

MEETING MINUTES

19TH DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 11:00 am

Directors Present: Miguel Avila, Luis Esparza, Teresa McWilliams, Nancy Melekian, Salvatore Milazzo, Mary Rose

Directors Absent: Michael Medel, Marshall Miller, Cecilia Tavera

Staff Present: Ben Sprague, CEO; Rosie Miranda, Events Coordinator; Vanessa Carachure, Staff

Guests Present: Kelly Elm, Lynne Sherman,

I. CALL TO ORDER: Director Milazzo called the meeting to order at 11:02 am.

II. ROLL CALL: Roll was taken, and a quorum was met.

MOTION: Director Esparza motioned to excuse the absence of Director Medel, Director Miller, and Director Tavera. Director Melekian seconded the motion. All in favor: Director Avila, Director Esparza, Director McWilliams, Director Melekian, Director Milazzo. No abstentions. Director Rose opposed. The motion **passed**.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment for items not on the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

CEO Sprague stated that the minutes were sent out, and no comments were received.

MOTION: Director Rose motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 26, 2023, and from November 9, 2023. Director Avila seconded the motion. All in favor: Director Avila, Director Esparza, Director McWilliams, Director Melekian, Director Milazzo, Director Rose. No abstentions, none opposed. The motion **passed**.

V. CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION: Director Rose motioned to approve all Consent Calendar, including all items under the Rental Agreements. Director Avila seconded the motion.

Public Comment was given by Lynne Sherman, and Kelly Elm offered a correction to the dates.

Motion **failed**.

MOTION: Director Rose motioned to approve all Consent Calendar, including all items under the Rental Agreements, with the correction that the Region II Horse Show would be from June 19-22. Director Avila seconded the motion. All in favor: Director Avila, Director Esparza, Director McWilliams, Director Melekian, Director Milazzo, Director Rose. No abstentions, none opposed. The motion **passed**.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. General Comments

President Milazzo stated the 2024 Budget reflects a much stronger financial position for the Showgrounds as a whole. The RFQ approval will support the creation of a Master Plan. He stated he was content to be at this point and moving forward.

VII. ACTION ITEMS

1. 2024 Budget

CEO Sprague stated the finalized budget included Board comments and had not been changed since the last time it was presented.

Director Rose asked about Schedule 6A and 6B since they were blank on the version that she received. CEO Sprague stated those items had not changed since the November meeting, and those pages were templates from CFSA. Director Rose stated she was glad to see the leave liability decrease.

MOTION: Director Rose motioned to move into a Closed Session. Director McWilliams seconded the motion.

Public Comment was given by Lynne Sherman and Karen Christensen.

All in favor: Director Avila, Director Esparza, Director McWilliams, Director Melekian, Director Milazzo, Director Rose. No abstentions, none opposed. The motion **passed**.

2. Master Plan RFQ Approval

Director McWilliams noted that there is not a section including the evacuation of large animals. CEO noted that it was mentioned elsewhere in the document but suggested for clarity adding a line 'large animal evacuation and emergency community resiliency' under Section B.

CEO Sprague noted that a preference for local vendors is mentioned in the document, but it is allowed to bring in outside vendors. Director Rose noted that in the previous meetings, they established that Section A, Part 4 should say 'within 100 miles' rather than 'within Santa Barbara,' as she was concerned that people would not apply due to those conditions. CEO Sprague stated this language came from the state.

MOTION: Director Esparza motioned to approve the Master Plan RFQ with the proposed amendment to Section B and Section A, Part 4, with additional minor edits to be approved by the Executive Committee.

Public Comment was given by Lynne Sherman

Director McWilliams seconded the motion. All in favor: Director Avila, Director Esparza, Director McWilliams, Director Melekian, Director Milazzo, Director Rose. No abstentions, none opposed. The motion **passed**.

VIII. CLOSED SESSION

President Milazzo stated the CEO Evaluation would be tabled, as only one response was received.

MOTION: Director Rose motioned to move into a Closed Session. Director Avila seconded the motion. All in favor: Director Avila, Director Esparza, Director McWilliams, Director Melekian, Director Milazzo, Director Rose. No abstentions, none opposed. The motion **passed**.

IX. OPEN SESSION

President Milazzo stated no action was taken during the Closed Session.

X. CEO REPORT

1. Warren Hall Update

CEO Sprague stated that DGS was finishing mold mitigation to finish out their original contract to fix the roof. That included painting the inside of the building. CCA was working on the slanted tile section of the roof that was not included in the DGS contract. CDFA provided \$170,000 to cover the expense of DGS's mismanagement of the project. There was not yet a completion date, but with both groups working, it was expected to move quickly. The project manager who mishandled the case was no longer with DGS. CEO Sprague stated he hoped it would be prepared before the Fair. Carpet purchase and bathroom renovations were scheduled. When it does open, a party will be held, and the press will be invited.

2. 2024 S.B. Fair & Expo

CEO Sprague stated the PR campaign would begin earlier this year.

3. General Comments

CEO Sprague highlighted that the Showgrounds was in a great financial position and working on several different projects with the help of positive and committed staff.

4. Kitchen Updates

CEO Sprague stated yearly kitchen rental contracts were being changed, as their appliances were previously included in the contracts. Most kitchen rentals require vendors to bring their equipment or cover the maintenance for those items so that standard was applied to the Showgrounds. All of the kitchens were rented except for Warren Hall, but there was a waiting list for Warren Hall.

Director Rose stated they had previously talked about sub-metering utilities to the kitchens and asked if there was an intention to apply it. CEO Sprague stated that sub-metering water would have the biggest impact, but they were still working on how to address the pipes since they were underground. This will be a first step in maintaining these items or having people bring in their things and getting rid of what is currently there. The per-square-foot cost of the kitchens will continue to be raised to match more closely with market rates.

5. RV Updates

CEO Sprague stated the Showgrounds has been working with the City of Santa Barbara to house some of their road construction equipment and material in exchange for compensation and repaving the RV park in its entirety and realigning it. The layout was updated so that more large RVs could be accommodated. The bid to repave the entire facility normally would have been \$3.4 million, so this partnership continues to benefit the grounds.

6. Upcoming Events

CEO Sprague stated that upcoming events included the re-opening of Warren Hall, the Orchid Show, the Hispanic Chamber dinner and expo, and more.

Director Melekian stated that last year, the Orchid Show was much higher than expected, and people are looking forward to the event in March 2024. She stated she hopes Warren Hall will be in better shape for the event. CEO Sprague stated he hoped the re-opening party would be held before the Orchid Show.

Director Avila stated on Friday, May 17, 2024, an all-day event will be held in Warren Hall. There will be an expo during the day and an inaugural dinner for the 170 members of the Santa Barbara Hispanic Chamber. He expects that 150 businesses will participate in the expo, even outside of the Santa Barbara area.

Director Avila stated he will have more information for the Board and staff in 2024, but he requested that the Showgrounds be in partnership with the event to increase exposure for both groups.

XI. LETTERS TO THE BOARD

Letters were included in the packet.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

President Milazzo adjourned the meeting at 12:56 am.

Respectfully submitted by Minutes Services.