

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2019 Interim

August 22, 2019

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 2nd meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture was held on Thursday, August 22, 2019, at 10:00 AM, in Louisville, Kentucky. Representative Richard Heath, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Richard Heath, Co-Chair; Senators Robby Mills, Dennis Parrett, Damon Thayer, Robin L. Webb, and Stephen West; Representatives Larry Elkins, Joe Graviss, Mark Hart, Kim King, Matthew Koch, Phillip Pratt, Brandon Reed, Rob Rothenburger, Steven Rudy, Dean Schamore, John Sims Jr, Wilson Stone, Nancy Tate, Walker Thomas, James Tipton, and Susan Westrom.

Guests: William M. Landrum III, Secretary, Finance and Administration Cabinet, Alex Francke, Miss Kentucky, and members of the Kentucky State Fair Board.

LRC Staff: Stefan Kasacavage, Tanya Monsanto, Silas Montgomery, Graduate Fellow, and Susan Spoonamore, Committee Assistant.

The July 8, 2019, minutes were approved, by voice vote, upon motion made by Representative Rothenburger and seconded by Representative Rudy.

Welcome

William M. Landrum III, Secretary, Finance and Administration Cabinet, said that the Kentucky Exposition Center and the Kentucky Fair Board was sued by Kentucky Kingdom last year for violating lease agreements related to parking and use of common areas. Secretary Landrum said that an agreement was reached by all parties in July 2019. He stated that with the financial help from the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy, the State Fairgrounds had been enhanced and upgraded including the demolition of Cardinal Stadium, which provided additional parking spaces. He said that \$1.2 million had been approved for the improvement and replacement of a make-up ring behind Freedom Hall. Another \$6 million had been approved to reconstruct Gate 1, Gate 4, and Gate 6.

Report on the Kentucky State Fair Board

David Beck, President and CEO, Kentucky Venues, stated that Kentucky Venues manages the Kentucky International Convention Center, and after a \$207 million renovation, the Center is open and hosting shows. Since January, the Center has had over 80 shows with an estimated economic fiscal impact of over \$1 million. He stated that since the first of 2019, the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center has hosted 123 shows, with an estimated economic fiscal impact of \$200 million.

Mr. Beck said that this year marked the 115th Kentucky State Fair. In 2018, approximately 114,000 people attended the fair. He said that over 11,000 different animals were entered in shows for 2019, along with approximately 5,000 exhibitors. In addition, there were over 23,000 entries for foods, quilts, etc. The facility has approximately 1.2 million square feet of climate controlled space, and the Kentucky State Fairgrounds is one of the largest in the nation. The Farm Machinery Show brings 300,000 people through the gates during a four-day period, and there are 400 vendors on a waiting list for an open space. Besides the Farm Machinery Show, the General Assembly mandates that the State Fair and North American International Livestock Show be held there each year.

Mr. Beck said that the board is also interested in upgrading technology, customer service, and safety for exhibitors, fair attendees, and employees. He stated that the Kentucky State Police and the Louisville-Metro Police Department have an active role in providing safety for the fairgrounds.

Ryan Quarles, Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), stated that the KDA had over 100 employees working the fair in some capacity. He said that there are over 90 county fairs in Kentucky, most of which use the county fair grant program. Commissioner Quarles said that the grant program is important to the continuation of county fairs.

Meeting adjourned.