

Lancaster County Ag Council
Thursday, May 28, 2020
12:30 PM
VIA CONFERENCE CALL

Roll Call: Scott Sheely, George Cook, Ron Frederick, Mary Henry, Lonnie Kauffman, Rob Barley, Tom Baldrige, Dale Hershey, Mike Peachey, Lisa Riggs, Jedd Moncavage, Loren Hershey, Ray D'Agostino, Steve Hershey, Dan Heller, Don Hoover, Jack Coleman, Stephanie Shirk, George Hurst,

Contractor: Shelly Dehoff

Guest: Josh Scheinberg, PDA

George called meeting to order at 12:34 PM. George introduced Josh Scheinberg, with PA Dept of Ag, who is interested in being on the Ag Council, who is listening in today. Josh joined PDA in the Executive Office as the Eastern Regional Director. The position is created to promote and continue relationships with Stakeholders and serve as a connection with Sect. Redding and the other Executive Staff. Josh's background is in the meat processing/food safety industry.

Roll Call by The Secretary: Jedd took roll call as best as possible since it was a virtual meeting.

Reading and Approval of Minutes The April 23, 2020 meeting minutes were noted. Motion made by Dale Hershey, seconded by Rob Barley to approve the April 23rd, 2020 minutes. Motion passed.

Review of Monthly Financial Reports: Dale Hershey reported a current balance of \$31,486 in the checkbook. Things are going well. The Council recently received \$10,000 from the Ann Barshinger Foundation and we are anticipating another \$10,000 from County Commissioners mid-year.

A revised budget of the Ag Council has been distributed electronically. Due to changes in 2020, such as cancellation of FFD, and unanticipated contributions from Barshinger Foundation and the County, etc, the previously approved skeleton budget needed modified. Labor costs have changed due to cancellation of FFD, and refocusing on activities/efforts. Many of the FFD sponsors said to either keep the money and use it some other way, or to keep the money and use it for 2021. We still don't know anything about Denim & Pearls yet, because that could be a fundraiser if we are able to hold it. The Barshinger Foundation money is anticipated to be spent on education efforts. Some labor costs and a few other expenses from 2019 had to be settled as well, so the proposed budget expenses are reflective of that. \$32,000 of the anticipated \$40,000 in sponsorships has been received; and those numbers are a separate line item than grant support, which provides additional financial resources.

Motion to approve the revised/updated 2020 budget as proposed made by Mike Peachey and seconded by Dan Heller. Motion passed.

Lancaster Economic Recovery Planning (role of Council in planning for economic recovery from pandemic)

Lisa Riggs led with updates on 2 key programs in the county's Economic Recovery Plan. EDC and the Chamber, along with others, have rolled out an economic recovery plan for Lanc Co one month ago. They wanted a coordinated plan to provide support to all sectors of the business community. Since the plan rolled out, they have been working with 5 action teams and a leadership team to drive all the strategies under the recovery plan. 130 volunteers are helping advance the initiatives. The team has guidelines in place related to \$25M fund for grants for small businesses throughout Lanc Co, targeting 20 or fewer employees. Ag would definitely be eligible for this. The application/registration is not yet available for this. A scoring matrix has been set up

so criteria for awarding the money is known. A second notable program is available through a \$6M allocation from CARES, and it's for free PPE gear for any business with under 100 employees. Again, ag qualifies.

www.recoverylancaster.com will be the website which will handle everything, and should be live in the next 2-3 weeks.

Commissioner D'Agostino expressed his appreciation to Lisa Riggs and Tom Baldrige for their leadership in these efforts. He also mentioned that there are expected to be additional rounds of funding, but no idea when/how much.

Lisa R. is also wanting Ag Council to help answer what does economic recovery look like for the Ag sector? What are threats and opportunities on the horizon? How do we need to be thinking differently? Navigating highs and lows of commodity prices, farm labor costs, are examples of things to discuss.

Mike Peachey added that wanting to be proactive in thinking strategically is important. Especially if there is a secondary COVID surge, and we didn't anticipate or act on something the "first time around". Contingency plans if meat processing plants shut down again?

Ag Council could potentially sponsor a "story telling" or "fact finding" effort to get the impacts first hand from farmers and the agri-business community.

Don Hoover/Charitable Food System Opportunity: Don Hoover mentioned Blessings of Hope, and what they are doing to help feed people in this crazy time. Even they have had to turn food away. Don is part of an effort to start looking at other ways to preserve food so it doesn't go to waste when it can't get to it's normal processing streams. Canning, drying, freezing commercially is prohibitive from a permitting/inspection/cost standpoint. Doing things "home to home" would probably be more realistic, and using more grassroots efforts to distribute food.

Jack Coleman on Executive Committee: Jack has expressed a willingness to be on the Executive Committee. Jack's heart is in agriculture, and he likes to solve problems, so he is very willing to give his best. Lisa Graybeal is past due to rotate off of the Exec Committee, so this timing is good. Motion made by Dale Hershey and seconded by Jedd Moncavage to have Jack Coleman serve as a member of Exec Committee. Motion passed. Jack Coleman abstained from the vote.

Report of the Executive Director: Scott Sheely gave a report. The Science Fair winners have been contacted, and have provided pictures and details to be placed on the Ag Council website. Planning for Ag Week continues. Looking at venues for Denim & Pearls, but most venues aren't even open and not planning that far ahead. Statistics for Lancaster County are starting to be included in our social media posts.

Scott noted there was a very successful event this morning—Ag Council bought T-shirts for graduating FFA seniors, and they will be handed out. Representatives from 10 FFA chapters in Lancaster Co were on a virtual event this morning with Ag Council reps. The students provided updates this morning. Sounds like many are planning to go into ag careers, which is encouraging. Lonnie Kauffman added that the energy was fascinating and needs incorporated in our county's ag.

Scott recognized that there are different entities working on water quality in the county. We don't want to be duplicating or stepping on anyone else's toes, so coordination and communication is important.

Scott provided an electronic summary of proposed programmatic activities through the end of this year. Many of the proposals are still in the beginning stages, trying to make them connect to existing efforts. Please look at list included in the email about today's meeting, and provide any feedback to Scott Sheely soon. Some

ideas include working with North Museum, working with PA FFA, working with PA Commission for Ag Education Excellence, etc. Lots of ideas. The suggestions fall in line with Barshinger Foundation funds, or FFD sponsorships, or Farm Credit funds that we may apply for. (Farm Credit grant is due in June, and Ag Council Exec Comm anticipates submitting a proposal).

However, a timely, action requested, idea is to create a Virtual Family Farm Day (working with Oregon Dairy). Oregon Dairy has requested some financial support to get videos made to be part of the virtual efforts for 2020. This could be accomplished using funds from this year's sponsors who said to keep the FFD-specific funds and use them for related 2020 efforts. The concept is to be YouTube quality/style videos. Motion was made by Rob Barley and seconded by Dale Hershey to provide \$1500 financial support to Oregon Dairy for tapings/videography to be used in the virtual Family Farm Days. Motion passed.

Reports of Committees:

- Education/PR— Lisa G and Stephanie S.— nothing today
- Economic Development— already noted by Lisa Riggs
- Legislative/ Environmental— Rob B. noted that CFAP funds are available.
- Ag Week—

Reminders/For the good of the order:

- Nothing today.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM.

NEXT MEETING is Thursday, June 25th, at 12:30 PM. Location or virtual media to be decided.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelly Dehoff
Lancaster County Conservation District