

Sustainable Sheep and Fiber Community of Northern MN
board meeting held at the Bemidji Library 12/11/23

Present: Alethea, Kelly, Robin, Trudy, Kathy, Margo, Dennis

Kathy opened the meeting by reading the minutes from 6/21/23.
Kathy moved to accept the minutes and Kelly seconded. All in agreement.

Margo presented the Treasurer's Report. Refer to the report for details.
Robin made a motion to accept, Kathy seconded. All in agreement. There were no remarkable changes. Margo gave a copy to Trudy for the file. Margo will email it out to the board members.

We had discussion of the September event in Bagley. It was well received but not as well attended as we had hoped. There were a lot of other events that day locally. The presentations by Margo and Linda Johnson-Morke were excellent.

Alethea recapped the Park Rapids FFF event. Overall it went well. We need to figure out a way to project sound for the fashion show and maybe have it down by our SSFC booths. We are invited by the Park Rapids Farmer's Market group to come again next year. Margo suggested considering participating before Labor Day because of more customer prospects. Kelly and Kathy pointed out that the difficulty is not being able to get in because of long waiting lists before Labor Day. Alethea clarified that we were invited because spaces open up after Labor Day. Suggestions were given to Kathy on what to do as a fund raiser during this event. Maybe a drawing every hour? We took in \$25 per vendor and because it did not cost us to participate, it was a profitable venture. Most vendors seemed interested in coming again next year. We will plan to repeat this event in 2024. We again discussed the possibility of having more sponsors.

The general consensus was that the way to get sponsors is to make personal contact. Mailings were ineffective.

Kathy asked about doing a radio ad for the February Sheep Event. Fosston has a free and or reasonably priced community calendar as a suggestion as does Park Rapids.

We discussed the status of the Yurt. It has been very well received wherever it has toured according to Linda J-M and by Alethea's report. Specifically, the St. Louis County fair and the Michigan event went very well. Maybe we need to work on a sign that goes with Linda which identifies SSFC as the maker. It was suggested that the trail back to SSFC might be getting lost. Alethea said we send brochures with Linda, but no sign. Kathy suggested an inscribed metal plate that is attached somewhere that identifies SSFC as the maker with contact info.

We discussed new events starting with the February Sheep Event. Alethea said the following people will be presenters:
Gail Rixen will talk about fiber to weaving.

Dennis and Phillip Engebretson will talk about their sheep and elk operation and if possible would include Laura Engebretson's role with product. Lynn Mizner who was a presenter in our early days, will be presenting. Alethea is still waiting to make good contact with Clayhill on meat processing. This will be our 10th anniversary of the Sheep Event. Fliers will be available eventually for posting or as needed and highlighting this milestone.

Lunch possibilities were discussed. All thought a repeat of last year should be the direction to go because it went over quite well, although we needed to emphasize more that there was a meal in advertising. Robin said they did not realize there was such a nice meal as part of the event. Dennis will donate meat. Trudy will make it. Stacy will not be able to come this year because of a shearing conflict, so some of her cooking duties will be picked up by others. If someone needs compensation for food product SSFC will compensate. Kathy's garden has produced abundant carrots and she will bring them as a cooked dish. She will bake bread. Alethea will bring a salad. Margo is willing to make another lamb dish. We will encourage presenters or members to set up animal products if they want to for those attending to purchase. This will help attendees to know where to purchase for the future if they desired and give members an opportunity to sell.

Robin volunteered to post SSFC events on FB. A happy dance followed. Stacy is doing Instagram and regularly posting. Margo will facilitate transfer of admin.

We discussed February event fees and what we can offer folks to encourage membership. Most felt it is a bit confusing and not enough benefit for attendees to pay both the entrance fee and membership fee simultaneously. They would be paying more as a member for this event than if they were not. Current rate for attendance has been 25/pp 40/couple for nonmembers and 20 per person or 35 couple for members. Membership for a couple is \$20/year. Most members who sign up do not resign yearly and thus do not pay a yearly fee. Most agreed this is an ongoing issue; to provide enough benefit for folks to sign up as member and do so yearly. Various benefits were suggested but no solid conclusion was drawn.

We discussed an opportunity for SSFC to be at this summer's St. Louis County Fair in Chisholm, MN. Alethea and Linda J-M were there last year by invitation and with the yurt. It has been proposed by the fair coordinator through Alethea as an SSFC opportunity to make kits for kids much like we did for the libraries in Brainerd and Bemidji in 2022. Alethea has sent an email out on this to the SSFC board recently with a suggested reimbursement breakdown. A suggested rate could be, for example: \$100/day, \$10/kit for 100 kits, mileage, and possibly hotel if needed. She and Linda J-M (with the yurt) will be there most of the week, 7/31 to 8/4/24, but the day which relates to demo's and kit dispersment is Friday, August 4, 2024. The deadline to send reimbursement proposals to Alethea is rapidly approaching so action is needed quickly by any interested in participating. Alethea has to send proposals to the St. Louis County Fair by December 31, 2023. Dennis said he a video of Phillip shearing but it would need equipment to set up.

We will start up Fiber Under the Pines again. Trudy will be present at the events as the SSFC Host and contact the CWLC to reserve. The dates are 1/12/24, 2/9/24, 3/8/24, from 1-3 on Fridays at the Clearwater Life Center in Gonvick. There is a fee of \$25 to rent the room. We will put a donation jar out. We discussed charging admission but decided not to.

The Science center event in Morris, MN, was also proposed by Alethea for those interested. January 17, 2024, is the date. None of the board members present were available. Linda J-M is planning on being there and maybe Alethea.

Do we want to join Park Rapids Chamber of Commerce again this year @ \$175? Kathy says that our events were posted because she checked. It was an idea, but maybe not worth it for the price. Consensus is that we will not do it for this coming year.

Kathy made a motion to adjourn. Margo seconded.

Respectfully submitted,
Trudy Delich
SSFC Secretary