

Hancock Co. Ag Association Meeting Minutes

Hancock Co. Fairgrounds, Sarah Burke Exhibit Hall

Monday, January 20, 2025 – 6:00 pm

Attendance: Jesse Melton, Debbie Vansickle, Holly Plank, Penny Hunt, Josh Myles, Delanie Melton, David Garmene, David Wildman, Mike Elsbury; ExOfficio - Rob Barnhart and Amber Barks. Absent – Brooke Green, Mike Manship, Lauren Fogle, Matt Joyce, Ryan Bodell

Meeting was called to order by President Holly Plank. Minutes from the December meeting were presented by Debbie Vansickle. Correction in the minutes that there was a loss instead of a profit for Christmas at the Fair event. Jesse Melton moved to approve the minutes as corrected and Mike Elsbury seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Debbie Vansickle presented the Treasurer's report. Balances as of 12.31.25 are – Checking/Savings \$63,606.18 with total assets of 1,281,839.36. On January 10th, \$12,000 was transferred from ATM account to pay for the \$12,700 insurance bill. On January 17th, \$5000 was transferred from the livestock fund. The county appropriations of \$95,000 should be received around January 22nd. Once received, the \$5000 will be transferred back to the livestock account. No plans to transfer back to the ATM unless there is a surplus. David Wildman moved to approve the financial report as presented. Delanie Melton seconded the motion and motion passed.

Extension Report – Amber Barks

- Amber Barks reported that they are in the process of finding a Poultry Superintendent. Requested that if anyone had suggestions to let her know.
- June 21st will be Ambassador Day at fair. Question was asked on what was needed for that. Amber will get back with the needs.
- The Affiliate Summit that Hancock Co. will be on February 8th at Miami County.
- There will be a Leader Meeting on February 10th.
- Amber will be teaching Indiana 4-H Quality Livestock Care on February 5th and March 6th
- Beef Tag April 13th, Lamb Tag May 4th, Goat Tag, May 8th
- Awards Committee meeting is January 20, 2025 at the Extension Office
- The Fair Books being printed. There is a copy on the Extension Office website.

Old Business

- County Council Meeting – Holly Plank
 - o Holly sent a recap from the financial meeting that the exec committee had regarding the County funds we will be receiving. Checking to see what requirements are for bidding and quotes for the projects we have identified. The understanding is we need three estimates for each project then we chose which one we want to go with on each project. After that, we need to make a public letting on that project. Pending on a few things we need to get to the financial support. We are working on quotes for the concrete project for the Pioneer Building; interior repair for the block bathrooms; quote for a security system from Ninestar; three quotes for the PA system and pavement. We are scheduling another meeting before Feb 1 with the financial support. It was stated we need to document what bid we want for each project.
- Lift Station – Holly Plank
 - o Holly consulted with Steven Elsbury on signing the adjustment on the easement that was requested by the city. That agreement has been sent to city so that the project moving so it will be ready for fair.

New Business –

- Committee Reports
 - o Buildings & Grounds -
 - Old Shop Building

Permit expires March 23rd. In order for the West Commons being approved that building has to be gone. Options – 1. move and fix it up to code, maybe another permit; leave and fix up; 3. Auction building online with the condition that it is moved and taken down. Possibly add to a Huber Auction – Holly will ask. Bids can be dropped off at Hubers or Fairgrounds. Whoever buys signs a contract on when the building has to be off the property. David Wildman moved the building be offered in auction, with a retain right of refusal, with a contract to have building removed by March 8th, a certificate of insurance with liability clause. 2nded – Delanie. Motion carried.

- Building was topic of discussion. Bids for capital improvement projects were discussed. Doug Rodebeck coming out to discuss items of repair. Rick Lawrence is coming out to show where all drains are. Both willing to help do what has to be done. Next meeting January 30th.
 - o Budget
No report
 - o Carnival – Holly Plank
 - Schedule – Went to the fairs and festivals convention and met with the carnival vendor. Company had the data from 2024, showing what days had what attendance and sales. Schedule was presented with special days. Need to advertise the ticket prices because they are different each day.
 - Ticket Sales
 - Cost – question on cost of presale tickets. Holly checking on. Prices will be the same as in 2024.
 - Presales – Advanced sale tickets can begin at anytime. Possibly have pop ups at ball games, Sunnyside greenhouse, and other times we would be selling prior to the fair.
 - Ticket Sellers – Need to find a group to be the ticket sellers. Difficult as a board to sell tickets. Possibly pay 50% of sales to group. Will take a shift or group for the whole thing. Priority to get that done as soon as possible. Need 6 people per shift over 16 years of age
 - Vendors – Penny Hunt
 - The Food and Vendors Contract is not finalized yet but working on it. Should be done by February meeting
 - Fair Events
 - Report was –
 - Brooke Green has been getting quotes for Barnyard Party Pals Petting Zoo; Mommatown continuing this year;
 - There will be no pig races
 - Silly Safari has reached out about coming back for 2025
 - Indiana Wild and Party Pals are similar to Silly Safari; possible have each for one day each. Possibly put Silly Safari in the Pioneer Building on Kid's Day.
 - Yard Card by Sarah will be \$295 for 9 days
 - The Cavalier Band for the Pioneer Band will be \$500; entertainment in Pioneer Building on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
 - Chainsaw art available anytime during the fair. Just need to schedule him.
 - Mechanical Bull would be \$1585 for 4 hours. Maybe charge to ride this year.
 - Bounce Houses and Dunk Tank cost will be \$3390 (would be the 3 days without carnival). Question regarding filling those 3 days without the carnival. It was stated that we are not sure how many people will be there during those days.
 - Penny Hunt moved to have Silly Safari on June 18th and Indiana Wild on June 21st for \$1200 each. Jesse Melton seconded and motion passed.

- Penny Hunt moved to have the Yard Card by Sarah for the 9 days for \$295. Josh Myles seconded and motion carried.
- Penny Hunt moved to have the board take on the entertainment for the Pioneer Building, capped at \$1500 for the week and drinks. Motion tabled. Holly Plank will talk to Kevin Quick with the Pioneer Building group and have the discussion about costs for entertainment and soda costs. Also talk about drink prices changing to \$2 for Sarsaparilla and Crème Soda to cover costs.
- Chainsaw Artist – Mike Elsbury moved to have him on Tuesday – Thursday, with 3 shows for 3 days at \$1200/day. Penny Hunt seconded. Motion passed. Maybe set a tent for the audience for to protect from elements. Rob Barnhart will work on that.
- Barnyard Party Pals – cost \$4275 for 9 days; \$2850 for 6 days. David Wildman moved to have the Barnyard Party Pals for 6 days at \$2850. Mike Elsbury seconded the motion and the motion passed.
- No Bounce Houses this year
- Mechanical Bull – Penny Hunt moved to have the Mechanical Bull for 4 hours at \$1585, located outside the multipurpose arena and charge \$5 per ticket to ride on the night of Extreme Bullriding; Jesse Melton seconded and the motion passed.
- Discussion on regarding the tent sides for food court and multipurpose arena for events. Mike Elsbury moved to get from same vendor as last year. Debbie Vansickle seconded and motion passed.
- Multi Purpose Arena Events
Brooke Green and Lloyd Arthur have worked on the schedule for events for the fair. The Schedule is -
 - June 17th - TK Rodeo proposal - \$15,000 (parade night)
 - June 18th – TK Extreme Bulls proposal \$20,000
 - June 19th – Horse Pull \$2,500 – question on premiums included in that price
 - June 20th – Donkey Ball \$1,500
 - June 21st – Monster Truck \$16,000 for 4 trucks; each additional truck is \$3,000
 - June 22nd – Tractor, Truck and Semi Pull - \$20,000
 They are requesting a \$10,000 advertising budget to try to get increased attendance. The total expense for the Multipurpose events is \$85,000
Penny Hunt moved to approve all proposed schedule events at announced prices with the Horse Pull contingent on staying at the \$2500 rate to be requested in the Tourism Grant. Mike Elsbury seconded and motion passed.
 - Hall of Fame – Debbie
 - A form has been developed and ready for nominations for the Hall of Fame. Deadline is March 3rd for nominations for this year. There will be a dedication program prior to the fair.
 - In search of the Achievement Record Book winners photos that used to hang in the fair office. It was stated that they are possible stored above the kitchen. The committee would like to reframe and place in a prominent place for recognition.
 - Advertisement
 - Annie Grinstead is working on an advertising proposal. Holly Plank will send her the schedule of events
 - Sponsorship
 - Holly Plank and Annie Grinstead have been working on creating a new sponsorship packet. They are also working on a budget for that.
 - Holly Plank is preparing a grant for Tourism and is submitting it for \$150,000.
 - Dave Garmene commented that the schedule tri-fold that was made last year was worth having. It was also suggested to have social media pieces as well as more paid ads on social media
 - There were questions on each sponsorship levels
- General Fair Prep
 - Police and Fire

- We need to confirm for parade coverage and multipurpose events. Penny Hunt will work on getting a commitment for those. The Mutual Aid coordinates those efforts. We need to request an ambulance be on grounds every night. An additional ambulance needs to be on grounds on the north side for the events on June 17th, 18th, 21st and 22nd.
- Parade Permits need to be established. We need all the proper inspections. Question about cleaning crew – Rob Barnhart will talk to the ones from last year, B & K Cleaning. Rob Barnhart is working on a trash vendor.

Next Meeting Dates

- The Working Meeting is February 3rd @ 5:45 PM . Tony Carroll from Purdue will be joining us at the meeting. It was requested that Amber Barks ask how long he needs for his portion..
- The Monthly Board Meeting is February 17th @ 6PM

Mike Elsbury moved to adjourn the meeting and Delanie Melton seconded the motion. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Debbie Vansickle, Secretary

Hancock Co. Ag Association Meeting Minutes

Hancock Co. Fairgrounds, Sarah Burke Exhibit Hall

Monday, February 17, 2025 – 6:00 pm

Attendance: Jesse Melton, Debbie Vansickle, Holly Plank, Penny Hunt, Josh Myles, Delanie Melton, David Garmene, David Wildman, Mike Manship, ExOfficio - Rob Barnhart and Amber Barks. Absent – Mike Elsbury, Brooke Green, Lauren Fogle, Ryan Bodell and Matt Joyce

Meeting was called to order by President Holly Plank. Minutes from the January meeting were presented by Debbie Vansickle. Corrections to the minutes: Balance as of 12.31.24 instead of 25 and corrected wording concerning carnival ticket sales to read “Possibly pay 50% of our share up to \$3000 to the group.” Penny Hunt moved to approve the minutes as corrected and Mike Manship seconded. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

Mike Manship reported that the general fund has a balance of \$122,328.59. He also reported that the tractor is paid off and we received the County Tax levy of \$95,000. Debi Hill asked about a check from Farm Bureau to Rodebeck Mechanical has not been cashed for \$2,500. Holly Plank will check on its status. Jesse Melton moved to except the financial report and Penny Hunt seconded the motion. Motion carried

Extension Report – Amber Barks

Amber Barks reported the following -

- The 4-H Handbook is printed and available at the Extension Office
- There was a good turnout for the recent leaders mtg
- The 4-H Ambassadors are having a Make and Take event at the Sugar Creek Library on April 12th
- There are two 4-H Quality Livestock Care Training scheduled for March 6th and 17th
- Ninestar will be having a 4-H program at Eastern Hancock to make Bristle Bots on March 11th
- Working on a partnership with Montessori Science Academy
- Meeting with a possible Poultry Superintendent on Thursday

Old Business

- Affiliate Meeting Recap

Penny Hunt and David Wildman attended the recent State Affiliate Meeting. Penny Hunt reported that the meeting was very informative. It was suggested to add youth back to the ag board - possibly 2 – one livestock member, one non livestock member. A concern was raised about having a minor voting. Another point at the meeting was made that the relationship between educators and affiliates needs to improve. David Wildman reported about the activity of structure levels of 4-H, going all the way to USDA. Managing the image of the 4-H program is protected for everyone. It was also brought out in the meeting that all people handling money or making decisions with money are bonded through the insurance.

New Business –

- New Ag Association member request was presented for Austin Farmer. Penny Hunt moved to accept Austin Farmer as an ag association member and Jesse Melton seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- Committee Reports
 - o Buildings & Grounds –
 - It was reported that bids are being solicited for capital improvements for the first phase. Once the money from the county is appropriated and in our account, we are ready to start projects.
 - The process of getting the money from the county was explained. Ag Association board members attended the County Council meeting on February 12th to support the attorney as she explained the legal process on receiving the appropriated money. The Phase 1 money is being given as a forgivable loan. With that, a Public Notice must be published in the newspaper. Following the published notice, a Public Hearing and presentation has to go before the Economic

Development Council on March 11th. On March 12th, the County Council accepts the EDC recommendation and papers are signed on March 13th.

- The old shop building sold for \$925 and buyer has started removing the building.
- The permit on the West Commons building expires on March 23rd and with a promise on an extension. Currently waiting on the city to finish the Lift Station before we can finish the West Commons.
- The tractor paid off
- Budget - No report
- Carnival – Holly Plank
 - Ticket Sales - No progress on groups selling tickets. Penny Hunt and Rob Barnhart are talking to groups to sell tickets as a fundraiser for their organizations. All the ticket booths need to be manned during the Carnival hours.
 - Vendors – Penny Hunt

The Food and Vendors Contracts were presented with a request to adjust vendor rental prices. The proposed adjustments were - Commercial Vendors \$350 (same as last year); Micro Food Vendors increase from \$250 to \$350 (making same as Commercial Vendors); Food Vendors increase from \$625 to \$750. Farm Bureau and York Rite stay the same at \$1000. Dave Garmene discussed vendor fee structure at LaPorte County. A motion was made by Josh Myles for Fair Food Vendors to be set at \$950 and increase electric drop charges to \$100 and \$200. Motion seconded by Jesse Melton and motion carried. Josh Myles moved to raise the Micro Food Vendor contract to \$500. Motion was seconded by Penny Hunt and motion passed. Penny Hunt made a motion to increase Commercial Vendor contract to \$500 and Jesse Melton seconded. Motion passed.
- Fair Events were reviewed.
- Austin Farmer said the Junior Master Gardeners need a community service project. They are looking at putting planters around the grounds and doing a scavenger hunt and incorporating the planters in the hunt. Participants would receive a prize if he/she found all 12 planters.
- The schedule for the Multipurpose Arena Events changed a little. Revised schedule is -
 - June 17th - TK Rodeo
 - June 18th – TK Extreme Bulls
 - June 19th – Monster Truck
 - June 20th – Donkey Ball
 - June 21st – Horse Pull
 - June 22nd – Tractor, Truck and Semi Pull
- Park Place Catering would like to sell alcohol during Multipurpose Arena events. This could generate more revenue for the Ag Association, estimated at \$500 - \$2000. Park Place would carry the liability insurance, check ids and serve the alcohol. It was suggested to create an isolated area within the Multipurpose arena area to contain those with alcohol. A motion was made by Dave Garmene to include alcohol sales by a vendor for the non 4-H ticketed entertainment at the multipurpose arena. These events will take place after the 4-H Horse and Pony shows are over. Josh Myles seconded and the motion carried.
- Hall of Fame – Debbie Vansickle
 - A nomination form was sent to all Ag Association members that we had emails for. Hard copies of the nominations forms are available. The deadline for the Hall of Fame nominations is March 3rd for this year. Honorees will be displayed inside the Exhibit Hall.
- Advertising for the Fair – Holly Plank
 - Holly Plank met with Annie Grinstead and they are working on a fair sponsorship packet/flyer. They are streamlining the sponsorship levels. They are also working on fair schedule flyers to get in the schools after spring break and information in newsletters. A separate livestock schedule is being developed like last year.
- Sponsorship – Holly Plank

- Day sponsors will be \$1000 again this year. Holly stated that they are trying to move away from specific event banners and do a more general banner that would be up all week. Also looking at getting multiple presenters at \$5000 each instead of one big presenter at \$25,000.
- General Fair Prep
 - Police and Fire
 - Penny Hunt is meeting with the Police/Sherrif Department to get with Mutual Aid on Friday for the needs we have for fair. Additional ambulance service is needed at the Multipurpose Arena for the events on June 17th, 18th, 21st and 22nd.
- Going back to the motion made on serving alcohol at the Multipurpose Arena Events, David Wildman suggested Holly Plank share the motion with Tony Carrell on state 4-H staff with Amber Barks copied on the email.
- Linda Petty wanted to make sure the Multipurpose arena is ready for horse and pony practice that begins in late March, early April. She also suggested postponing fundraising for backdrop until the capital improvements are made.
- Amber Barks asked if Barb Pescitelli had been contacted to chair the parade again this year. Question was asked about entry fee for this year. It was stated that we were trying to find a sponsor to be able to waive the fee. Grand Marshall could be the sponsor and lead off parade.
- Amber Barks informed the board that there is going to be an Exhibit Hall Committee formed to revive the Exhibit Hall and displays.
- The Indiana State Fair "Step Right Up". Penny Hunt moved to use the state fair theme for the parade theme. Jesse Melton seconded the motion and motion carried.
- A question was asked about the status of the Pioneer Building in regards to running the entertainment; displaying of tractors and selling pop. Holly Plank stated she has reached out to Kevin Quick who has been overseeing the Pioneer Building and has had no response. Penny Hunt is working on a one page contract for tractor exhibitors to be able to display their tractors.

Next Meeting Dates

- The Working Meeting is March 3rd @ 5:30 PM .
- The Monthly Board Meeting is March 17th @ 6PM

Penny Hunt moved to adjourn the meeting and Mike Manship seconded the motion. The motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Debbie Vansickle, Secretary