



Location: Brussels Library

Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Brussels Agricultural Society General Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Joan Bernard, Crystal Blake, Sandra Cable, Cathy Cardiff, Janelle Cardiff, Jeff Cardiff, Matt Cardiff, Dorothy Cummings, Mary Douma, Jenna Fischer, Linda Garland, Rhonda McArter, Crystal McCallum, Pam McLellan, Justin Morrison, Zoellyn Onn, Maggie Speer, Mary Ann Thompson, Lori Vader, and Reg Vinnicombe (virtually).

Regrets: Monique Baan, John Lowe, and Sean Mitchell.

NOTE: Quorum achieved (19).

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was reviewed. The motion to approve the agenda (L. Vader) was seconded (M.A. Thompson) and passed.

Approval of Minutes

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed. The motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2022 meeting (D. Cummings) was seconded (L. Garland) and passed.

President's Report

Z. Onn welcomed members on behalf of R. Vinnicombe, who was virtually participating in the meeting.

Homecraft President's Report

L. Garland shared that she has been approached by a Society member about adding some inclusive Fair articles, aimed at adults living with disabilities. She has reached out to some community groups and persons who service the population of interest to gain a better idea of interest, appropriateness, and wording. Based on these discussions, L. Garland is suggesting that we move

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forward with this idea, introducing two or three Fair articles for adults living with disabilities. L. Garland will meet with the Leads for Sections K and O after the meeting to further discuss and identify the Fair articles. Z. Onn requested that L. Garland provided her with the details by Friday, March 3rd so that she can include them in the Preliminary Fair Book.

Treasurer's Report

On behalf of J. Lowe, C. Blake shared the following financial report:

Item	Amount	Notes
TD Canada Trust	\$22,297.85	\$12,000 transferred from the Manulife Advantage account for GIC purchase
Manulife Advantage	\$635.69	2.85% (up from 2.75%)
Manulife GIC #1 0358	\$6,683.31	2.75% matures Mar. 1, 2024
Manulife GIC #3 7268	\$4,310.12	0.85% matures Dec. 18, 2023
Total Funds	\$33,926.97	As of February 19, 2023

Income:

- Fair prize donors/sponsors: \$1,100.00
- Memberships (24 were paid at the Annual General Meeting [AGM]): \$120.00
- AGM meal payments received (26): \$480.00

Expenses

- Rental of the Brussels Legion for the AGM and purchase of thirty-six meals: \$1,011.35
- Payout of the Optimist Best All Round Participation Award: \$25.00

D. Cummings asked why we paid the Optimist's award out of our account. Je. Cardiff stated that the award monies comes out of the Optimist's annual \$1,500.00 donation towards the Fair.

J. Lowe's report noted that:

- We experienced a loss at the AGM in part because of the incurred cost of meals for guests and dignitaries, and because of last minute attendance cancellations by our members
- He 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**
- He investigated the Community Services Recovery Fund grant, but that our project (implementation of the AssistExpo software) does not really qualify us for the grant
- He needs the **Leads for Sections J and I to determine prize amounts for the local winners of the OAAS Plain Chocolate Chip Cookies Competition, Maple Syrup Competition, and Honey Competitions, and to send the information to Z. Onn (by Friday, March 3rd) so that it may be added to the Fair Book**

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- He needs the **Leads for Sections O and I to determine prize amounts for the winners of OS1 and to send the information to Z. Onn (by Friday, March 3rd) so that it may be added to the Fair Book**

C. McCallum read an addendum to the Treasurer's report, provided by J. Lowe. In this report, the following additional expenses were reported:

- Accidental injury coverage for Officers, Directors, and Society members was renewed for 2023 at a cost of \$372.60. This was based on an estimate of 50 Officers, Directors, and Society members participating during our Fall Fair
- OAAS Convention registration fees (3 voting delegates): \$542.40

The report further indicated that J. Lowe has been calling AssistExpo to arrange for set up and training, without success. He has left voicemails and emails and **will continue to follow up**. He also left a voicemail with TD Bank today to arrange for the purchase of a GIC as previously motioned by the Society's members and to update our signing authorities considering the recent change in our Officers. **J. Lowe will continue to follow up with TD Bank regarding these matters**. He also requested that our AGM minutes be updated to reflect the appointment of G. Morrison as co-Treasurer as this information will be needed by TD Bank. **C. McCallum to update the minutes and send the updated version to J. Lowe and G. Morrison.**

Z. Onn added that approval was needed to pay an invoice from Farm and Food Care Ontario (FFCO) and to consent the purchase of an ad in The Citizen's Salute to Agriculture edition.

The motion to pay the FFCO invoice (\$350.00) (C. Cardiff) was seconded (L. Vader) and passed. **J. Lowe tasked to pay this invoice.**

The motion to place an ad in The Citizen's Salute to Agriculture edition (\$139.70 + HST) (D. Cummings) was seconded (M. Douma) and passed. **J. Lowe to arrange for this ad and its payment.**

The motion to accept the Treasurer's Report (D. Cummings) was seconded (M. Douma) and passed.

J. Bernard asked why, now that we have two Treasurers, a Treasurer was not present at the meeting to provide their report and take questions from the membership. Z. Onn stated that it was just a mix up. The motion to mandate the presence of at least one Treasurer at every Society meeting (C. Blake) was seconded (D. Cummings) and passed. **J. Lowe and G. Morrison to connect to establish a schedule of who will attend upcoming meetings.**

It was also requested that the following items be reported on at the next general meeting by a Treasurer:

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- The progress of our charitable status application/registration
- Whether or not our annual District 8 and OAAS affiliation fees have been paid
- Whether or not the annual OMAFRA grant was completed and submitted
- The progress of our annual grant requests to Morris-Turnberry and Huron East
- Whether or not the early Fair sponsorship letters have been sent out (Five Star Quilt Guild, Allan Johnston, Brussels Optimists, and Brussels Lions)
- Whether or not we have paid AssistExpo anything to date
- Whether or not we provided the Arena with the profits from our last Ladies Night, as previously motioned by the membership

Ambassadors' Reports

M. Speer reported that our Ambassador and Junior Ambassador are planning to attend the Mildmay Homecoming August 3-7, and that Deanna will be participating in the District 8 Ambassador Workshop and Competition (April 8 and May 6 respectively). M. Speer requested that **C. McCallum confirm the District 8 Ambassador Workshop and Competition dates with her.** M. Speer added that the Ambassador Sub-committee has decided that the Ambassador Competition will be held on August 12th at the Brussels Legion, and that the Sub-committee is working on the essay topics for the Junior and Little competitions. Details to follow.

S. Cable asked why we selected an Ambassador who is not eligible to compete at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). D. Cummings explained that Deanna does fit the age requirements for an Ambassador, but that the CNE rules differ from that.

Old Business

AssistExpo Set-up and Orientation

See Treasurer's Report.

Farm and Food Care Ontario (FFCO) Breakfast on the Farm

Ja. Cardiff reminded members that our Society was recently awarded an opportunity to host a FFCO Breakfast on the Farm. This event will be taking place on June 17th at Grazing Meadows (Tim and Donna Prior's). Ja. Cardiff stated that the **Breakfast on the Farm Sub-committee**, which currently consists of nine members (new members welcome), **will be meeting on Thursday** to further plan. Our Society members will be asked to consider volunteering at the event and will be provided a link to sign up as a volunteer. R. McArter asked what volunteering entailed. Ja. Cardiff suggested it would involve tasks like serving breakfast, helping with registration, parking cars, etc. She added that we may have the opportunity to host our own information booth at the event and will need volunteers for that as well. J. Bernard asked if the breakfast is an "open event". Ja. Cardiff replied, "no" and added that people will be required to register to attend. M. Speer stated that she will request that our Ambassadors volunteer at the event too.

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Homecraft Vice President Election

M. McCutcheon offered to let her original nomination (made by M. A. Thompson at the Annual General Meeting) for Homecraft Vice President to stand. After three calls for nomination, M. McCutcheon was acclaimed as Homecraft Vice President.

New Business

2024 Brussels Fall Fair Date and Theme

Deferred.

Sub-committee Duties

C. McCallum reminded those heading Sub-committees of the Society, that there is a list of duties outlined in the Society's Constitution that they are to be following. C. McCallum provided M. Speer and M. Cardiff copies of the duties and asked that they reach out to R. Vinnicombe should they have any questions. **R. Vinnicombe also requested that each Sub-committee provide him with a list of members and let him know if they require assistance recruiting new members.**

Secretary/Treasurer Honorariums

Z. Onn advised that there is a section in our Constitution that mentions providing our Secretary and Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer with an honorarium for their work. She suggested that we may need to consider this if we continue to struggle to find a new Secretary. R. Vinnicombe added that the 4H Secretary and Treasurer is paid \$2,450 annually for their time and effort (and to cover some expenses). Z. Onn asked that **we all continue to attempt to recruit for a new Secretary** (word of mouth) and suggested that if we have not been successful by our next general meeting, that we place an ad in The Citizen.

The motion to place a Help Wanted ad in The Citizen for a Secretary for the Brussels Agricultural Society (if the membership is unsuccessful in recruiting a Secretary by the next general meeting) (J. Bernard) was seconded (L. Garland) and passed. **C. McCallum to create a Facebook post advertising the volunteer position.**

Ladies Night

J. Fischer reported that she recently spoke with members of this historic Sub-committee, and they are interested in resuming an annual Ladies Night. Details to follow. **C. McCallum will provide J. Fischer with a list of the Sub-committee duties** found in our Society's Constitution.

Website

J. Morrison reported that he recently received a list of updates for the website, requested by C. McCallum, and that all updates have been made.

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Fair Prizes

See Treasurer's Report.

District 8 AGM Motions

C. McCallum reported that the District 8 Executive was requesting our Society's input on whether or not to move forward with the following two motions passed at the District 8 AGM:

1. That District 8 Agricultural Societies support in principle the concept of enabling the distribution of information directly from the OAAS central office to individual members within Societies
2. That the District 8 Executive investigates through conversations with Societies and local judges the need for materials that could be used by all fairs in the District to judge local competitions of maple syrup and honey with a report and recommendation presented at the District Spring meeting

After some discussion, the membership voted that they were NOT in favour of motion #1 and in favour of motion #2. **C. McCallum to notify Janet Cameron of our Society's decisions.**

Ideas for Our Future Fairs

In light of her and R. Vinnicombe's recent experience at the OAAS Convention, Z. Onn presented the following ideas for the 2023 Brussels Fall Fair:

- Marketing of the Fair via a postcard advertisement, placed in all Brussels PO boxes. Z. Onn presented a preliminary mock-up of such a postcard. D. Cummings suggested that the postcard could be placed in tourist booths across the region, and J. Bernard suggested that it could replace our placemats, which were not well used last year. **Z. Onn to work on a more complete mock-up of the postcard for the next general meeting and to seek out a printing cost estimate**
- 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**
- Enhancing our rural, residential, and business decorating contest by increasing the prize amounts. **Z. Onn stated that Riverside Funeral Home will sponsor at \$100 prize for each of the three categories**
- 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

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- 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. L. Garland strongly opposed the admission fee idea. **No decision was made on whether or not to pursue with this**
- Renting an outdoor/portable speaker system to announce upcoming events throughout the duration of the Fair. D. Cummings suggested that Z. Onn reach out to Orr Insurance to see if they have an outdoor/portable speaker that we could borrow or rent. **Z. Onn to investigate this.** M. Cardiff suggested that we investigate if the arena renovations include a plan to have an outdoor PA system. **R. Vinnicombe to investigate this**
- 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 to reach out to the local Junior Farmers to see if they would be interested in participating**

L. Vader also suggested updating our photo op displays and potentially creating some new ones. **No decision was made on whether or not to pursue this.**

Je. Cardiff inquired if we will be having a community barbecue dinner on the Tuesday night of the Fall Fair this year. After some discussion it was agreed to host the community barbecue dinner. **Z. Onn will add this event to the Fair Book.** M. Cardiff asked where our Fall Fair will be occurring this year. **J. Morrison to confirm with Council that the Brussels, Morris & Grey Community Centre will be available for us to host the 2023 Fall Fair.**

M. Douma announced that she and Maurice would like to donate the barn board backdrop and split rail fencing that has been used at the Fair for the last number of years. The items would need to be stored in the Society’s shed. Members present agreed there is adequate space in the shed to store the items and gratefully accepted the donation.

In addition, Z. Onn suggested that for the 2024 Brussels Fall Fair that we consider:

- 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**
- Moving our Fair to a weekend, in particular the second weekend in September. She noted that while this date does conflict with the Thresher’s Reunion and the Kirkton Fair, that she strongly feels that having a Friday/Saturday Fair will improve attendance. R. McArter expressed concern about school children not attending. Z. Onn suggested that the school children could attend during the day on Friday. D. Cummings asked who we would get to assist with set-up if we changed the date. M. Cardiff responded saying that it likely wouldn’t be an issue considering it is the same people who always assist with the set up and take down. M.A. Thompson requested that we reach out to the Howick Fair and ask them about their experience moving to a weekend fair before making the decision. D. Cummings

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suggest we reach out to Seaforth Fair as well. **L. Vader offered to reach out to the Howick Fall Fair to inquire about their experience transitioning from a mid-week to a weekend Fall Fair.** Je. Cardiff inquired about the impact on the 4-H program. M. Speer stated that she thinks there would be minimal impact as the date change does not conflict with the Lucknow or Seaforth Fall Fairs. C. Blake suggested that we may even see better 4-H attendance as having the event on a weekend makes participation more realistic for College and University students. R. McArter asked if the potential new dates conflict with the ladies' or men's slo-pitch tournaments and M. Douma asked if we needed permission from District 8 to make the date change. Z. Onn responded that last she talked with Vince Brennan, permission from District 8 and the OAAS was not required. M. Cardiff asked if the arena would be okay with the date change and whether or not this impacted our gentlemen's agreement (would we have to pay a rental charge to use the arena on a weekend). **R. Vinnicombe agreed to reach out to District 8, 4-H, the ladies' and men's slo-pitch leagues, and the Brussels, Morris & Grey Community Centre to discuss the potential date change and inquire about any concerns making the change**

- 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. Ja. Cardiff asked if Z. Onn or R. Vinnicombe got any new ideas at the OAAS Convention for the Children's Program. Z. Onn suggested Bex in Motion, the Fire Guy, or Super Dogs. M.A. Thompson suggested Birds of Prey.

Society members were encouraged to reflect on Z. Onn's proposed ideas and come prepared to further discuss them at the next meeting.

Correspondence and Announcements

- Knitting, Crocheting, & Photography Judging School: Saturday, March 25, 2023 from 0900-1530 at the Seaforth Agriplex. \$20.00 to participate. If interested, reach out to C. McCallum for registration details
- Ambassador of the Fair Competition: August 12, 2023 at the Brussels Legion. Details to follow
- 2023 Brussels Fall Fair: September 19-20, 2023 (Bank Barns and Spinning Yarns). Details to follow

C. McCallum reported the following correspondence since the last meeting:

- Janet Cameron reached out on February 7th requesting an updated Officer Directory, which C. McCallum provided
- Monique Baan asked if we would like to create an item about the Agricultural Society for inclusion in the "Welcome to the Community" bags, distributed by the Brussels Library. The

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membership agreed to include the postcard being developed by Z. Onn. **C. McCallum to notify M. Baan of this decision**

- Susan McGonigle from the Stratford and District Agricultural Society emailed on February 14th requesting our Homecraft/Youth divisions policies and procedures and executive role descriptions. L. Garland responded indicating that we do not have such policies or procedures, but did share a copy of our Constitution which does contain some information on our Officer's roles and responsibilities
- Kathryn Lambert emailed on February 20th requesting our Society complete a survey on the future of the OAAS Convention. R. Vinnicombe completed the survey on our Society's behalf

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by L. Vader. The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Brussels Library. Details to follow. It was agreed that meetings will routinely fall on the first Wednesday of every month.

Minutes submitted by: C. McCallum

Minutes approved by: R. Vinnicombe

NOTE: ACTION ITEMS ARE IN RED

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