



**Location:** Brussels Library

**Date:** Wednesday, April 5, 2023

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

## Brussels Agricultural Society General Meeting Minutes

### In Attendance

Kate Aitcheson, Peggy Aitcheson, Monique Baan, Joan Bernard, Sandra Cable, Cathy Cardiff, Janelle Cardiff, Jeff Cardiff, Matt Cardiff, Dorothy Cummings, Mary Douma, Murray Hoover, Gail Jaycock, Sandra Machan, Rhonda McArter, Crystal McCallum, Pam McLellan, Glenda Morrison, Justin Morrison, Zoellyn Onn, Maggie Speer, Mary Ann Thompson, Reg Vinnicombe, and Jill Wagemans.

**Regrets:** Linda Garland, Pauleen Kerkhof, John Lowe, and Sean Mitchell.

**NOTE:** Quorum achieved.

### Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed. D. Cummings requested that the following two items be added to New Business: Waterline to the Shed and West Door of the Shed. The motion to approve the agenda as amended (Z. Onn) was seconded (D. Cummings) and passed.

### Approval of Minutes

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed. The motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2023 meeting (Z. Onn) was seconded (J. Morrison) and passed.

### President's Report

R. Vinnicombe welcomed attendees and gave updates on the action items from the last meeting. These updates are noted throughout these minutes. He also reminded all **Sub-committees and Fair Section Lead's to provide him with lists of their members.**

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## Homecraft President's Report

On behalf of L. Garland, R. Vinnicombe shared that L. Garland has been busy securing judges for the 2023 Brussels Fall Fair. He added that she is proposing that our Society consider increasing the honorarium we provide and mileage we pay to judges. Currently we provide judges \$15.00/hour and \$0.50/km. District 8 is suggesting that it's Societies provide its judges \$18.00/hour and \$0.55/km. This will be further discussed at the District 8 Spring Meeting. Discussion ensued. M. Baan asked if we have had judges refuse to participate because of the current remuneration. P. McLellan stated, "no". M. Baan added that it was just last year that we increased our honorarium and mileage rate for judges and that we do provide them with free lunch. M. Douma suggested that our Society should be consistent with District 8's direction, which D. Cummings agreed with. **The plan is to wait until a decision is made by District 8 and to then revisit this.**

## Treasurer's Report

On behalf of J. Lowe, G. Morrison shared the following financial report:

Item	Amount	Notes
TD Canada Trust	\$9,937.26	
Manulife Advantage	\$10,637.08	2.85%
Manulife GIC #1 0358	\$6,702.82	2.75% matures Mar. 1, 2024
Manulife GIC #3 7268	\$4,314.03	0.85% matures Dec. 18, 2023
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$31,591.19</b>	As of March 29, 2023

### Income:

- Fair prize donors/sponsors: \$50.00
- Memberships: \$15.00
- AGM meal payments: \$20.00

### Expenses

- Farm and Food Care Ontario annual membership \$350.00
- Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies (OAAS) convention:
  - Registration x3 (\$180.80 each): \$542.40
  - Hotel and meal/travel allowance (Z. Onn and R. Vinnicombe): \$875.08
  - Meal/travel allowance (L. Vader): \$100.00
  - Auction donation: \$100.51
- Program Guide (Ontario Agri-Food): \$20.00
- Auditor gifts x 2: \$100.00
- Printing of annual general meeting packages: \$161.88

J. Lowe's report also noted that he:

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- Has received financial donations from the Brussels Lions Club and the 5 Star Quilt Guild and is anticipating a donation from the Brussels Optimist Club (all to support the 2023 Brussels Fall Fair). He added that **he will be connecting with Allan Johnston in August regarding their typical Fair donation**
- Paid our annual District 8 affiliation fee and is waiting on a receipt
- Has submitted for our annual OMAFRA grant and anticipates hearing about it in April
- Anticipates hearing about our annual grant requests to Morris-Turnberry and Huron East in June
- Has been unable to connect with bank staff to arrange for the GIC purchase as previously approved by the membership, but that he **continues to work on this**. J. Bernard asked why we are having such difficulty securing a GIC. R. Vinnicombe replied that we are having trouble getting a bank staff assigned to us, which G. Morrison attested is a real issue
- Has been working with Meredith at AssistExpo to setup our software and anticipates that **he will be calling a meeting with the Fair Section Leads by the end of April to demonstrate the setup to date**. He added that no payment to AssistExpo has been made to date and that they will invoice us once the software is customized and up and running (\$700.00 - 800.00)
- Reviewed our books and our Society did not make any donation of Ladies Night proceeds to the Brussels, Morris & Grey (BMG) Renovation Fund, but that we did make a \$2,000.00 donation to the Rec Board in November 2019 as a thank you for the pulled pork and mac and cheese meal they provided. R. McArter stated that a review of the BMG Renovation Fund donation list confirms that, adding that it is unfortunate as we will not be recognized on the donation wall. K. Aitcheson added that the Ladies Night Sub-committee is reluctant to proceed with an event this year until all outstanding donations earmarked for the BMG Renovation Fund are made. The amount owing remains in question as it is not reflected in the previous minutes that C. McCallum has possession of and the computer that housed previous Society financial records (and that J. Lowe has possession of) is non-functional. R. Vinnicombe suggested that he and J. Lowe will have to rummage through totes of old financial records at J. Lowe's to figure out the outstanding amount owing. He added that our Society may wish to further supplement that amount with an additional donation. M.A. Thompson produced an old financial statement that she was able to find in her records (and that G. Morrison now has possession of) that showed a net income of \$6,533.63 from the 2018 Ladies Night and \$6,146.79 from the 2019 Ladies Night. Je. Cardiff noted that his understanding was that not all of these funds were earmarked for the BMG Renovation Fund, but that some were to offset midway costs at our Fall Fair. J. Bernard agreed. M. Cardiff suggested that the Ladies Night Sub-committee meet to come to an agreement on the amount of funds they wish to donate to the BMG Renovation Fund and to present that at our next Society meeting. With many of the Sub-committee members present, M.A. Thompson made the following motion: that a \$5,000.00 donation be made to the **Municipality of Huron East BMG Renovation Fund**. The motion was seconded (D. Cummings) and passed. **J. Lowe is to proceed with issuing the cheque.**

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Regarding the issuing of cheques, M. Douma asked if the persons with signing authority need to be changed. R. Vinnicombe noted that he and J. Lowe currently have signing authority but that **he will bring this suggestion to the executive for discussion**. M. Douma also asked for an explanation of how our 2022 Fair lost \$10,000.00. M. McCutcheon noted that in 2022 we did not have a dinner. M. Cardiff added that we also did not receive any additional sponsorship as funds were “held over” from previous COVID years. S. Machan added that we had to pay to rent the Brussels Four Winds Barn and that there were costs associated with the parades and decorating competitions that we ran in 2020 and 2021.

M.A. Thompson shared that she had heard a rumor that our charitable status had been revoked. G. Morrison confirmed the rumor noting that she has applied to have it reinstated and that we will hear in 6-8 months. J. Bernard asked how important it is for our Society to have charitable status. G. Morrison replied that it permits us to issue tax receipts (which R. Vinnicombe added may be important for corporations) and to accept donations from other charitable organizations. D. Cummings asked if that meant, for example, that organizations like the Brussels Optimists would be prohibited from donating their charitable funds to us. G. Morrison agreed that that would be the case. This is an issue considering both the Brussels Optimist Cub and Lions Club are regular Fair donors.

The motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report (M. Baan) was seconded (Z. Onn) and passed.

**R. Vinnicombe will request that the following outstanding item be reported on at the next general meeting by a Treasurer:** whether or not our annual OAAS affiliation fees have been paid.

## Ambassadors’ and Ambassador Sub-committee Reports

M. Speer reported that our Ambassador is gearing up for the District 8 Ambassador Competition in May and that Deanna will be participating in the District 8 Ambassador Workshop this weekend in Milverton. M. Speer added that the Ambassador Sub-committee has come to a decision on essay topics for the Junior and Little competitions. She also inquired if the executive was aware of AgLinks as it appears that Fairs can be advertised there for free. **C. McCallum to investigate this and report back to the Society at the next meeting.**

## Farm and Food Care Ontario (FFCO) Breakfast on the Farm Sub-committee Report

Ja. Cardiff provided the following report:

- The event will be held on Tim and Donna Prior’s farm (Grazing Meadows) on June 17<sup>th</sup>
- There will be a second location in Blyth for attendees to travel to that day (Hallahan’s Dairy Farm). 20-30 additional volunteers will be needed to support this second stop
- Anticipating approximately 2,500 attendees

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- Arrangements are being made for additional equipment and livestock to showcase at the event
- There is still time to sign up to volunteer! M.A. Thompson requested that **J. Morrison add a link to the volunteer opportunity and event tickets to our webpage. She also asked that the Homecraft Vice President be updated to reflect M. McCutcheon's information**
- Our involvement as an Ag Society includes having our Ambassadors participate (at Tim and Donna Prior's), having a booth at Prior's (there is no cost for this, but the booth must provide some sort of agricultural educational opportunity. **D. Cummings offered to provide a 10 x 10' tent for our booth**) and participating as volunteers. Je. Cardiff suggested our members wear our Ag Society t-shirts that day, but Ja. Cardiff stated that volunteers will be provided with specific t-shirts to wear. M. Baan suggested distributing our Fall Fair postcards on-site

## Ladies Night Sub-committee Report

As entertainment and linen deposits are outstanding, D. Cummings made the motion to approve the use of up to \$2,000.00 in funds to pay deposits required for this year's Ladies Night event. The motion was seconded (S. Machan) and passed.

## Old Business

### AssistExpo Set-up and Orientation

See the Treasurer's Report.

### Secretary/Treasurer Honorariums

R. Vinnicombe reported that we have not had any success recruiting a new Secretary. Therefore **we will move ahead with last meeting's motion to place a Help Wanted ad in The Citizen.** S. Cable asked if there was a job description. C. McCallum stated that she has a detailed duties list prepared.

Discussion ensued regarding providing our Secretary and Treasurers with annual honorariums for their work. D. Cummings suggested a \$1,500.00 honorarium per position (e.g. the two Treasurers would split \$1,500.00). R. Vinnicombe shared that District 8 pays their Secretary and Treasurer each \$500.00. Both C. McCallum and G. Morrison indicated that they were not interested in accepting honorariums, but M. Baan suggested that they accept them and if they choose to donate them back, then that is their choice. The motion to provide a \$1,500.00 annual honorarium to the Society's Secretary and Treasurer (with the amount equally split between any position held by multiple people) (Z. Onn) was seconded (D. Cummings) and passed. **It was requested that the honorarium be mentioned in The Citizen ad.**

### Ideas for Our Future Fairs

The following future Fair ideas were discussed:

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- Moving our Fair to a weekend, in particular the second weekend in September: R. Vinnicombe reported that he reached out to the following groups to discuss the idea of us moving our Fall Fair date:
  - District 8: they stated that we would have to have any date change approved at their October Annual General Meeting. The request would need to be submitted to them by September 1<sup>st</sup>
  - 4-H: they like the idea of moving the Fair to a weekend as it will enable more college and university students to attend
  - The ladies' and men's slo-pitch leagues: The ladies league may be moving their year end tournament date into August and the men's league indicated they would move their year end tournament date to accommodate us
  - The Brussels, Morris & Grey Community Centre: no concerns

L. Vader had previously offered to reach out to the Howick Fall Fair to inquire about their experience transitioning from a mid-week to a weekend Fall Fair but was not present to report on this. The decision to formally request a date change with District 8 was deferred to the next meeting.

- Outdoor/portable speaker system to announce upcoming events throughout the duration of the Fair: R. Vinnicombe confirmed that the BM&G Arena renovation does not include the addition of an outdoor PA system. Z. Onn reached out to Ernie King whose portable PA system is used at the Threshers Reunion. While the equipment is available for our Fair this year, it will not be available in subsequent years if we choose to move our Fall Fair to the Threshers Reunion weekend. R. Vinnicombe offered to reach out to 4-H as they have a portable PA system that we may be able to borrow
- Marketing of the Fair via a postcard advertisement: Z. Onn reported that she is waiting on the Society to finalize all Fair events so that she can finalize the postcard. Once this has been completed Z. Onn complete the postcard and seek out a printing cost estimate
- Adding "Country Games" to the Children's Program, e.g., three legged race, potato sack race, kicking a shoe, etc., possibly run by the local Junior Farmers: R. Vinnicombe reported that he did reach out to the local Junior Farmers who are not able to support this. C. McCallum suggested that R. Vinnicombe reach out to the local 4-H clubs to see if they could run the Country Games
- Charging a \$5 Fair admission fee and a \$5 exhibitors fee and getting rid of the current process of subtracting membership fees off of Fair winnings: the motion to not introduce a Fair admission fee (M.A. Thompson) was seconded (G. Jaycock) and passed. The motion to stop subtracting membership fees/fair exhibition fees from Fair winnings and to require people to separately pay their membership fee/fair exhibition fee annually starting in 2024 (P. McLellan) was seconded (J. Morrison) and passed. This means that this year, no fair winnings will be withheld to offset next year's membership/fair exhibition fees
- Entertainment: Z. Onn reported the following:

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- Canadian Raptor Conservatory Birds of Prey Show. 45 minutes long. \$700.00 + HST. Erie Birds of Prey Services. 45 minute show for \$450.00 + HST, three 45 minute shows for \$950.00 +HST, or three 45 minute shows PLUS an activity table for \$1,200.00 + HST. This information was given to **M. Cardiff to consider for the educational programming portion of the Fall Fair**
- Inflatables. \$3,350.00. The motion to book the inflatables as quoted (D. Cummings) was seconded (M. Cardiff) and passed. **Z. Onn to book the inflatables.** M. Cardiff asked if we'd need to rent generators as the Fair is to be at the BM&G Community Center again. **Z. Onn to ask Abi Corbett if there is external hydro that can support the inflatables, or if generators will be needed**
- Escape Room. \$370.00 +HST for one day rental. Aimed at teens. M. Baan asked how many people could go through the escape room in an hour. **Z. Onn to inquire and report back at the next meeting**
- Small Hooves Big Hearts (miniature horses and petting zoo from Kawartha Lakes). \$1,000.00 + HST for two days
- Snippet the Clown: \$850.00 for two days. Booked
- Heatwave Blacksmithing (makes nails into swords). \$550.00 for six hours

M. Douma suggested sourcing some sort of entertainment that aligns with our theme, e.g. a wool spinning demonstration. **M. Baan** noted that there is a weaving group out of Goderich who does this. She **offered to look into it and report back to the Society at the next meeting.**

C. McCallum asked if our Society would be interested in having a food truck at our Fall Fair, as one had inquired via our website. Those present indicated that there is no interest as we run our own food booth. **C. McCallum to communicate that to the interested party.**

The following future Fair ideas were posed at the last meeting, but not discussed at this meeting/remain outstanding:

- Fair rebranding, e.g., merchandise featuring our logo in black and white, sold on-site during the fair at a merchandise booth. **Z. Onn to continue to investigate merchandising possibilities.** Z. Onn also suggested that we purchase new table cloths for our exhibit tables as the ones we currently have are not uniform, some were not in great shape, and there didn't seem to be enough of them. She provided a cost estimate for fifty 8-foot spandex table covers. **No decision was made on whether or not to pursue with this purchase**
- Adding a rental bank machine or contactless payment option to encourage Fair donations and enable the purchase of food and vendor items. **Z. Onn to investigate this.** M. Speer suggested that if we did this, we may even be able to offer a licensed event with a beer garden, considering the recent success of Homecoming
- Updating our photo op displays and potentially creating some new ones. **No decision was made on whether or not to pursue this.**

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- Revamping of the Ambassador Program by moving our Ambassador Competition so that it occurs during our Fall Fair, as she feels that there will be more attendance at and interest in the program. **M. Speer to take this suggestion to the Ambassador Sub-committee for discussion and feedback. M. Speer stated that she will also reach out to some local fairs who already do this, e.g., Lucknow and Listowel, to see what their experience has been**
- Including more experiences at our fair and leveraging local service clubs to host events at our Fair. C. Cardiff suggested adding the Masked Singer to the list of potential experiences/live events for future fairs. L. Vader suggested an “Old Bessie Bingo” as a Fair fundraiser.

### **Waterline to the Shed**

D. Cummings reported that the waterline to the cattle shed has been broken for many years and inquired if it were still on the docket to be repaired as part of the BM&G Community Centre renovations. **R. Vinnicombe offered to email Brad McRoberts to see if this repair is still scheduled to take place.**

### **West Door of the Shed**

D. Cummings reminded those present of an old motion (made pre-COVID) to install a new door on the west end of our storage shed. After some discussion D. Cummings made a motion to rescind the previous motion and to not proceed with replacement of the door. The motion was seconded (M. Hoover) and passed.

## **New Business**

### **2024 Brussels Fall Fair Date and Theme**

R. Vinnicombe proposed the following date for the 2024 Brussels Fall Fair: September 17-18. This was followed by a brief discussion regarding a Fair theme. M. McCutcheon suggested, “Pork and Beans”. The motion to accept the proposed date (September 17-18) and theme (“Pork and Beans”) for the 2024 Brussels Fall Fair (M. McCutcheon) was seconded (D. Cummings) and passed.

### **Ad in The Citizen’s Volunteer Appreciation Edition**

After some discussion the motion to place an ad in The Citizen’s Volunteer Appreciation Edition (D. Cummings, seconded by M.A. Thompson) was not passed.

## **Correspondence and Announcements**

- District 8 Ambassador Workshop: April 8, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the Milverton Legion
- FFCO 2023 Annual Conference: April 13, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the GrandWay Event Center in Elora. Cost \$95.00 per person
- District 8 Ambassador Competition: May 6, 2023 at the Milverton Legion

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- District 10 Judging School (Groups Display, Junior/School Work & Woodworking): May 13, 2023 from 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at the Tara Anglican Church. Cost \$35.00 per person. Deadline for registration is May 7 **(let Crystal know if you want to register)**
- District 8 Judging School (Knitting, Crocheting, Photography): **rescheduled** to May 13, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Seaforth Agriplex, Seaforth. Cost \$20.00 per person. Deadline for registration is April 6 **(let Crystal know if you want to register)**
- District 8 Judging School (Arts and Crafts): May 16, 2023 from 6:30 - 10:00 p.m. at the Crystal Palace in Mitchell. Cost \$10.00 per person. Deadline for registration is May 2 **(let Crystal know if you want to register)**
- Brussels Ambassador of the Fair Competition: August 12, 2023 at the Brussels Legion. Details to follow
- 2023 Brussels Fall Fair: September 19-20, 2023 at the Brussels, Morris & Grey Community Centre. Theme: Bank Barns and Spinning Yarns

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by J. Bernard. The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Brussels Library. Details to follow.

Minutes submitted by: C. McCallum

Minutes approved by: R. Vinnicombe

**NOTE: ACTION ITEMS ARE IN RED**

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