that we looked at expenses, we divvy them out to be more accurate and changing the money to the correct account for the future. Director Bridges expressed gratitude to the ones who put the fiscal policy together. Director Westby added, this is something that should be looked at annually to ensure it is followed and to tweak to make it more legal or effective. Director Steffen said September would be a good time to do that. Director Tregemba asked, if the audits go through state level, Ms. Cook confirmed it does go through the State Auditor's office. Director Bridges moved to approve the fiscal policy. Sater had one correction, should be \$1500 and under instead of \$1500. Director Barks' motion includes the change. Director Westby confirmed it is in 4 places to correct. Director Bridges seconded motion with changes. Motion carried. Ms. Conkle will correct and distribute.

Director Tregemba asked for a directive to make sure it is on the agenda once a year. Done.

- E. Personnel/Rules – Director Berger asked Ms. Conkle to report on staffing and internship. WSF has experienced some turn over in Operations. We worked with WDA and HR to get it posted. We have an offer out and it was accepted. Starts March 24. Internships are open and seasons are open. In the coming months we will work with this committee on new positions in Operations. We anticipate asking 2 new positions to host more events on grounds.
- F. Marketing/Promotion/Planning Events – Director Shober asked Ms. Conkle to present on her behalf. A few big things. We went through a transition with Marketing firm. Lum presented last time. We had an RFP, we had 6 responses, and the incumbent was not the highest scorer. The highest was New Thought. They can do traditional and modern reaches. As a committee we have been discussing that we have missing in infrastructure. Historically, GM and AGM have overseen the marketing firm. These positions are not accessible when they need it most. Our brand is beautiful but doesn't have depth. These positions can't grow that. With Office of Tourism, we are doing an annual MOU to add a marketing manager and liaison position. Will report to Ms. Conkle, work with the firm, oversee the calendars. This adds a layer to depth and credibility. This position will be filled by Kota Provence. She started in 2021 as a temp and has returned every year.

Ms. Conkle said this will be an expanded role for Ms. Provence. It will make sure that what goes out represents the Fair well. She will be quality control and help us be a good partner to our marketing firm. This contractual layer will give us the accountability. We appreciate Director Shober and the Office of Tourism for this support. Director Barks asked if it is a grant funding this? Ms. Conkle explained that Tourism will fund it, they are working out the way it will transfer or handle directly, but it will happen yearly. Director Barks asked if it's a full time or additional role, Conkle said it's an expansion, but we aren't filling the open position.

- G. Youth Show – Director Berger reports they have met several times. Continue to work on Drug Testing documents. Working on educational side on the whys and hows. We addressed the inconsistency for ownership deadlines. We talked about WY Bred & Fed. Asked Director Bridges to share. Director Bridges shared WY Pork Producers came forward to do a show at State Fair, they are financially backing and setting up ownership. This is just animals that were raised in Wyoming, designed to highlight WY produced swine. Looking at adding this to Wednesday night when we already have the judges to handle it. This is a good way to support the State and what the State does. This can highlight the kids

that do things locally. Director Barks asked if it goes through county fairs, Director Bridges said it is separate. For next year they can simplify to know which animals are eligible. Director Barks asked if these animals will be drug tested. Director Bridges said no, as they aren't champion animals.

Also discussed Champion of Champions. Making it a very special, moving it to Tuesday night. We have some smoke machines, a professional announcer, maybe some pyro before, looking at new and different awards. Director Bridges threw out that he was thinking a champion belt. Just want to make it something kids want to chase hard. First year we might go a little bit overboard.

Director Berger asked Ms. Conkle to expand on the Drug Testing FAQ. Conkle shared we have been putting it together, want board consent that it is a living, breathing document that is rolled out from the YSC. Ms. Conkle asked if they are comfortable or if they want special meetings called. Director Tregemba expressed that the board should be informed and the committee should be at the responding level. Director Steffen shared it is a first and will be a work in progress. Director Bridges agreed that everyone needs to know and the whys behind it. Director Steffen expressed it is very appreciative of all the things we are bringing to 2023, and that's because of the ideas from "this room".

Director Barks asked how the liability works if something comes up and the Board didn't approve the action? Director Steffen said he thinks if the board approved the committee to do the FAQ, then they are covered. Sater stated that he understood that it was JUST the FAQ that the board was giving the committee the approval to handle, and that it is allowable for the board to give that to the committee.

Ms. Conkle asked, we have 8 committees, 5 of which are really engaged and make progress between quarterly board meetings. Are there any ways the full board wants the committee reports disseminated? Where does it come from? How do we want that info given, full reports after each meeting, delegate to another member to report at board meeting if chair isn't there, etc. Ms. Conkle asked for thoughts and preferences. Director Bridges expressed that he likes to know what is going on even if he's not involved with every decision. He would like an email with what overview of discussion. He would also like any feedback if anyone had it on other committee. Director Steffen said if we know what the topics are we could then just know. Director Berger said if we know the agenda, does it violate committees and make them open meetings? Director Steffen felt it should be more of a "be in the know" than something to make comment on. Director Berger wants to keep committee members out of the weeds and taking questions and be careful. Director Tregemba likes how it is set up, she likes to reach out if she's interested. Director Berger said it might be helpful to have the reports in the board packet so they could be aware and have questions ready at the meeting. Director Westby shared that it might be just taking better notes and having those reports ready. Ms. Conkle suggest she go 2 weeks prior and ask for the reports from chairs to have a report to her 1 week prior, and they everyone has a heads up on what has been discussed. General consensus was that would work.

Break for lunch 12:04

Called to order at 12:35

Sater added his corrections to the minutes. Director Bridges moved, Director Boner seconded to accept minutes as corrected. Motion carried.

## **VI. - GENERAL MANAGER REPORT**

Ms. Conkle explained why we flipped the order, to accommodate the Ranch Rodeo and thanked all for that.

First thing everyone wants to know is “what’s new”. This year, we will have Everyday Ag, the exhibitor appreciation breakfast on Tuesday morning (which will be free and served by the board, so no Tuesday morning board meeting). We will also have Champion of Champions, we are making it huge, to be the best of the best. It will be at 4PM. World Champion Mutton Bustin’. First come, first served, opens July 1. FAIR Posse is designing shirts for participants. Ms. Conkle will meet with the First Lady this week about doing “Fair to Fork.” Working to have fair kids raise an additional animal that is then bought and used for the food banks. We are working to make the fair more cost affordable. We are purchasing a Mini Golf set. FAIR Posse will check out the supplies, it will be free for participants. Located on the other side of the Pepsi stage it will be large scale yard games that will be free. It will strengthen our partnership with Posse and keep us from having to find more people. Internship is up and running. On Friday we are doing an inaugural Figure 8 Race. It is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Demo Derby!

Went over what the new marketing firm and what the position will help with. It will increase our ability to respond in a timely fashion, and make sure both sides are on the same page. The firm will have to be onsite for Fair. This will help if we have any sort of critical incident they are here and ready. The liaison will also work with us on customer service with our media relationships.

Director Barks asked—what was the cost of the past contract and new contract? \$62,000, a \$37,000 contract and \$25,000 amendment from State Tourism. This is the max payable for this year. Max for the marketing position is \$30,000. This doesn’t include the media buy to Converse County, we never fund this.

Everyday AG. We are blessed here because we have a big AG influence. But we also have a lot of new people in the state who are visiting the fair, so we need to help educate them with AG in an intentional and relatable way. We want people to leave the fair understanding how AG impacts your everyday life. We have partners that touch on this, but we want to initiate this in a comprehensive manner. This will touch all areas, from livestock to culinary to the arts. We are open to ideas and suggestions. This will have an audio tour, working with Chugwater FFA and State FFA to do the scripts and Dennis Switzer (local radio) will help with recording. This will help everyone have a better understanding of agriculture in daily life. Director Shober asked who is paying for this? The Fair is paying for this, it’s 10k total. We do have some partnership/sponsorship opps. We do want to make sure any partners are on brand.

We were directed by legislature to raise \$500,000 in funds to access a matching funds. We also have a 5 to 1 match opp for Master Plans. We raise \$100,000 to get another \$500,000. So we need \$600,000 in the next year to get those funds. This is a launch and could be a yearly thing and will help build the endowment fund and a nest egg. Conkle recommended we create a contracted fundraising and revenue development position to report to the GM. This would start as a one-year position to get the \$600,000, but could be yearly if it works well. This position would hit the pavement, track donors, and really work to maximize. Conkle expressed that she could do both the fundraising and her GM duties, but fund raising would take much of her time and the org would suffer.

Director Barks asked if we want to attempt to raise that \$130,000 or if that was coming out of the budget. Conkle said it comes out of the budget. Director Barks asked if, by chance it fails, what we would do? Conkle said we could then supplement the amount raise with a portion of 0803 to hit the \$100,000 to get that match.

Director Bridges expressed that this is the right path. Creating those partnerships takes a lot of time. He has had a part-time position and they struggled, when it moved to full-time it was great. There is a good validity in having this person. It’s about making this something for our kids. Director Westby

agreed but also suggested “putting skin in the game” and making the contract a percentage. You can point the RFP towards the percentage incentive. Conkle said they are having the discussion about the history of percentage basis. Julie shared that in the past the fundraised funds couldn’t be taken from to pay for the work. Cook is recommending the flat amount, going off past conversations in regards to the Fair. The directive has changed, but WDA was concerned about perceptions.

Director Westby expressed that it can be contractual, that they must hit certain levels to get paid. Director Barks asked if it’s written as a percentage over a set amount, is that easier to do? Sater said that he is still researching and will have to look into it. The issue is that the Endowment can’t be touched, so it has to come from somewhere else.

We have the funds to support this position this year, but might not in another year.

We are making more money on our events and rentals, so we are able to put funds back into the organization.

Conkle has drafted an RFP with a monthly fee, which would allow us to terminate if they were not performing. We do need the right individual who sees the value and has a heart for this.

Director Barks expressed that the incentive is vital, so we need some way to motivate them. Courtney expressed that our management team has no skin in the game but work very hard to make everything work, and that’s the person we want. Discussion ensued.

Julie advised that if a group is fundraising, we need to structure it so that where the funds go is set. FAIR Posse started as a fundraising and then wanted to change focus.

Director Barks asked if we can create a 501c3. Courtney said yes. But we need to get the \$600,000 first. If we did the 501c3 first, it takes time, and we only have 14 months to get that \$600,000. We don’t have the time to do this, and we don’t have seed money to fund it. But long term, yes.

Director Tregemba stated she is behind the RFP, time is money, moved to pursue the RFP, Director Bridges seconded. Sater pointed out that we are still making sure it’s legal to do this, so need to do the motion with that in time. The board also doesn’t have the legal capacity to set up the foundation. Director Westby shared about how this type of position can work. More discussion.

Director Tregemba volunteered to help with contracting.

Sater thinks it wouldn’t be difficult to give incentive, just not on a percentage basis. It would need to be verified. The caveat the Sater made was added to the motion (to make it legal). Verifying that the motion is giving Conkle the ability to move forward of bringing this person on board. Motion carried.

Silver Arena Level I/Level II we met with our State Construction Dept Project Manager last month to understand the scope and realities. Next meeting is 9am Apr 25, if any want to attend, please let Conkle know so we can watch quorum. We will discuss feasibility and what we are looking for. May 9<sup>th</sup> at 11, we will have an online user group meeting to share concepts and ideas. Conkle will email out the dates and times, please let her know if you are planning to attend.

Breed Verification Task Force. Three person for each species (beef, sheep and swine) that can do visual IDs for animals. We need nine qualified individuals and it is volunteer. Don’t want breeders, sellers, etc.



Director Bridges thinks if we don't incorporate breeders we won't have the participation. Conkle wants to state we do need help, and we usually wait until late to get them. We need to get a little better about getting them together. Ms. Podio said we should have 12, just to have backups. Director Steffen asked if papers can overrule the committee. Courtney said it has been established that it was visual identification. Conkle does recommend moving to a papers can overrule the committee, but it should be a hybrid. Ms. Podio said that classifiers are pretty clear about not voting if they had an investment in an animal. Director Berger said she thought it was to help protect breeders as well, just to clarify. Ms. Podio reiterated that it's very hard to get volunteers for this. Director Bridges asked why we don't pay them? The consensus was to include breeders as potential verifiers for 2023.

Director Barks asked for an update on the land purchase. Conkle confirmed it closed on Feb 28 and we now own it.

Conkle did mention that we are looking at 3 new large scale events in 2027/2028 that would use all the grounds.

## **VII. - ASSISTANT MANAGER REPORT**

KMs. Mitchell presented her report. She touched on Champion of Champions, it will be on Tuesday evening at 4. We did get a judge that can judge all four species. This judge is a big thing in the show world. Ryan Rash has agreed to come. He does the "glitter slap", it's very theatrical. Kids love him and he's very good with them. Director Bridges said he is by far the best known judge in the nation right now, and he's very impressive to watch.

Sponsors. Brand Club banners for inaugural members under the grandstands. She is focusing on really honoring and making sure all sponsors know what their activation was. She is using tools learned from IAFE. This should help, esp for those who couldn't make it. WyoLotto has approached us to be a sponsor, they would also like a vendor space and would like to sell KENO tickets. Ms. Mitchell has cleared it with AG (through Sater) that it's okay. Ms. Mitchell would just like the board's support or directive in case of complaints. Director Bridges said it's legal in the state, we would let any other legal money maker have a space. Director Steffen agreed. They can be a vendor.

Ms. Mitchell has 2 IFM classes left. Will graduate in November. Was able to go to Washington DC for summit in February. All the programs have been great and she gets so many takeaways.

Proposed Rate Increase. Ms. Mitchell presented a chart with historical rates, cost per sq foot, and compared with other venues. Her proposal is for the board to approve a 25% increase. Conkle clarified if it was just upper campus or both upper and lower. Mitchell clarified that it was both to keep it consistent. Director Tregemba asked if there is a discount for multiple buildings or if it's piecemeal. It varies a little, depending on if the event is youth or nonprofit, etc. Mitchell proposed we keep lights for the arenas the same, and keep the hourly the same as they are consistent with the region. Director Barks commented they have only been increased 22% since 2009. Director Tregemba asked if there is a loss leader on the list. Mitchell said we encourage winter renters to buy producer punchcards at a reduced rate and then try to upsell stalls and such. Conkle explained we don't have many up sells because we don't have the leeway because we don't do food/alcohol. Director Berger asked if the rate increase would deter renters and have them look for other venues. Conkle said we have the same groups that complain no matter how much we increase, but we have a lot of groups that are going to book anyway. Conkle doesn't think it will impact partners by doing an adjustment. Some will complain a little, but they will still rent. Mitchell pointed out Pepsi Arena renters do have opps for groups to upsell stalls and RV spaces to cover, they already do this. Director Haley asked if the cost includes clean

up and set up? Mitchell explained having the building set up by staff is an additional charge, the renter is expected to clean up, we do a follow up. We can offer janitorial for horse shows at an additional charge or renter is in charge of their own clean up. Director Haley asked how many days last year weren't booked? Conkle explained that she has event days total, but we can't have more events until we have more staff. Conkle explained we are turning events away weekly because we are at our current bandwidth. The supply is what we are struggling with, not the demand.

Director Barks asked, what is the cost, excluding the fair, to operate the grounds vs the revenue, ballpark? Conkle that they way it is designed is a little weird. 0803 should be interim and 0801 should be fair. Total 557,692 is the budget for interim. Mitchell said for 2022 revenue, minus RV, was \$175,300. Conkle said it does run in the black.

Director Barks pointed out if we raise it 25% we will get 200 complaints but if we raise it 20% we get 195, so might as well take it higher. We could also look at spreading it out over two years, but that is longer complaint time. Director Barks moved to raise rates 25% starting Sep 2023, excluding contracts in place. Director Westby seconded. Motion carried. Director Westby recommended putting an FAQ on the "why" to help ease this for renters.

#### **VIII. - OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR REPORT**

AJ Deines shared that we did have a power issue on ground just before the NRA Friends banquet. It was an underground line that took out power to upper campus. Once power restored, we had issues. We were missing a phase. It was the line from the panel to the cafeteria. We hooked up our generator and powered the cafeteria for the weekend. We were able to have the contractor do the repair the following week.

We have also done a ton of removal. Office has helped with turning events, which has helped a lot. Maintenance deals with a lot of unknowns, like snow storms that require removal and event set ups that do cause some overtime and stress. We do get to our deadlines. Through major maintenance we got the floors in Reno and Upper Ag refinished. IF kept up on, we should be able to keep it for a long time.

Director Boner asked if we can call on city or county for snow removal. Conkle said we have a county agreement but we use it with dirt hauling. The city only has two trucks, Deines explained if we were in a bind we could reach out, but unlikely to have them on a continual basis. Director Westby said there is some budget in the 900 series, you could hire a contractor.

#### **IX.- OLD BUSINESS** No old business

#### **X.- NEW BUSINESS**

Director Boner would like to start an effort to revitalize/grow the volunteer efforts, and to beautify the grounds. She is willing to spearhead the effort, starting with ranch community and the local community. Will have 3 days this summer, Converse County Bank will help sponsor, to work on the grounds. Support was across the board, think it's a great thing.

Conkle mentioned we are contracting with a lawn care company to help with the grounds as well as moving for building flips. It's one company that can do both, so we are excited to have that support.

Director Bridges brought up that FFA use to have a work day, might be something we can encourage them to attend. Director Bridges asked Mr. Deines if we are still having water issue for watering.

Deines said we can use our water rights and we can purchase additional water from the river. We have two pumps for the river. The purchase water we can use anywhere, the water right has specific areas to be used. The underground line is damaged, so last year we found breaks and couldn't repair it at the time. If we can get it fixed we have the infrastructure to water. The water right and purchase is cheaper than city water. Conkle said there is sprinklers on major maintenance that is approved. Deines went over the map and what water can go where. There is some labor and tracking, but it can be done. Director Bridges expressed that it's worth doing the upkeep because it's the first impression. Director Price asked about hose reels to help instead of hand lines. AJ said we have two with aprox 200 feet of hose. The price point is a little high. Director Price suggested an in kind sponsor. Director Bridges suggested finding a small contractor to do the digging to fix the line for in kind sponsor as well.

**XI. – MEETING ADJOURNMENT 2:58**