

Minutes of the Farmers Institute Directors Meeting held on MONDAY, July 20 @ 6 p.m. in the Cobble Hill Hall with social distancing practised.

Those present: Roger Painter - President, Jason Walker - Vice President, Robin Brett - Treasurer, Roy Davies, George Robbins, Bill Wikkerink, Bill Dumont, Blair Herbert, Dave Bilkoski and Gerry Giles - Secretary. Apologies: John English, Lynne Pohynayko

Moved George Robbins

Second Robin Brett

the agenda be accepted as distributed with the addition of Alistair MacGregor.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved Jason Walker

Second Blair Herbert

the June 15, 2020 minutes be accepted as distributed.

MOTION CARRIED

Business from the Director's Minutes:

- GST update - Robin reported the information has been filed for registration
- 4-H agreement recommendations - Roy/Roger/Gerry - on hold
- Constitution and Bylaw - on hold until we can meet
- Shaw service provisions - on hold until March of 2021
- Changing web host providers - complete with previous providers notified
- Volunteer Recognition - Bill Dumont said he would like to see a committee struck to discuss better recognition of volunteers. Roger, Blair and Roy agreed to form this committee and report back to the next meeting
- Alistair MacGregor - the question was asked whether he or his office had responded to our request for assistance. Gerry indicated the office had provided a list of potential funding sources and it was agreed she would forward this list to Blair and Jason to review.

Correspondence:

1. CVRD Covid19 Safety Plan was received with appreciation for information.

Treasurer's Report - Robin reviewed her financial report, which is attached to these minutes. She also reviewed the Covid budget along with the Financial Statements and provided a synopsis of where the Farmers Institute now stands with respect to funds available for normal operating procedures. After much discussion about the services required for the hall and whether or not expenses have been cut back, it was

Moved Jason Walker

Second Bill Wikkerink

the financial information provided by the Treasurer be accepted.

MOTION CARRIED

Fundraising - Roger led a discussion on how the Farmers Institute can raise funds given our traditional funding sources have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. Some ideas presented included the following: virtual auction, direct appeals, funding grants, signage promoting local agriculture along with other ideas. It was agreed this item would be referred to the executive committee for further consideration.

Rentals Report - Gerry provided a rental report listing the groups and organizations that were looking for rental space. The various cleaning requirements mandated by the

Provincial Health Officer were also reviewed. It was agreed Roy and Blair would work with Gerry to see if there is an innovative way to permit rentals. After a discussion about the pros and cons of renting the Stu Armour and the Cobble Hill Halls, it was

Moved Dave Bilkoski
Second Robin Brett

the buildings not be rented out during the month of August and this item be placed on the August Director's meeting agenda for further consideration.

MOTION CARRIED

Maintenance Report - Bill Dumont provided his report and noted the following:

- broken water pipes on the fairgrounds continues to be a problem
- the water supply inside the scale shed was broken and leaking. It has been replaced with an exterior tap/supply
- the irrigation controller for the trees on the horse field has been replaced
- the metal posts/stands in the horse field have been installed so the memorial plaques can be ordered.

Note: George Robbins left the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

A revised 2020+ Capital and Maintenance Budget Proposals/Project list was also reviewed. After discussion it was

Moved Gerry Giles
Second Blair Herbert

the revised 2020+ Capital and Maintenance Budget Proposals be referred to the executive for their consideration and prioritization after which it be returned to the Board for discussion.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved Bill Dumont
Second Roy Davies

the following five people be recognized on plaques in the horse field and further the President contact the families of these five to ensure they agree with this recognition being made: Ian Christison, John McLeod, Romey Pringle, Shirley Thomson and Dan Cooke.

MOTION CARRIED

New Business - Virtual Fair Update - Gerry brought the Board up to date on the website development, transfer to the new server, the Fair Catalogues and sponsors, advertisements and other aspects of the Virtual Fair. Although not yet open for entries three have been submitted to date.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Gerry Giles, Secretary

As we are all aware, large projects were started too early in 2020 at a time when income is traditionally low, and some projects went well over budget. This put our current earnings in a loss position larger than we have ever experienced. We might have recouped this loss with the profit from this year's fair, but that was not to be.

This net loss may fluctuate up and down a bit over the next couple of months, but there is absolutely no sense in kidding ourselves that we aren't going to be in a much larger net loss position by the end of the fiscal year – October 31, 2020. As well, for the first 6 months of our next fiscal year, we are also going to be in a loss position until next June when the sponsorship money starts to come in for the 2021 Fair.

These are facts we cannot change.

Of more importance right now is how we survive the coming months with significantly reduced rental income and fair profit. And when rentals begin again, how do we plan so we can extend our survival if there is a second shut down?

Last month, Jason and I prepared a Covid Budget which outlined the current money on hand, and the essential expenses we expect to pay over the next months.

When we looked at this budget a month ago, there was a shortfall of \$4000 to meet expenses to April 30, 2021. Since there was no way to cover that \$4000 shortfall, it meant we would have to be making some serious decisions in February 2021 regarding what essential services would have to be cut.

Now, thanks to a grant from Duncan Dabbers (which is reserved for a specific purpose) and a possible \$6000 profit from the sponsorship money for the Virtual Fair, **if we stick to this Covid Budget** we now estimate that we will be able to hold out until June 30, 2021 before serious decisions will have to be made.

I mentioned the fluctuations over the next months: Some of the sponsorship money has come in already and over the next month or two the bank account may give the impression we are fine. But that is a false impression that is created simply because few fair expenses have come in yet. Any extra funds that we have after the Virtual Fair is over, must be spent on our essential bills. It will likely be considerable time before the provincial health officer increases the numbers allowed at gatherings and before people feel safe in attending large events. So even when rentals start again, they are not going to be what they once were. And whatever profit we have from the Virtual Fair is not going to be anywhere near what we might have expected from a normal fair.

When Covid shut us down in the middle of March, I seriously wondered if we could survive the significant hole in our current Earnings, the loss of Seedy Saturday, Movie Program, rentals, and the Fair.

My thanks to Jason for pushing us to start some serious planning. By reducing our spending to only basic essentials, we can extend the time to sustain the Institute until next June; with the hope that with that longer time frame, the institute can last out until things have gotten back to a new normal.

Like it or not, we are standing at the edge of a precipice. **We must keep our spending to absolute essentials only, so that the Institute can sustain itself for as long as possible.** The alternative is running out of money and turning the management of the halls over to the CVRD because we no longer have funds to keep the lights and heat on, or to pay to insure the property.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Brett, Treasurer