

Minutes of the Farmers Institute Directors meeting held in the Youth Hall located at 3565 Watson Avenue at 7 pm on Monday, September 16, 2024.

Those present: Roger Painter – President, Roy Davies – Vice President, Russell Dann, Jayne Shaw, Bill Wikkerink, George Baird, Michael St. Clair and Gerry Giles.

Apologies: Betsy Burr, Scott Robinson

Moved/second
the agenda be accepted as distributed.

MOTION CARRIED

Moved/second
the minutes of July 15th Directors Meeting be accepted as distributed.

MOTION CARRIED

Business Arising:

- What can we do to improve the Horse Field – Gerry Brecken – Roy – a discussion ensued on the condition of the field. Roy has had a conversation with Gerry Brecken at the Fair, which had led him to believe we either strip the field back to bare ground then build a proper horse ring, likely cost around \$500,000 or more, or we continue to do as we have done in the past and invite the mini horses to participate more fully in the Fair. Additional comments were made about the back of the field and using it for some horticulture venture.
- Fundraising Gala – October 26th - Beef & Pork and other items. Note: the Cobblestone has offered to support the event – meal and bar – tickets \$75 each. There has been very little done toward the evenings event.
- The report on the Chinese Fundraising Dinner held August 17th was given. It was an exceptionally successful event raising just shy of \$2700 for the South Cowichan Seniors Luncheon group. A very special thank you and our appreciation goes always to James and Anita Yeung of the Cobble Hill Market for their continuing support.
- A report on September 13th catering to the Vintage Car Club of Canada was given. This was another very successful catering event with help from the seniors lunch cooks.

Correspondence:

- The letter was sent to Director Wilson re the band stand as directed in June. His response was less than supportive. However, Roy reported after seeing the band stand location at the Fair he may have changed his mind.
- Partial requirements for the CVRD grant were filed – ask this year is for \$30,000 which Director Wilson has said he will support.

President's Report – Roger indicated he had been exceptionally busy with the Fair and that was his main focus. He was pleased he has managed to get the stage at the back of the hall repaired in time for the Highland Dance group and it was reported they were very happy with the condition of it this year. The cleanup of the grounds went well and they were in good shape for the Fair.

Treasurer's Report – Robin indicated in the aftermath of the 2024 Fair, the bank account has quite a bit of money in it. She is waiting until all the bills from the Fair were paid before she transfers money into the general savings account and into the Floor Reserve. These transfers will be done in September. We hope to have a total of \$50,000 in the Floor Reserve account so that the invoice can be paid when it comes in.

Looking at the Income Statement, we've made \$854.21 on catering to the end of August 31, 2024, as we head into our busy catering period.

The Fair made \$27,004.33. There may be a few more invoices to come through, but I think I've recorded most of them now.

The Meat Pie program made \$11,811.11 since November 1, 2023, and soon we will be back making them again.

The Chinese Food Fundraising Dinner made \$2,625.30 and that was paid to South Cowichan Seniors in September. Anita and James donated all the food for this event, another example of their kindness and service to this community.

And as usual, the United Way Technical Upgrade shows the loss because the income came through in the previous fiscal year and most of the expenses fell in this fiscal year. I should mention that program particularly because the grant from the United Way made a huge difference in the electrical for the gates. We were able to take cards as well as cash at the gates and for food services, and reports note that 51% of people paid using a card this year. The upgraded electricity will also benefit the Cenotaph and will make it a lot easier at that event for the volunteers doing the set up.

None of the money we earn would be possible without the volunteers who work on everything from shopping and cooking for food services, cleaning up the grounds, making meat pies and selling them, fundraising, Seedy Saturday greeters and seed sorters, to the Show and Shine people who park the cars, and the hundreds of volunteers at the Fair doing everything from registration, gate shifts, conveners and judges, helping vendors, organizing 4H and the rest of the livestock area, putting up and taking down fencing, garbage and recycling detail, managing the Youth Hall all day, and the countless other jobs that have to be done.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Institute.

Moved/second
the treasurer's report be accepted as presented.

MOTION CARRIED

Secretary's Report - Gerry said she enjoyed her trip to Toronto, Niagara Falls and New York and thanked the Board for giving her the time off. She said she really appreciated it although she did continue to answer emails and book rentals while she was away!

With respect to the Fair, several days before it, she wanted the Board to know she transitions away from being an active part of the organizing committee to working on providing food services for the Farmers Institute. Doing that takes three full days of prep time as it involves the pancake breakfast where more than 300 people are served, a cold plate luncheon in the dining room, which needs to be better advertised... as well as preparing food for the cook cart for sale for lunch outside. Gerry said she is lucky enough to have a volunteer staff of about 25 – 30 people but that is why she changes her name on Fair day and refuse to have anything on her person that anyone can call her on. She said she heard the Tzinquaw Dancers and thought they were a great addition to the Fair.

Rentals are up and they have been relatively problem free. However, she has indicated she has run into a few renters are ringing alarm bells and one that is pushing the envelope as far as the

Rental Rules go. But her rental is not until next October so we'll see what happens between now and then.

The health inspector looked at our kitchen in August before the Fair and it seems that the Farmers Institute is now responsible for ensuring renters, who do not have caterers providing food services at their event, hold and produce "Food Safe Certificates" as part of their rental agreements. A new level of complexity as it likely puts more responsibility on the Farmers Institute for ensuring all food served from the kitchen is free of anything that could cause food poisoning.

The first Seniors lunch since July was held last Monday and we had approximately 130 in attendance along with the volunteers so about 150 overall. We need to get this kind of attendance in order to make a profit so here's hoping the numbers keep up.

She indicated she has been too busy over this past month to look into the Critical Policy issue and what is available through Victim Services but hopefully will get to this in October.

The Highland Dance group was extremely grateful for the work done to restore the stage for their event and asked this be pass along their gratitude.

As part of my report, permission is being sought to raise the rental rates at all three of our halls to those shown below:

Cobble Hill Hall

From \$35 per hour to \$45 per hour (4 hour minimum) for morning

From \$35 per hour to \$45 per hour (4 hour minimum) for afternoons to 5 pm

From \$45 per hour to \$50 per hour (4 hour minimum) for evening after 5 pm

For an 18-hour rental from \$420 to \$600.00

3 Day Event Package

From \$1250 to \$1550.00

This gives a \$430 discount over renting three days separately

Youth Hall

From \$20 per hour to \$35 per hour with a 4-hour minimum

8-hour and more from \$150 to \$280.00

Stu Armour Hall

From \$25 per hour to \$35 per hour (4 hour minimum) for morning

From \$30 per hour to \$45 per hour (4 hour minimum)

Full Day 18 hours or more from \$275 to \$460.00

Minimum Damage Deposit from \$600 to \$750

Minimum Damage Deposit for a 3-day event from \$1,000 to \$1,500

GST applies to all rental rates

A \$100 deposit is required to book all halls.

Moved/second

the rental rates be increased as recommended above.

MOTION CARRIED

A huge thank you to Robin who did the research on the rental rates; however, our rental charges have been too low for quite some time.

Rentals Report – the September/October were attached to the agenda and no questions were asked.

Maintenance Report – Roger said the car show crew did a very good job setting up the ground for the Vintage Car Club of Canada and issued a special thank you to them. He indicated Frank Bonner did a great job in building a new entry gate for the Fair. Roger brought up the topic of purchasing the Cook Cart from South Cowichan Rotary and he read their letter where their asking price is \$10,000. Various comments were made about whether or not the cart would be an asset or a liability. Storage was an expressed concern as was towing. At the end of the discussion it was felt other priorities, such as the wiring in the Baird Barn and a tractor to service the grounds, took precedence over this purchase and if another grill was needed for pancake breakfasts, or other events, then one could always be borrowed. Therefore, it was agreed by the Board the Cook Cart would not be purchased from South Cowichan Rotary.

Preliminary Fair Report – Roger indicated from his perspective the KIDS ZONE was a huge success, the parade had very much improved this year, it was great to have the mini horse show and the Poultry show back, the stage location in the Cobble Hill Common was a terrific improvement over previous years – thank you to Scott and his company, a big thank you to Cicely McLachlan and Kathy Pringle for all of the work they do as Fair Registrars and of course Robin Brett as the Fair Secretary and Treasurer for the tremendous amount of work she does year after year for the Fair. Roger also said he thought the road crew was very good this year and the Mill Bay Fire Department is always an asset to the Fair.

New Business:

- Volunteer/Sponsor dinner – Saturday, October 5th gather between 5:30 and 6 pm with meal service at 6:30 pm. Chef is Sean Napier with assistance from Seniors Lunch cooks. Sean is a Chef and former owner of Gossips restaurant in Duncan and was head Chef at Brentwood College for years. We will acknowledge trophy winners simply by asking them to stand and by having a printed sheet at each table listing the trophy winners.
- Veterans Dinner – Thursday, October 24th at the Legion – Gerry will organize but we do need volunteer help.

Moved/second

All director's reports be accepted as given.

MOTION CARRIED

Next Directors meeting – October 21st, 2024.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Submitted by,



Gerry Giles,
Secretary