

Minutes of: 25th District Agricultural Association

Meeting Held on: Tuesday, September 21, 2004

Directors Present: Myrna Abramowicz, Paul Battisti, Don Carr, Dave Dickson, Hope Lugo, Peggy O’Kelly and Greg Rodeno

Directors Absent
And Excused: Jim Cathcart and Paul Dohring

Staff Present: Joseph Anderson and Denise Davis

Others Present: Charlotte Alvaro, Kittie Amaral, Kevin Courtney, Linda Feutz, Donna Hall, Evelyn Kelly, Vicki Myers, Bill Nystrom, Pearl Nystrom, Helen Sexton, and Jacqueline Zuest

ROLL CALL AND QUORUM CONFIRMATION

President Abramowicz called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., confirming the presence of a quorum.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Abramowicz called for approval of the agenda, moving item 6.2.1 2004 Fair re-cap, to include a discussion of items stolen prior to the Fair, to just prior to item 5.2 Correspondence.

Director Rodeno moved approval of the agenda as amended. Director Lugo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Abramowicz opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

President Abramowicz called for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, correcting the statement of “Directors Absent” to “Directors Absent and Excused”.

Director Lugo moved approval of the minutes from July 20, 2004 as corrected. Director O’Kelly seconded the motion. The motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS AND PROGRAM REPORTS

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee – President Abramowicz appointed Director Lugo to chair the Nominating Committee for this year, with Director Battisti also serving on the committee. The committee should meet and report on a roster for nominations at the October meeting.

Personnel Committee – Director Lugo reported that the Personnel Committee will make their annual evaluation of the CEO at the October Board meeting. Board members will receive evaluation forms with their October packets and are asked to return them as soon as possible to the Personnel committee chair.

Friends Committee – The Friends Board will have their next meeting on September 28th at 12 noon in the Directors House. Director Carr will attend the meeting.

Livestock Committee – Director O’Kelly reported on the successful Livestock Auction. This year’s auction sales were just over \$695,000, up from \$658,000 in 2003. The Board purchased a lamb, which has been donated to the Food Bank. The Board should have received their bills for that animal by now and are asked to make payment as soon as possible.

Buildings and Grounds Committee – Director Battisti reported that we had another tree limb fall on the non-profit food concession buildings, this time damaging the ICF and the Nuestra Esperanza/Aldea booths. The staff will be looking at bids for tree repair and removal for the upcoming budget cycle.

Finance Committee – Director O’Kelly gave the Finance Committee report, explaining the overages in the maintenance and attractions accounts.

Vice President Dickson moved that the financials be approved. Director Lugo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director O’Kelly reported on the recent audit by the Department of Food and Ag. Audit Department. There was just a one page report at the exit conference this year, as opposed to two pages last year. Most of the items are immaterial. One item of concern that the audit department will be doing more research on is the fringe benefits to the three employees currently living on the fairgrounds.

Director O’Kelly reported that the audit team was very complimentary of the staff in how prepared and thorough they were for the audit.

Real Estate and Development Committee – Vice President Dickson reported that the city is convening a stakeholders committee on the Soscol Corridor plan. Both Vice President Dickson and Interim CEO Anderson will sit on the stakeholders committee.

2004 Fair re-cap, to include a discussion of items stolen prior to the Fair - Interim CEO Anderson reported on the break-in at Riesling Hall just prior to the Fair. A police report was made, fingerprints were taken and the building superintendent and staff were interviewed. The building superintendent did report that when she left the building the night before and when she returned the following day, all doors and windows were locked. Items discovered missing at the time of the break-in were 5 quilts taken from their displayed positions throughout the building. Other items in the building were disturbed, so staff took an inventory of items immediately following the break-in to make sure only the 5 quilts were missing. At that time, only the 5 quilts were known to be among the missing. Security was hired immediately to guard all buildings on grounds overnight when staff was not present. During the Fair, it was reported that a purple sweater was also missing.

For 2005, we are looking at changing the receiving schedule, bringing the non-perishable items in closer to the Fair, thus decreasing the amount of time for display. We are also installing bars on the windows, and have had the front doors replaced.

Director O’Kelly asked who had access to the building. Interim CEO Anderson stated that permanent staff and the building superintendent were the only ones with keys to the building. Vice President Dickson asked if there were guidelines from the State on loss or theft of exhibit

items. Interim CEO Anderson explained that there is a hold harmless clause when exhibitors sign their entry form and make entry in the Fair.

President Abramowicz called for Public Comment on this topic.

Linda Feutz with the Napa Valley Needlers spoke. She showed the Board a flyer with pictures of all 5 missing quilts. They are very disappointed at the loss of their quilt, which turned out to be a \$2,000 revenue loss as they were selling tickets for the quilt. It does sound like the management has taken steps towards securing items better for 2005.

Donna Hall with the Napa Valley Quilters addressed the Board. She was present during a judging in Riesling Hall after the break-in and expressed concern over the number of workers coming and going through the restroom doors. She is afraid that this year's break-in will result in a decrease in quilt exhibits in the future. She won't be entering her quilts any longer.

Evelyn Kelly addressed the Board. Her quilt was the one with the dragon that was stolen. She expressed concern over the length of time it took the Napa Valley Register to publicize the issue, and believes that it was someone on the inside who coordinated the theft. She is a first time exhibitor, and will not be exhibiting here again.

Vicki Myers addressed the Board. Her daughter encouraged her to enter her quilt, and is now encouraging her to make another one to replace the missing one. She pulled all of her exhibits from the Fair, and is upset that another exhibitor who also pulled all her exhibits from the Fair but was not a victim of the break-in, was denied her ribbons and premium monies. She believes that awards, once made, should be given.

Kittie Amaral spoke to the Board about the value of quilts and how these five quilts could be sold at high prices.

Bill Nystrom addressed the Board. His wife discovered opening day of Fair that her knitted sweater was missing from the building. He was disappointed with the treatment of the building superintendent, the office staff and the CEO. He was told to go to the police department and add the missing sweater to the police report on the quilts. He felt the CEO should have done this on opening day of Fair. He is also disappointed with the police department who promised to contact him and still have not to this date.

Charlotte Alvaro addressed the Board regarding what security measures are taken to protect exhibits. Interim CEO Anderson answered her question.

Donna Hall and Helen Sexton expressed concern that quilters are not taken seriously or treated with respect. Helen Sexton also commented that some of the quilts are returned dirty and asked if the walls are washed prior to their display.

Director Carr asked where the quilts might surface. Linda Feutz explained that they may appear at flea markets or at quilt vendors out of state. Director Carr remarked that it sounded like they could have been taken by someone from within the quilting community who knew their value. Director Rodeno agreed that it sounded like a steal to order situation.

Vice President Dickson asked if there was a retail value that could be placed on the missing quilts. Donna Hall explained that the missing quilts were worth more than \$700, but for insurance purposes, the most that is recoverable is the cost of material. Time, design and workmanship are not able to be valued for insurance purposes, but certainly figure in to the

overall feeling of loss. She explained that there is a history of lost or stolen quilts, from loss in the mail, FedEx, UPS, etc., as well as loss from fires and home thefts.

Director Carr addressed the audience and sympathized with their loss. The Board and Fair staff recognize that this theft is a great loss to everyone who lost exhibits at the Fair. While we sympathize, he reminded the audience that we are a State agency required to operate under the rules dictated by the State of California for Fairs. We have been in existence for 74 years and this is the only instance of theft known to this staff and Board who have been around for more than 18 years. Perhaps this is the one year when someone was able to thwart our regular security measures, and may it never happen again. The Fair will also experience a loss of confidence from the exhibiting community that we are chartered to serve.

Vice President Dickson suggested that President Abramowicz and Interim CEO Anderson meet with a group of representatives from the audience to help ease the pain and help the community deal with the loss of this year.

Director Lugo stated that she is a beginning quilter and her quilts are priceless to her. On behalf of the Board, she apologized to those in the audience and stated that the security measures at the Fair will be addressed. She suggested the Buildings and Grounds committee also consider this for the upcoming budget year, and that a written policy be established.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no "New Business" brought up by Board members at this meeting.

FUTURE MEETINGS

President Abramowicz read the list of future meeting dates.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar consisted of the following: Standard Agreement #STD-04-34 through and including #STD-04-48, Rental Agreements #2004-88 through and including #2004-96, and Judging Agreements #J-04-40 through and including #J-04-47.

Director Lugo moved approval of the Consent Calendar. Director Carr seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CEO/MANAGER'S REPORT

Business Assistant Davis reported on the upcoming surgery for Interim CEO Anderson.

Interim CEO Anderson reported that Junior Livestock Auction was a good one this year, with prices staying high and the auction ending at a good time. The new Livestock Office and Restrooms were built in 16 days, just in time for Fair, due in large part to all the leg work by JLAC volunteer Burt Brace. This \$70,000 will probably only cost us half that, with the remainder coming in donations of time, labor and cost of goods. As a thank you, Burt Brace was awarded the Western Fairs Association Blue Ribbon Award just prior to the start of this year's auction.

Biggest problems at Fair this year include the power in livestock and the garbage company. Because of their non-responsiveness to our needs during the Fair this year, we have switched to Valley Recycling and Waste Management for all of our disposal needs.

Premiums paid for this year were on par with 2003, about \$21,000. Entries were up overall. Fair attendance was also up this year, 145 people over 2003.

2005 Fair dates are August 10 – 14 and the theme is Our Diamond Jubilee. For 2005, we are considering an increase in fair admission by \$1.00. We have not raised admission prices in more than 7 years.

The ATM machines purchased in March have just about paid for themselves this year.

Another eucalyptus tree dropped a limb in the Plaza Area. We are looking at bids to just top the trees that run \$7 - \$10,000 per tree.

The Revenue Generating Grant that we applied for to begin the renovation of the RV Park in phases was denied. We will re-submit in January in a different format.

We received a letter via Director Carr from a patron of the Lipizzaner Stallion event held here in July, concerned about the exit area from the grandstands and the lack of sufficient lighting. Staff will address these concerns in a follow up letter.

Director Lugo asked where we were on RV revenues for this year. Interim CEO Anderson stated that we are down slightly this year.

ADJOURNMENT

Director Rodeno moved to adjourn the meeting of the 25th District Agricultural Association Board of Directors at 2:51 p.m. Director Lugo seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Joseph Anderson, Interim CEO

Date

Myrna Abramowicz, President

Date