**Southwestern Donkey and Mule Society**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**October 26, 2019**

**Belton, TX**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order 5:06 p.m. at the Bell County Expo Center in Belton, TX. Attendees were Greg Schlosser, Skip Oertli, Patsy Oertli, Jessica Meuth, Diane Smith, Ray Archer, Julie Archer, Sarah Matz, Mary Stewart, and Shirley Knott.

**Minutes:**

Greg reported that the August 24, 2019 minutes were approved and added to the website.

**Treasures Report**

Mary reported the club balance and said she would share a full report over email so people can get a full understanding of the budget and ask any questions. The report will also include the balances from the current show (SDMS Spooktacular). A member asked a question about the scholarship fund. Mary responded that the balance is $3245.41, which hasn’t changed. Mary asked for people to contact her if they have any specific questions or if they’d like to see additional information on her report.

**Committee Reports**

**2020 Ft. Worth Show**

Shirley asked the secretary to send an email around Nov. 10 reminding everyone to send in entries. The FWSS staff asked us for video footage or logo information so they can promote the club during the show. A member suggested looking into it and trying to put something together. A discussion ensued about the new rule about not letting people stay in their trailers on the grounds. Greg said he thinks this will be a huge burden for members and is looking into other options.

Additionally, Shirley reported that the entry deadline is Nov. 15 and late entries can be accepted until Dec. 30. Diane asked about the class list and whether it could be changed for staging. Shirley said it’s set in stone already, but we could consider other logistics to help make things safer for big and small animals.

Julie is working with Shirley to get exhibitor gift; Julie and Ray are preparing patterns; and Sarah and Vicki are ordering awards. Greg requested help from members and the board to find a high-level sponsor for the FWSS and there was a discussion about advertising opportunities.

**Year-End Banquet**

The year-end banquet is set for Dec. 7 in Waco at Uncle Dan’s. Julie has purchased decorations per previous approval from the board. Greg reported that Vicki is working on awards. A member suggested mini blankets and referred us to Supreme Equine Design. Another member said they really liked the denim jackets that were awarded in 2005 and suggested also looking into other apparel items. Sarah reported that she and Vicki were looking at buckle mugs for year-end awards and Mary said she saw them at the Houston Stock Show and liked them. Sarah stated that she’s suggested jackets and chairs in the past, but she got conflicting feedback on what members wanted. Greg stated that Vicki has been busy with the sale of her farm and move to new place so he’s not sure what’s been done thus far. Sarah said that she’d be happy to contact Creative Awards and that she’s already discussed with Patsy, Skip and Shirley about getting points finalized the week following the show so orders can be placed as soon as possible.

**Rules Committee**

Greg stated that Feb. 15 is the date to send rules to the Gulf Coast club regarding any potential changes to the Texas Rule Book. He added that Gulf Coast will oversee updating the rulebook this year and asked everyone to send to Sarah any suggested rule changes by Feb. 1.

**Old Business**

Greg reported that Vicki Taylor suggested starting a trail club and then setting awards. He stated further that Vicki is finishing up those details and will email it to the club.

Although requested by email, no changes to the bylaws or policies were submitted. As a result, Greg asked club members to review the rules and he moved to extend the deadline from Oct. 24 to Dec. 1. Diane seconded the motion, and it was approved by voice vote.

Sarah talked about membership management system, which she emailed the board about. Donna said she liked the idea and that the board had previously voted to be able to pay dues online. Sarah mentioned that the membership system would also provide an electronic filing system for club documents, such as budget, contracts, and even show patterns. A discussion ensued about patterns and making sure we’re not using the same ones. A member suggested asking the judge to set patterns, which someone replied that they don’t always know what we have.

Mary asked if we could accept other payments such as entries and sponsorships. Sarah wasn’t sure, but she thinks it would be possible and the system would provide customer service support to help maximize the website. Diane moved to accept the system and try it for a year. Ray seconded it, and the motion was approved by voice vote.

**New Business**

**2020 Classic**

Greg reported that the cost of the Classic is increasing $1500, which is over what we generally make each show, so he asked members to hustle to get additional entries and sponsorships to help cover the costs. He added that the show is scheduled for July 17-19, so next year the club won’t have to compete with the national show, and he hopes that will increase attendance. Greg further stated that he thinks Bell County Expo will eventually increase the overall rental costs in 2021 so we might need to consider other locations for the Classic in future years.

A member suggested partnering with Gulf Coast to increase entries, ramp up sponsorships, and get great awards so we can do a big show at Tyler Rose Park or Brazos County Expo for 2021. Gulf Coast would be interested in partnering up in 2020 as well. Diane shared reservations with partnering with another group and said it hasn’t worked in year’s past. Greg suggested tabling the idea, making a list of pros/cons and discussing the idea further at our Dec. meeting.

**2020 Spooktacular**

The price is increasing to $600 per day and there’s a chance we’d have to use the old stall barn, which would be cheaper, but less convenient. Greg, Diane and Mary talked about possibly looking at other options in Taylor, Dripping Springs, Bryan, and Buffalo. Diane suggested looking into Hamilton for the Nov. show, but there was a concern that it might be too expensive. Someone mentioned that it’s under new management so it might be worth looking into again. Ray suggested everyone reaching out to their favorite arena and call them asking about 40-70 stalls for a 2-day show and bringing the info back to the Dec. meeting.

**SDMS Member Complaint**

A member requested to be added to the agenda to discuss recent complaints made by other SDMS members and a letter of reprimand that was recently received. The member requested documentation regarding the complaint and for clarification on several items including telephone calls, emails, timelines, and other communications.

A question was asked about why an executive session was called at the previous board meeting to which Greg replied that he was trying to protect everyone’s privacy and handle the situation with respect. Several other questions were asked about whether the full board had approved the letter and Greg stated that while the board gave verbal approval to write the letter, he did not get approval on the final letter prior to it being sent. As a result, a member asked for the reprimand letter be withdrawn because it wasn’t vetted through the proper board channels. Mary moved to rescind the letter, Diane seconded, and the board approved by voice vote.

A heated and lengthy discussion ensued about SDMS members, how complaints are handled by the club, and a general lack of respect and bad blood between members, some going back several years. As frustrations mounted, a member asked what can be done to help mitigate the situation further to which no additional solution was provided.

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Submitted by Sarah Matz, Secretary