

St. Joseph County Grange Fair

Board Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2023

Fair Office

St. Joseph County Grange Fair

316 East Charlotte Street

Centreville, MI 49032

President Keith Bower called the St. Joseph County Grange Fair Association Fair Board Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Fair Office located on the Fairgrounds of the St. Joseph County Grange Fair in Centreville Michigan.

Pledge of Allegiance: The St. Joseph County Grange Fair Association Fair Board Directors stated the Pledge of Allegiance at 6:00 p.m.

Present: The St. Joseph County Grange Fair Board Members that were present; Keith Bower, Angie Mingus, Penny Waltke, Mindy Timm, Charlie Carpenter, Deborah Davis, Gary Clark, Kristine Kirsch, Bill Lindsley, Tom Miller, John Tate (not voting), Tricia Ulsh, Barb Weston, and Bill Younts.

Absent Directors: Ronnie Bauman

Excuse any absent Directors:

MOTION by: Kristine Kirsch, Second by: Penny Waltke

Motion was made to excuse Ronnie Bauman, the absent director, was made by: Kristine Kirsch and the second was made by: Penny Waltke.

Motion passed 8-4

Review and Approval of the Agenda:

MOTION by: Tom Miller, Second by: Kristine Kirsch

Motion was made to approve the presented agenda and add one new topic under new business, g. Still Exhibit Judging and Placing was made by: Tom Miller and the second was made by: Kristine Kirsch.

Motion passed 12-0

Adopting of the Minutes:

MOTION by: Penny Waltke, Second by: Kristine Kirsch

Motion was made to approve the September 5, 2023, Fair Board Meeting Minutes, with suggested corrections, was made by: Penny Waltke and the second was made by: Kristine Kirsch.

Motion passed 12-0

4-H Update – Kayla Mitchell:

Kayla was out of town, she will give her report at our next meeting on November 6, 2023.

Recognition of Visitors:

Visitors at the meeting were: Dave Yunker, Ella Yunker, Stacey Bower, Amy Maystead, Derek Maystead, Nyla Erhardt, Ryan Waltke, Steve Wolf, Emily Redmond, Kayla Irelan, Katie Irelan, Norma Switalski, Leslie Jacobs, Cindy Gordon, Jim Susemihl, Darlene Tate, Ron Weston, Robert Tomlinson, and Taya Bower.

Public Comments:

There was one public comment made.

- Norma Switalski – Open Class Chickens
 - 33 Entries
 - 29 Showed
 - 12 exhibitors
 - The People’s choice award was a big hit, and they received a lot of votes.
 - Norma is looking forward to next year. She needs 50 cages next year.

Treasurer’s Report:

Penny Waltke, Fair Board Treasurer presented the Fair Board with the following financial documents; Profit and Loss from January through December 2022, and the monthly financial report – accrual basis from January 1, 2023, to September 30, 2023.

MOTION by: Angie Mingus, Second by: Kristine Kirsch

Motion to place on the record the Treasure’s report that was presented to the Fair Board was made by: Angie Mingus and the second was made by: Kristine Kirsch.

Motion passed 12-0

Correspondences:

Fair Board Secretary, Mindy Timm read a letter from Nearpass Pulling L.L.C. The letter thanked the Fair Board for their friendship and years of letting them work for us. The letter announced their retirement. Jeff Storey at Central Michigan Pulling, L.L.C. purchased two of Nearpass’s sleds. The letter included Jeff Storey’s contact information for next year’s fair.

Fair Board Secretary, Mindy Timm read a letter from Betty Persons. Betty wanted to inform the Board that she would not be at the meeting this evening, as she was attending quilt club. John Tate said he would come tonight, as John attends tonight’s meeting. Betty thanked everyone on the Fair Board for the friendships and lots of knowledge she has learned over the past three years as a Fair Board Director. Betty still plans to be an active Fair Association Member and will help when needed. Betty would still like to be in Building #44. Betty stated that John Tate was voted as the new board representative for the Burr Oak Grange. She is confident that he will do a great job.

Fair Board Secretary, Mindy Timm read a card from the Horse Council Board, Horse Council Members, and a personal note from Danielle Sackrider. The card read, thank you for the support and open communication with the horse program through 4-H. This year’s fair was a success due to the building of positive relationships. Dannielle Sackrider’s personal note read, thank you for the discussion and working together to keep the 4-H youth and horses safe. The holding area and parking were a huge success this year.

Director Reports and updates for the Committee's each Director Heads-up

- ***Bill Younts –***
 - *4-H Extension and Liaison Committee –* No report to give.
 - *Grants/Legacy Committee-* We did not receive the AARP grant.
 - *Birthing Tent Committee-* The birthing tent was a big success this year. We need to make it longer and stretch it out further in the future. Next year, we need to find a new goat and sheep person.

- ***Debbie Davis –*** No report to give.

- ***Keith Bower***
 - *Entertainment Committee-* Keith Bower and Mindy Timm presented and reviewed the following documents to the Fair Board; the 2023 Grandstand Income and Expense Condensed Report and the 2023 Grandstand Events grandstand and pit attendance income breakdown report. A question was asked regarding the big loss at Saturday's Too Hot to Farm Event. It was not a loss, as Sunday's Farm Truck Pull event was cancelled due to rain and the remainder of the event was run on Saturday with the Too Hot to Farm event. Only one class was able to finish on Sunday for the Farm Truck Pulls before the rain cancelled the event. Debbie Davis asked about concerts and stated that her friend can help with finding an artist.
 - *Ice Committee-* We made a \$102.79 profit on ice this year.

- ***Charlie Carpenter –***
 - *Buildings and Grounds Committee –* Our Maintenance crew is doing an amazing job. They did great leading up to Fair, during Fair, and after Fair with cleanup and putting things away.
 - *Fair Week Maintenance –* We had a great smooth week.
 - *Harness Racing –* Harness Racing was cancelled on Monday, September 18, 2023, due to the track conditions from the rain on Sunday afternoon/evening. We moved Monday's races to Tuesday and ran both days on Tuesday. We had 94 horses. Angie Mingus and Christina Yunker helped in the office to learn how things operate back there. Charlie Carpenters wife Patricia Carpenter and her sister Beverly Souter are retiring after this year. Both ladies run the speed office during the Harness Racing. It was a team effort to get all races in before the Figure 8 Races and we did it with time to spare.

- ***Gary Clark***
 - *Courtesy Cart Committee –* Everything went well with the Courtesy Carts Fair Week. We did have a few breakdowns but got those fixed and had no major issues.

- **Angie Mingus**
 - *Machinery Dealers/Tractors Committee*- Machinery Row was full this year. We had 60 feet left of open space. Next year we will relocate the Live Bull to another area, a more visible area.
 - *Beer Tent*- The Beer Tent made a profit of \$16,909.28 this year. This is the profit from both beer tent locations. We changed the way we did inventory and counting this year, we used square.
 - *Heritage Committee* – Barb and Ron Weston did an amazing and fabulous job with Heritage Hall. Barb Weston stated that the hall was very busy all day every day and they had people come to the Fair just to see the barn/hall, it was very well received. People loved all the displays, the town of Constantine, display of old vehicles, Veteran’s display, and the Veteran’s Map. The DAR (Daughter’s of American Revolution) did an amazing job as well.
 - *Heritage Park* – We had 17 more tractors this year than in 2022. The Old Engine Tractor Club is wanting to come back next year in some capacity. The Educational Area layout was great. The pony ride company did complain about not having a lot of people down at that location with the petting zoo and pony rides. Angie Mingus and Christina Yunker discussed the Farm to Table idea for the Garden area again to the Board.
 - *Antique Tractor Parade* – The Antique Tractor Parade was on Saturday of Fair, we had 2 tractors and a Fire Truck.
 - *Marquee/New Digital Sign* – The digital marquee is running now. We have not advertised digital advertising yet. We wanted to wait until the sign was fixed. We would hate to sell advertising spots if the sign is not working, and we continue to have issues with it.
 - *Personnel Committee* – If anyone has employee issues, they need to report those issues to Christina Yunker, they are her employees.

- **Bill Lindsley**
 - No report to give.

- **Tom Miller** –
 - *Hall of Fame/Awards Committee*- We inducted two members into the Hall of Fame: Charlie Carpenter and Bill Younts. Thank you to everyone who attended the ceremony on Thursday, September 21, 2023.
 - *Open Class Draft Horse and Pony Superintendent* – The rain on Sunday of Fair did help the arenas with the dust and soften them up a bit. We had 72 total entries: 35 draft horses and 37 ponies. We had 11 hitches. Horse pulls were a big success. We had a parade on Saturday with 5 draft horse hitches.

- **Tricia Ulsh**
 - *Grange Building Superintendent-* Wendy Guess said that everything went great, and exhibitors were happy. Angie Mingus asked Tricia Ulsh regarding budget concerns and the amount of \$5,926.29 for wages that is broken down on the 2023 Cost of Grange Building/Open Class handout that was included in our Director Packets. Discussion was had regarding wages, a plan, and volunteers. There was a plan last year for 2022 and it worked well. This year there was not a plan, or it was not executed. Angie Mingus stated that when she visited the Hillsdale Fair their open class barns were inviting. We need to have someone to oversee the Grange Building and make it vibrant and welcoming.
 - *Policy and By-Laws Committee* – Jeff Brazo emailed/submitted the proposed bylaw changes to Mindy on September 30th. The proposed bylaw changes are to be sent to all current Fair Association Members with the 30-day Annual Meeting notice.
 - *Maintenance* – Tricia Ulsh stated that she had an issue with the water heater in the milking parlor during Fair Week. Chuck Zinsmaster and Christina Yunker called Jergens, and they came in and replaced the water heater. There was also an issue with the plumbing in the milk house and maintenance came in and re-plumbed it. The pump on the milker stopped working as well. Prenger’s brought a new pump for us to use during Fair Week. We will not receive a bill for this. Prenger’s would like to share a portable pump with us.

- **John Tate**
 - No report to give.

- **Barb Weston**
 - *Free Stage and Community Tent Committee-* Everything went smoothly. Next year we will need to change the times with the Free Stage, so the acts are done before the Grandstand Events. We served 125 -150 people for the Veterans Day Breakfast on Friday, in the Community Tent. Thinking the Blanket Wheel needs its own separate committee next year. Jim Hart is willing to help. We have six blankets left and made a profit of \$2,400.00.
 - *Fair T-Shirt* – We need to have another location other than the Fair Office to sell T-shirts next year during Fair Week.

- **Penny Waltke**
 - *Premium Office* - Penny took over the duties in the Premium Office this year. Penny states, “we need a new program in the Premium Office. We are only allowed one user and one computer.” The software we are looking to is online, all entries would be online, and the livestock office are able to make changes as well. Kristine Krisch added that 4-H is looking into a new platform and maybe we can have the same platform. Kristine Kirsch also mentioned that the premium book needs to have its own committee. Angie Mingus commented that the new program should/could interface with 4-H, if possible.

- **Mindy Timm**
 - *Fair Advertising and Marketing* –
 - **2023 Fair Week**
 - Will be posting pictures and videos from Fair in the next few months.
 - Lots of positive comments on Facebook regarding Fair Week on the Fair’s page
 - Had radio interviews Wednesday afternoon 3-5 and 5-7 during Fair Week.
 - Scavenger hunt was a big success. Will do it again next year.
 - Brochures – next year each director will be assigned an area.
 - **MDARD Case/Issue – Update**
 - Spoke with Greg Harris our MDARD Case worker for the second time on Tuesday, October 4, 2023, over the phone. Greg called me.
 - He is still working on the investigation and finalizing the report/case. He has spoken with everyone from all parties.
 - Greg Harris stated, “that the animal should have been sent home on the day the tag fell out if they could not get a tag put back in that animal within a few hours. Once the Fair knew about it, we should have sent the animal home and not to auction.”
 - The MDARD Fair inspector should have been called immediately as soon as the tag fell or was out of the animal’s ear. Anytime during Fair there is an issue with a scrapie/ID tag protocol is to call our MDARD inspector ASAP.
 - The Fair Board Directors had discussion on this issue/topic.
 - **MAFE Zone 1 Meeting**
 - Wednesday, October 18th at 7 p.m. via zoom. If you want the Zoom link, please let Mindy Timm know.
 - **MDARD 120 Day Report**
 - Due 120 Days after completion of Fair.
 - All committee reports and number of volunteers for this year please email to Mindy, by November 6, 2023
 - Fair Association
 - Association Dues are due Saturday, October 14, 2023
 - Fair Office will be open Saturday, October 14, 2023, from 8 a.m. to Noon for people to sign up or renew association memberships.
 - Email went out to all current and 2024 members today.
 - Due are due October 14, 2023.
 - Letters of interest for Board Positions due November 4, 2023, at Noon.

- **Kristine Kirsch**
 - *First Aid Station* – The First Aid Station did not have any big issues this year. Kristine Kirsch is still waiting for Nurse Betty Meyer’s final report from Fair Week.
- **Ronnie Bauman**
 - Ronnie was absent from the meeting.

Manager’s Report:

Fair Manager, Christine Yunker, presented the Fair Board with the following Manager’s Report.

- One of the trucks from Project Connect hit and ripped part of the M-86 ticket booth. I have filed a claim, and I am working on getting quotes to fix it.
- **Maintenance**
 - **Roof Leaks:** Barns 40, 41, 43 & 49
 - **Burr Oak Street Fence:** Done and appeared to work well. No problems with neighbors.
 - **South Property Line Fence:** See quote. Quote was provided the Directors packets. This will need to be done to secure the property. There is talk of development by the Village in the area behind the school, also a report from Sheriff Dept of homeless living in the woods south of fairgrounds; Nottawa Gas has reported the same.
 - **Metal Barns 40- 44:** See attached quotes; for quoting purposes, Leon S was given proposals from N&M with amounts removed. If approved (goal is decision Oct meeting) this can be winter/spring work for the construction crew. Winter storage will not be an issue.

MOTION by: Angie Mingus, Second by: Debbie Davis

Motion was made to approve the presented quote from Shelter Roofing LLC for metal siding on Barns #40, #41, #42, #43, and #44 for \$39,500, was made by: Angie Mingus and the second was made by: Debbie Davis.

Motion passed 13-0

- **Fair**
 1. Vendor Barns: ALL FULL ... including entire barn 46.
 2. Outdoor Vendors: 95% Full: Had 1 last minute cancellation; due to emergency. Plan to be back next year.
 - a. **The Market:** Vendors didn't think there was enough traffic. Brainstorming about what to do with that area for next year.
 3. **Food Vendors:** 1 spot open; Had 1 last minute cancellation; due to emergency. Plan to be back next year.
 4. Reports
 - a. Grandstand Income/Expense
 - b. Sponsorship Money 2023
 - c. Free Camping

- d. Director Passes Expense Report – Per Policy
- e. Passes Recorded – See handout.
- f. Daily Attendance Report – see handout.
- g. Skerbeck’s Weekly Report
- h. 2023 Cost of Livestock Shows
- i. 2023 Cost of Grange Building/Open Class
- j. Harness Racing Report
- k. Fundraising Report
- l. Concerns/Complaints & Camping Office Report – Concerns

- **Concerns/Complaints**

1. Pit passes should include access to the grandstand. Drivers would like to be able to see their sponsors/family/support.
2. Speakers in grandstands so crowd can hear over noise of midway/event.
3. Call from Mike Davis:
 - Upset about beer in Grandstands and people partying, crassness/rudeness and profanity
 - "I have always come to the truck pulls every year with my family; how long has there been a beer tent"? I explained that it's been 3 years and it's a board decision yearly and we have not had any significant issues with having the beer tent but would let the board know as it's a board decision yearly. He went on yelling; "Well, that woke ass board needs to get their f.....g heads out of their a...es. I asked him to not yell and use profanity, since after all that’s part of what he complained about...and he hung up on me.
4. Julie Lawson -worked in Grange Building.
 - Concerns about Wendy's grandchildren in building, yelling, and screaming while intake and judging was going on.
 - Not everyone working in the barn received the passes to get in.
 - Filled out W-9 and gave to Wendy, she did not turn into office; so, it had to be redone
 - She heard some people had quite a few hours turned in on timecard and wasn't sure, how that could be possible.
 - Does not wish to come back to help if Wendy is still "in charge."

- **Camping Office Report – Concerns**

1. Porta Johns & Bathrooms need to be set and open before campers show up on Sunday.
2. Speed bumps installed before camping starts
3. 21 electrical issues in all campgrounds; good it wasn't super-hot!
4. 110 backflow preventer issues; 55 commercial & 55 regular camping. Will have. "Warning tags" ready for next year

- **Winter Storage**

1. Change in Office Hours from October 16 – November 10 to be more accommodating to our customers. See flyer in your director packets.

Old Business:

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

a. IAFE – Institute of Fair Management Courses – Christina Yunker

Christina Yunker presented to the Board that she would like to take the Institute of Fair Management Courses. The cost is \$2,500 per year. The course does require some travel to in person sessions, most of it is done online. You pay per course/program as you sign up for the courses.

MOTION by: Kristine Krisch, Second by: Angie Mingus

Motion to allow Christina Yunker to spend \$7,500 over three years on the IAFE courses was made by: Kristine Kirsch and the second was made by: Angie Mingus.

Motion passed 13-0

b. 4-H Removal Times – Kristine Kirsch

Kristine Kirsch brought up that she would like to see the removal time of 10 p.m. on Saturday night of Fair be allowed for the 4-H animals and have release time and day the same for all the animals. The Fair Board had discussion on this. ****Table discussion****

c. 4-H Funding Potential Increase – Tom Miller

Tom Miller brought up to the Board that he would like to give 4-H more money. When times were tough, we set the amount at \$15,000.00, I feel that now we are more stable we need to re-evaluate and give them more. The Fair Board had discussion on this. Emily Redmond and Kayla Irelan from the Youth Council spoke up from sitting in the crowd regarding this. Kayla Irelan stated, “the Youth Council would be happy to show you our financial records.” Bill Younts stated, “I think we should tie 4-H to a 3-year contract, set a figure and expectations of the contract.” ****Table discussion****

d. 4-H – Tricia Ulsh

Tricia Ulsh brought up to the Board regarding the rumor of the Fair Board having discussions regarding removing 4-H and going to an Open Class Fair. Tricia stated that she has been approached by people regarding this rumor that is going around. Angie Mingus stated, “that she would like to see our open class livestock area expand by adding more classes and draw people to show in our open class livestock.” The Fair Board had discussion.

e. Re-issuing Premium Checks from 2016 – 2018 – Christina Yunker

Christina Yunker presented to the Fair Board that she received a letter regarding re-issuing premium checks to a family from 2016 – 2018. The letter stated that the family had some family issues, and the checks were put in a place and just found. The family is asking to have the checks re-issued.

MOTION by: Debbie Davis, Second by: Gary Clark

Motion to re-issue the premium checks from 2016 – 2018 as presented, was made by: Debbie Davis and the second was made by: Gary Clark.

Motion passed 11-2

f. Winter Office Hours – Christina Yunker –

a. Tuesday & Thursday – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Dec. 4th – March 15th)

Christina Yunker presented to the Fair Board that she would like to change the Fair Office Hours to 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday's and Thursday's (Dec. 4th – March 15th).

MOTION by: Kristine Kirsch, Second by: Angie Mingus

Motion to approve presented Winter Office Hours, was made by: Kristine Kirsch and the second was made by: Angie Mingus.

Motion passed 13-0

g. Still Exhibit Judging and Placing – Penny Waltke

Penny Waltke brought up to the Fair Board the issue of people not receiving places even if they were the only ones in the class. When Penny was entering the placings for still exhibits, she came across several exhibits that did not receive a placing even if they were the only person exhibiting in the class. She made the decision and gave the people that did not place and were the only ones in their class, a place.

Adjournment of Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

MOTION by: Tom Miller, Second by: Debbie Davis

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by: Tom Miller and the second was made by: Debbie Davis.

Motion passed 13-0

Meeting Minutes taken and prepared by: Mindy Timm – Fair Board Secretary