

DELAWARE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 21st, 2023

ATTENDANCE:

Present- Jeff Armentrout, Adam DeMarco, Mark Fisher, Patricia Gladman, Mike Harter, Don Howard, Dan Huffman, Mike Knapp, David Laaksonen, Bryan Mellen, Tiffany Rankin*, Colleen Smith, Chip Thomson, Randy Turner, Chris Welker, Benjamin Wenner, Diane Winters, Tom Wright, Laryssa Hook and Jen McGowan

*Arrived late. Will indicate in the minutes when they arrived.

ABSENT: Jennifer Brown, Jon Melvin

GUESTS: Jeff Stover, Kevin Simpson

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chip Thomson called the meeting to order, David Laaksonen led the pledge of Allegiance and Chris Welker called the Roll.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Stover asked about moving out of the hoop barn. He shared with the board his personal experiences as a horse trainer on the grounds. Mark Fisher presented a solution to Mr. Stover about working on moving him over to the north side of the D barn. Mr. Stover agreed to the solution.

MINUTES

Adam Demarco moved and Benjamin Wenner seconded to approve the minutes from the board meeting on February 21th, 2023. Motion Carried.

Benjamin Wenner moved and Mark Fisher seconded to approve the minutes from the board retreat on January 28th, 2023. Motion Carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chip Thomson updated the board on procuring a large sturdy tent with logos on all sides to support our brand awareness when we have the ability to use the tent. The need for a tote board where the old one was taken down was discussed. Tom Wright indicated that you could use the pad that is currently there and build one that has a similar design to our current one, just with a smaller footprint. Chip also asked Tom Wright to discuss a real estate tax issue.

Tom shared with the board that there was some confusion on to what the bill we received was for, but it seems to be sorted out now. When the land was transferred to the Delaware County Agricultural Society, an assessment of the land took place, Dan Huffman worked with a law firm who handle real estate issues and they filed all the appropriate paper work to get the real estate tax exempt, and as we are in the middle of that process Tom was advised that we not pay the tax until a final decision has been made.

Chip Thomson then spoke to the meeting that he and Chris Welker had with the County administrator and the county attorney on the current situation involving the occupancy of the agricultural center. They were informed that building occupancy cannot be held for non-building related issues. The next step will be to meet with Tom Homan and city officials. Chip would like to keep the meetings at 6pm for the rest of the year, and would like to move the meetings to the conference room in the back. Benjamin Wenner insisted a vote was necessary since it was previously voted by the board to hold meetings at 7 pm from March to October. Benjamin Wenner moved, and Colleen Smith seconded to make the board meeting at 6pm year round. Motion Passed.

OFFICE REPORT

Jen McGowan reported the District 6 meeting was on April 2nd, and if anyone else want to attend to let her know by Thursday. There are 10 applications in for the Junior Fair Scholarship. Chip asked for volunteers for a committee to pick recipients for the scholarship this year. Benjamin Wenner, Randy Turner, Bryan Mellen and Chris Welker volunteered.

*Tiffany Rankin arrived

Jen updated everyone on the progress of the DACC barn and it is looking great. Then she presented a sponsorship updated: \$171,500 has been committed for racing with \$38,000 received and \$26,000 for the rest of the fair with \$500 received. Rugged will not be returning they have found a different location, and Mud Girls have 1 payment left.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Dan Huffman reported that we have \$72,300 in our account and that ticket renewals have started to go out, and after that money will start to come in. The budget will be in next month's packet.

Benjamin Wenner moved and Bryan Mellen seconded to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chip Thomson reported that a motion was made and carried by the Executive Committee in a Bed Tax meeting, but the need for that action is no longer needed.

GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

Mike Harter reported the committee had met and discussed our sounds, cleaning, and souvenir contracts we discussed.

Don Howard moved and Benjamin Wenner seconded to approve the updated 3 year contract with Absolute Impressions for souvenirs.

Mark Fisher shared that it was discussed in a maintenance meeting that they would set a scope of work for the cleaning contract and send it out to bid. Mark then asked why has G&A set the scope for this contract. Chip Thomson asked Jen if she had concerns with Sunshine's work? Jen responded, no, but she would like to ensure that the needed off-season work is addressed in his contract to help address any issue during the rest of the year. Mark shared that he had asked for the Coliseum restrooms to be cleaned weekly as it is the main restroom for the DACC classroom on the grounds and it hadn't happened. Mark just wants to confirm that this would be addressed in the cleaning scope of work. Chip Thomson said we have Jen to handle this stuff, there is not a need to have multiple people delivering messages.

Mike Harter will continue to work with Pete on our sound and try to make sure our needs are met and in writing. Jen informed the Board that she had talked with Pete that day and he is willing to come out and show people where the buried cables would need to go to avoid having cables across the infield during fair.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

No Report.

FAIR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Benjamin Wenner shared there was no meeting, but there is \$4,000 total for the scholarships.

ADVERTISING COMMITTEE

Patti Gladman asked Randy Turner to share about the tent and the budget they presented to the finance committee. Randy further elaborated on the tent that will be available for use, and the budget that they asked for.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Mike Harter reported that the committee met briefly, they discuss the private security company's contract. And the towing contract and would hopefully have something by the next meeting.

MOTORSPORTS COMMITTEE

Bryan Mellen reported that a meeting was held and they agree on some of the event contractors to use and they will move the contracts along in our process. Chris Welker shared with the board that in order to do a rodeo the committee would need to increase the budget they already had presented to finance. But the committee plans on working out ways to increase the sponsorship at the motorplex to help offset this increase in the budget.

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE

Mark Fisher reported had a meeting, minutes are in the board packet. There was some wind damage. Dan Huffman shared that our deductible was \$50,000 and they say they would only approve roof. So, it might not be the best option. Mark also shared a concern he received, there have been needles and trash in the manure dumpsters. If this continues the farmer will not accept the manure. It was discussed on how to address this with the horsemen, Jen could send out a reminder text. Chip Thomson said that we should just meet with them.

RACING COMMITTEE

Tom Wright reported that he is moving forward with Fox Sports. He has already gotten a commitment of \$5,000 to help offset costs. He will also be stay after the meeting to explain how racing at the fair works, for any members who would like to stay and are interested. Horse nominations are up compared to last year.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

Colleen Smith reported that this year there will be personal changes in the tents, she is working on some of our returning sponsors.

BED TAX COMMITTEE

Tom Wright reported that there was a meeting on the grandstands project. Tiffany Rankin has been working with First Commonwealth, and we are very close to have the final approve for the loan done. Tiffany went over the list of items the banks was asking for and report she was working with our attorney to get a clarification on the borrow limits presented in the red book. Regency will provide us with an onsite. The committee to the list of ideas from the board retreat and worked on a priority list for the year, based on the expected income and the cost of the projects.

Diane Winter moved and Randy Turner seconded to approve up to \$50,000 for junior fair barn overhead fans.

Benjamin Wenner moved, and Don Howard seconded to approve board President, Henry Clay "Chip" Thomson III, to sign any required documents needed to secure financing from First Commonwealth Bank. Motion Carried.

Benjamin Wenner moved, and Randy Turner seconded to approve borrowing the 3.5 million dollars for the grandstand project from First Commonwealth Bank. Motion Carried

ALL HORSE PARADE

Diane Winters stated that there are people on this Board who do not care for the Horse Parade, and whether they like it or not, it's a community event and it serves as a great kick off for the fair. Benjamin Wenner told her that he cared to have a parade, but he spoke for barn superintendents on the Jr. Fair side who are tired of having their facilities damaged the day of the parade. For the sake of a lot of people's sanity she needs to share what her needs of the grounds and buildings are. Chip Thomson asked her to provide a list of needs by next meeting and Diane agreed.

HALL OF FAME/MUSEUM

Don Howard shared that the space upstairs that we were going to allow the Junior Fair Board to use is not approved for occupancy. Discussion was held on how to fix this problem and Don presented a solution to allow the Junior Fair Board to use the kitchen space. Don Howard moved and Patti Gladman seconded to let the Junior Fair Board use the kitchen for their space for fair this year. Motion carried, 17-2.

OLD BUSINESS

Chip Thomson asked if there were any commission due to a previous employee of the fair. Tiffany Rankin shared if there were any they would be issued as a 1099 payment.

Dan Huffman updated the board on the settlement our attorney had worked out with Marker, we would have to pay \$20,000 for our portion of the fix on the concrete. Mark Fisher said that he looked and shared that there were problems, and asked if we wanted the maintenance associated with this fix. Dan Huffman moved and Benjamin Wenner seconded to accept the settlement provided to use by Marker. Chip Thomson asked all board members present if they had any thought, Adam DeMarco did not share an opinion. Motion carried, 16-1. Adam Demarco and Tom Wright abstained.

Benjamin Wenner updated the constitution and shared that the wording that was voted on by the members of the Society didn't match the wording the board approved. Essentially, the ballot provided by the Board of Elections reflected a minor change where annual meeting notifications were not required to be posted in the newspaper. Chip was unsure how this was translated differently into the ballot machine. Benjamin wanted to formally approve this change since it was in disagreement with the board's previous decision. Benjamin Wenner moved Mark Fisher seconded, to accept the minor wording change. Motion Carried.

Diane Winters asked if there was any more discussion on the veterans. Chip Thomson shared that he has been in contact with Mr. Wolford and that he would handle it.

Jeff Armentrout shared with the board the excuse policy that their committee had worked on, and that they had reached a consensus. Chris Welker shared with the board that in the red book it clearly states that the board may remove a member after 3 consecutive meetings. There is a difference between may and shall. No action was taken.

Tom Wright asked that committee or group of people be assigned to help promote and market that Ag Center is available to be rented. Chip Thomson assigned this to the advertising committee.

NEW BUSINESS.

Mark Fisher moved and Diane Winters seconded moving into Executive Session for a personnel matter. Motion Carried.

Tom Wright moved to return to regular session, noting that no decisions were made. Jeff Armentrout seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Randy Turner moved and Mike Harter seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.