

MDGA Board  
January 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The MDGA Board of Directors was called to order by President Wendy Lawliss on Saturday, January 27. The meeting was held at the home of Treasurer Laura Kieser.

Members present: Shellie Gilbertson, Lexy Heldt, Kelly Hovel, Wendy Lawliss, Rustianna Mechura, Cathay Prodoehl, Cynthia Rico, Kirsten Zoellner, and Laura Kieser. Absent was Maggie Stensass.

Secretary Report: Motion by Lawliss to approve the report. Motion seconded by Rico. It was approved unanimously.

The last board meeting was virtually on November 25. Agenda topics at the meeting included the state show, the fall conference, youth, and bylaw updates. The board also discussed the ongoing board election and revisited the discussion of the MDGA Historian. New business included the MN State Agricultural Society seeking a representative from MDGA.

Shellie Gilbertson has volunteered to serve as the new state show chairperson. She is seeking volunteers to help with planning and the show. The fall conference, held on November 11, was a success. Both Morgan Allen and Lexy Heldt provided recaps of the events. Applications are out and promotion is happening for the 2024 Outstanding Youth. The board will select their candidate in February. Cynthia Rico found the documents with the 2016 bylaws and has forwarded them to the board for review. Any proposed changes will need to be presented to the membership and voted on at the annual meeting. The board is still seeking a new MDGA Historian.

Treasurer's Report: Kieser presented an update and overview of the finances. The current bank balance is \$23,393. Zoellner motioned to accept the report. Motion seconded by Gilbertson. It was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports:

- Show Committee:
  - State Show Update: Gilbertson has submitted all contracts for three judges and has received them back. She will go over the fees with the treasurer to ensure they are comparable to previous years. MDGA is using the facilities for \$1,500, the same price as in 2023. The contract for the facilities is still coming. Several volunteers have reached out to assist with the show and several are asking for parameters regarding tasks and costs. Kieser stated there have never been guidelines on these items and it's up to the board to decide priorities.

The paperwork is ready, but the board needs to determine the amount to charge for class fees to get the show sanctioned. Kieser noted the fees started at \$5 when the show was created and were increased to \$6 per entry per ring.

Members receive a \$10 discount. Gilbertson suggested the board up the membership discount and make it more clear that 4H kids without registered stock can show for the youth show. There will be pen cleaning this year for \$5-7 depending on stall size.

Kieser suggested getting things lined up with the Showman app. The cost is \$300 and the time management and benefits have been extremely helpful. It was suggested to leave the entry fee at \$6 with a clear discount per member/family membership. She also suggested registration closing an hour before the show may be too late and asked the board to consider moving it back an hour. Educating attendees on why it's best to be there early, why a certain number of animals per breed are needed, and why they should participate in Best of Show was also highlighted.

- Promotion Committee:
  - Website: Wendy Lawliss has updated the website to include a new subscribe function and called for a big push to get people to the website. Subscribers will get direct emails with post updates to the website. She suggested that perhaps there should be a members-only page, which has been considered before. Members-only would be able to see additional information, but it was questioned whether or not there is enough content to fill a member-only page. Lawliss also thought the use of tags on the website would help users find information. The next step is getting more information on the site. Mechura suggested additional information and education to attract prospective members and to promote events. Lawliss motioned to publish the Gopher Goat Gossip (GGG) editions on the site. Motion seconded by Heldt. It was approved unanimously.
  - Social Media: Zoellner will handle social media for MDGA Facebook groups and pages. She is keeping a timeline of what is marketed to the public and when scheduling posts as needed. There is a members-only and public Facebook group, as well as a public page for MDGA. All current board members are admins for the groups. The members-only group has far fewer followers and most are in the public group as well. Gilbertson motioned to merge the two pages or shut down the members-only page. The motion was seconded by Zoellner. It was approved unanimously. To maximize and target the information being seen, the members-only page will be shut down on March 1. The Promotion Committee will work to promote the MDGA and member benefits.
- Education Committee: The board is working to organize this year's conference and is looking at a hands-on event. Gilbertson will confirm with Morgan Allen to see if she's interested in continuing with committee work. Heldt suggested a possible separate youth convention to be held in January-February.
- Youth Committee:
  - State Show: Heldt is working to put together the state youth show. Plans for awards are underway and Caden Gilbertson is making some awards and the

Gilbertson family is donating chairs for showmanship awards. Reserve showmanship awards will be covered by MDGA funds. Ribbons received from Melisa Czeck will be inventoried. The cost will continue to be \$3 per head to encourage youth participation. The Heldt family is considering a skill-a-thon between the end of the youth show and before the junior shows.

- Outstanding Youth: Kieser suggested the board push for more applicants. Mechura indicated more guidance on applying may help bring in applicants. Kieser further suggested adding explanations or assistance to the form. She also suggested the option of providing a one-time scholarship for up to five applicants to the 2024 convention.
- Organizational/Finance/Operational Committee:
  - Bylaws: Rico noted two years ago the board made efforts to look into the current bylaws. As of last fall, she could only locate the 2016 version. She was able to find a 2019 version fully marked up with changes that were voted on and approved by the membership, as noted in previous minutes. This version was never published to the membership. Zoellner will modify the document only to remove the editing that was previously approved and send it to Lawliss for publishing on the website. The board should review this newer version to see if additional changes need to be made. If changes are needed, the board needs to provide 30-day notice to the membership and a vote must take place at the state show annual meeting.
- Futurity: No update
- Development Committee:
  - State Fair Production Awards: Zoellner noted she's been in contact with Mark Boorsma and Diana Miels about a way to make sure the information provided by those entering is accurate and timely. Kieser suggested the lactation period be clarified to last completed lactation or a limit of days. Lawliss suggested using from the time of lactation start, limiting to 305 days. A form will be created for those entering with the required information noted and the deadline will be moved ahead. Rico noted the responsibility for complete information needs to be on the owner entering.
  - MN Livestock Breeders Association (MLBA): Melissa Czeck provided an update on the last meeting via phone. The MDGA pays dues annually and the association gets funds appropriated from the state with the biggest item being the purple ribbon auction. If MDGA is not a member, goats are not represented at auction. The auction committee will be doing a breeder incentive program this year with breeding livestock now eligible for recognition. Funds are also used for items such as youth and other shows. MLBA recognizes and has been supportive of MDGA, but there have been issues historically with the 4H PDC and MDGA. Czeck recommends that if 4H approaches MDGA for money, to let her know. It was noted there may be a new PDC head and it was suggested the

MDGA send an email after the transition to encourage the relationship. "I think it's worth the money. We don't maybe see the benefit first-hand, but to sit with those organizations is a good thing," said Czeck.

## New Business

- Election of Officers:
  - President: Rico nominated Gilbertson. Nomination was seconded by Mechura. It was approved unanimously.
  - Vice President: Heldt nominated Lawliss, Lawliss nominated Prodoehl, and Hovel nominated Rico. Lawliss and Rico declined the nomination. Zoellner motioned to cease nominations and accept Prodoehl. The motion was seconded by Heldt. It was approved unanimously.
  - Secretary: Rico nominated Zoellner. Motion to second and cease nominations by Heldt. It was approved with Zoellner abstaining.
  - Treasurer: Motion by Zoellner for Kieser to continue as treasurer. The motion was seconded by Heldt. It was approved unanimously.
- National Convention: Gilbertson opted to volunteer time in the hospitality space and Kieser will be a speaker.
- WDGA Sponsorship Request: A sponsorship request was received from Anna Thompson on behalf of the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Association (WDGA). Kieser noted the two states have historically always sponsored each other, both financially and in-kind. Kieser noted that WDGA provided a \$1,000 sponsorship last time the convention was in Minnesota. No action was taken by the board at this time.
- Committee appointments: The board will work to recruit committee members from the general membership. Zoellner will check with Stensass on committee interests.
  - Show Committee - Gilbertson (Note: She will compile a list of volunteer members)
  - Public Relations/Marketing Committee: Zoellner (social media), Lawliss (website)
  - Education Committee: Mechura, Stensass
  - Youth Committee: Heldt (Youth Advisor), Hovel
  - Organizational/Finance/Operations Committee (Bylaws, budget, etc.): Rico, Prodoehl

- Development Committee (performance and production programs and awards, Linear Appraisal, Dairy Herd Improvement Registry, etc.): Lawliss, Zoellner, Prodoehl
- Historian: Zoellner, Heldt

#### Updates/Miscellaneous

The board will meet again in February and March/April with a general membership meeting at the state show. Communication for the board outside of meetings will continue via the Facebook board page and email.

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Kelly Hovel. Motion seconded by Lexy Heldt. It was approved unanimously.