

**Wisconsin Association of FFA Board of Directors Meeting**  
**May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Clarion Suites Hotel, Madison**  
**Opened: 8:00am      Closed: 1:35pm**

**Call the Meeting to Order:** The meeting was opened at 8:00 AM by State FFA President Joe Schlies.

**Attendance:**

Mr. Jeff Hicken (joined virtually) ..... State FFA Advisor  
Mrs. Cheryl Zimmerman..... State FFA Executive Director  
Mr. John Hromyak.....State FFA Foundation Executive Director  
Joe Schlies..... State President  
Jackie Rosenbush..... State Sentinel  
Ms. Susie Olson-Rosenbush..... Spooner Advisor  
Ben Styer..... State Vice President  
Carisa Cleven..... State Vice President  
Ms. Nelda Bailey..... Tomah Advisor  
Mrs. Emma Huber..... Tomah Advisor  
Kendra Jentz..... State Treasurer  
Mrs. Madeline Esser..... River Ridge Advisor  
Brooks Lueck..... State Vice President  
Ms. Kim Houser..... Wisconsin Heights Advisor  
Ms. Beth Babcock..... Mauston Advisor  
Cortney Zimmerman..... State Vice President  
Mr. Mark Zimmerman..... Spencer Advisor  
Katie Loehrke..... State Secretary  
Mrs. Sandy Dykes..... Weyauwega-Fremont Advisor  
Katrina Hoesly..... State Parliamentarian  
Ms. Mary Handrich..... Denmark Advisor  
Melissa Konkel..... State Vice President  
Mrs. Lisa Konkel..... Big Foot Advisor

**Purpose of Meeting:**

This is the board of director’s first time meeting together in-person. The agenda covers a Wisconsin FFA Officer Update, Wisconsin FFA Update, DPI/Agricultural Education Update, Wisconsin FFA Foundation Update, Wisconsin FFA Alumni Update, WAAE Update, State FFA Committees, Unfinished Business (Sectional Leadership Development Events, and State Officer Election Process), New Business (CTSO MOU with Department of Public Instruction) and 2021 State FFA Convention details.

### **Opening:**

To start off the meeting, the board sang “Happy Birthday” to Mr. Zimmerman. The State Officers ran through opening ceremonies and Joe opened the meeting at 8:00am. Mrs. Zimmerman said that she was very excited for the board to be together and is looking forward to all the great ideas and details to be finalized in this meeting. Mrs. Zimmerman gave a rundown for the day going over the meeting agenda previously emailed out to everyone.

### **Wisconsin FFA Officer Update:**

The officers went around the room saying some of their biggest highlights of the year. Jackie talked about the week of recording the “*Learning to Do*” videos, what the purpose of those were and other things we did throughout that week. Ben talked about how he had previous other obligations for this year and wouldn’t have been able to run for state office, but all that changed with COVID and he has been extremely thankful. He said one of his highlights was the week of ag tours the team did back in September and how it brought the team together. Carisa talked about a highlight for her is the interaction with members officers are still being able to do, even if it may be in a virtual format. She said having the back and forth communication with those members, seeing them grow, seeing them participate in workshops on the computer, and seeing them in banquets soon in-person has been a humbling experience. Kendra talked about the Past State Officer (PSO) testimonials that are in the works for the State Officer Academy and how she is looking forward to convention and going throughout life with each of her teammates. Brooks talked about how “this team was meant to be” instantly clicking when we came together for the first time and how together we are creating better opportunities for members. Courtney said she would be lying if she said she wasn’t scared going into this year and truly didn’t know what to expect but through everything she couldn’t be happier with the turn out. Katie talked about the vast knowledge she has learned about the FFA and how the Wisconsin FFA Association and its affiliates are ran. She said some of her highlights have been during the in-person banquets she has been able to attend thus far, seeing those members you only knew over the computer, getting to know them, and making connections with them. Katrina talked about how many members didn’t know what FFA was and didn’t know what this organization had to offer. She said that we’re showing them what we had to offer and that we don’t realize the impact we had, we don’t know the full force of what we can do to make their lives better. Melissa highlighted a video that was shared with the team during one of our training sessions through National FFA. The video talked about the word “Good” and if something bad happened, we should simply say the word good and make the most of it because even though things don’t go as planned, it doesn’t mean something great won’t happen. Joe talked about how last year as a State Officer, he was so determined to have a convention. He said that this year he has learned so much about service and what it actually means and that it all started with the beginning of the year having no idea what was going to happen next.

**Wisconsin FFA Update:**

Mrs. Zimmerman led the discussion. A final list of 2021 state degrees were sent out last week. There were 317 applications submitted with 304 accepted, 13 of those applications did not meet minimum qualifications. State degree applications were down some from in previous years but overall it was good to be at least 300. It was definitely a learning process for advisors and working through the appeals on some of those applications. She appreciates all the advisors help with getting state degrees finalized within their sections.

State STARS were recently released. Information has been sent to those individuals. There are 10 finalists in STAR placement, 10 finalists in STAR farmer, 2 finalists in STAR in agribusiness, and 3 finalists in STAR in agriscience. All interviews for the finalists will be done virtually through the STARS committee, hoping to be completed around June 9th.

The state honors band and chorus is coming back together after a halt last year. The directors have selected 55 students for chorus and 46 students for band. This is a smaller group than in year's past. The advisors and Mrs. Zimmerman are working with state fair to make it happen for the traditional performances down there. The plan would be for the band and choir to be at state fair Thursday through Sunday. Only one school said their band/choir student(s) would not be able to travel to participate. For State Convention, choir practice will be held in the arena compared to traditionally in the Michigan room in the hotel. This extra space allows precautions due to COVID.

There were 612 proficiency applications submitted. These were judged by volunteers back in March held at the Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells. This was the state's first true in-person event. Places are finalized.

Wisconsin had 86 American Degrees submitted. Cheryl Steinbach and Mrs. Zimmerman worked on reviewing them together to send on to Nationals. If any applications needed corrections, the student's advisors were reached out to. The official list must be submitted to Nationals by June 15th.

Wisconsin has 1 national STAR in agriscience application, 3 for STAR farmer, and 5 for STAR placement through the American Degrees.

Mrs. Zimmerman has been working with Adam Wheeling at Chippewa Valley Tech College (CVTC) to plan for a tractor driving contest. This will not run like in previous years but students will have an opportunity to compete at the Eau Claire Farm Technology Days this summer. The idea is to have only a state level competition. The contest would be offered everyday on the Farm Technology grounds and students would be able to compete on any of those days. The winners will be selected from an overall basis. In the future we would see continuing the traditional contest with regional contests to advance to a state contest.

**DPI/Agricultural Education Update:**

Mr. Hicken led the discussion. He said we have a substantial amount of turn-over this year in our profession. Some turn-over is because of retirement, some to moving schools, and some to leaving the profession. 22 positions will have changes this year. A new program is in the works for Nekoosa. There has been interest from 4 other schools for an agricultural program. Mr. Hicken went over the list of schools that have opened positions and all recent retirements. Mr. Hicken stressed that with these recent retirements, these teachers have a combined years in education that is very impressive. On the DPI level, there will be a new state superintendent on July 5th. July 5th is also when all state employees can go back to working in state buildings. Now and before then, Mr. Hicken will continue working from home.

**MOU (Memorandum of Understanding):**

Mr. Hicken led the discussion. In hindsight, the state association has had to take out more liability insurance and plan. A document that was shared is not specific to FFA but includes all CTSOs within DPI. Mr. Hicken wanted the board to be aware of this as nobody is sure how this will all be finalized and said that he will keep the board posted on upcoming changes.

There was a virtual guest speaker, Sharon Wendt, Director of CTE for DPI. She said this has been in the works for several years. This would help to understand and clarify relationships between student organizations (such as the FFA) and DPI as DPI supports all 6 CTSOs in the state. She said it has been challenging to understand the authority that DPI has over these organizations, especially if each organization has their own entity. This recognizes they are their own organizations with their own boards and outlines what the state staff would do to support these organizations. Mrs. Konkel asked if this was a brand new concept or if it is simply adjusted from what it was before? Wendt explained that the only thing really new or different is clarifying the independence of the organizations. If finalized, all contracts will have the association logo, not the DPI logo.

**Wisconsin FFA Foundation Update:**

Mr. Hromyak led the discussion. He has been busy contacting sponsors and starting to get the ball rolling about the convention now that we have dates set. Hopefully there will be more good news to come in the future. At this point, we are not breaking any records for attendance and supporters but are not in a terrible condition with all things considered. Mr. Hromyak wants to keep industry partners going, and there is looking to be a lot of opportunities on the individual partners side. Large-scale, the foundations focus is on 2029, as it will be the 100 year anniversary. Watch out for a much larger campaign in this area. Mr. Hromyak talked about a summer intern that will be joining the state foundation crew on May 25th. The state foundation

scholarships are being judged currently and those results should be known within 2-3 weeks from now.

**WAAE Update:**

Update from Mrs. Kathy Hartmann-Breunig. Bylaws has been a big thing they have been working on finalizing throughout the new year. Their partnership with Mr. Hromyak and the foundation has been wonderful. The committee and sectional WAAE meetings are being scheduled and will need to be done within the next few months. A handout was also shared going over the National Policy Seminar by ACTE, upcoming Professional Development Conference (PDC), membership, FFA center partnership, foundation partnership, and teacher news.

**State FFA Committees:**

Constitution and Bylaws: (Katrina) **Katrina moved to approve the policies committee report, seconded by Jackie, no discussion, and unanimously passed by the officers. Advisors sustaining action approved.**

Finance Committee: (Kendra and Mr. Hicken) Mr. Hicken described that the major change is that we did not receive state dollars as General Purpose R Funds (GPR), none of the CTSOs did.

**Kendra moved to approve the report, seconded by Katrina, no discussion, and unanimously passed by the officers. Advisors sustaining action approved.**

Marketing and Membership Committee: (Carisa and Brooks) Wisconsin FFA currently has **19,798** FFA members statewide. Mrs. Zimmerman described that nationwide, we don't know what the membership numbers look like, and to be aware it may change delegate count for some states. However, we did increase in affiliated memberships. Their next projects include Facebook and Instagram lives, merchandise at state convention, and the 2020-2021 State Officer Gift of Blue.

Awards and Programs Committee: (Katie and Melissa) Completed tasks include: selecting and creating spirit sticks for 10 FLW and 10 FIRE conference chapters, with one award per conference per section, the State Program of Activities was updated for the 2020-2021 year, an updated list of application due dates was created and shared with members, and all Leadership Development Event (LDE) contest areas were update to compete in a virtual environment. Plans for moving forward include creating visuals about specific awards and programs through Wisconsin FFA to share and public at State Convention. Mrs. Zimmerman described that the goal is for all LDE plaques to be distributed at the State Convention. They are being made right now. Plaques for sectional proficiency award areas are in the process of being ordered. She also said to be aware that Shop FFA is about 2-3 weeks behind on getting things out.

Media and Public Relations Committee: (Cortney) Wisconsin FFA has hit 10,000 likes on our State FFA Facebook page. Highlights arranged from the State Officer travel blogs, state facebook page, state instagram page, state snapchat, state website, sectional officer newsletters, and other media publications.

Partners Committee: (Cortney and Joe) The Partners Committee has been working closely with all other Team AgEd members. Main duties include attending the Wisconsin FFA Foundation Board of Directors meetings, committee meetings, FFA Alumni meetings and convention, and Team AgEd meetings. Their goals include to continue to work with Mr. Hromyak, Mrs. Rozell and Mrs. Roudebush at the Wisconsin FFA Foundation to set up Spring Business and Industry visits with current donors, to hold an in-person event in conjunction with the Wisconsin State FFA Convention in July to recognize and celebrate our sponsors, Foundation members, and honored adults, and to have sponsors engaged throughout the virtual aspects of the Wisconsin State FFA Convention.

Service Committee: (Jackie and Ben) The service committee purpose is to create and review local and state FFA service projects for the Wisconsin Association of FFA. Current projects include Jag Lake renovations, sectional competitions, Thank a Farmer activity, and “Wisconsin FFA Shows Unstoppable Service” campaign.

A motion was requested to approve all other reports (Marketing and Membership Committee, Awards and Programs Committee, Media and Public Relations Committee, Partners Committee, and Service Committee). **Brooks moved to accept all reports, seconded by Katie, no discussion, and unanimously passed by the officers. Advisors sustaining action approved.**

### **State Contests:**

After this meeting, officers will reach out to advisors to gauge interest in if chapters can go in-person to compete in other state contests. Currently, the Ag Issues and Marketing Plan Career Development Events (CDEs) plan to be in-person. Mrs. Zimmerman said in a general year, we don't have many people sign up for those two areas. High School Quiz Bowl during a normal year would have a maximum of 16 teams. Mr. Hicken said all Alliant Energy Center rooms are renovated and have projectors and screens that would greatly benefit us if we decide to make any contests virtual.

### **State Officer Election:**

There are a lot of different options being thought of about this process for 2021. Mrs. Zimmerman described the amount of officer applications has surprisingly and sadly low. Mrs. Dykes and Mr. Zimmerman insisted on thinking of changing the process to elect officers not by a sectional basis, but top 10 in the state overall. Mrs. Konkel suggested that we need to work with

colleges to help allow FFA members to be officers and college students at the same time. The unanimous agreement was that if an FFA member submits an application and does not meet requirements of being an officer, they simply will not qualify, even if there was only one applicant. Mrs. Huber mentioned that you need to consider the officer candidate's home advisor signing off on the candidate's application and hope that they would be honest with the qualifications of the applicant. For this year, the election will be run similar to the 2020 virtual election in the sense that judges will stay with the candidate throughout the whole process.

### **Career Expo:**

Mr. Hromyak said this year's career expo at the State Convention will be smaller than in year's past. He is anticipating to have 40-50 booths, about half as usual. He is hoping this is something that all members will get the chance to mander through. The Peterson Farm Brothers will also be there in the morning for a "meet and greet". Mrs. Zimmerman mentioned that there will still be FFA bucks awarded to members at the State Convention like in year's past and that there will still be a silent auction of basket items put together by the State Officer team. This silent auction will occur during the career expo and will hopefully encourage students to engage with vendors and collect bucks.

### **Scrapbook:**

Mrs. Zimmerman wondered if there would be a want to do a scrapbook contest this year. She said that one of the main coordinators for it will not be able to make it this year for convention. In the past there has been no pre-entry and chapters brough their scrapbooks to convention for drop-off and to be judged. However, maybe this year there needs to be a survey to analyze if there is interest state-wide. Ms. Houser suggested that if we have judges willing to judge these, why not offer it and that there will certainly be a lot of Zoom pictures! A thought that came up was to host a large survey that would include the scrapbook contest, tractor restoration, artwork, meals, number of students attending per chapter, etc. Another thing that was discussed was if it would be a good idea to have these scrapbooks displayed for the public due to COVID and many people rummaging through the pages.

### **2020 State Degrees:**

A survey was sent out to see if there would be interest in having the 2020 state degree recipients recognized at the 2021 State Convention. There were approximately 325 state degrees last year, and so far there are nearly 80 responses saying yes, these members would be able and willing to attend. Their advisors shared that if there were to be 100 students, it would be worthwhile and a good turn out. The thought is to have this special recognition ceremony either immediately

before or after the 2021 State Degree recognition ceremony. There are still plans to have a state degree lunch at convention but it is up in the air if this will include the 2020 recipients or not yet.

### **Gala:**

This is an idea through Mr. Hromyak and the Foundation. This gala would be a formal adult dinner program. However we need to be considerate of respecting sponsors schedules and their time commitments. Over the years, less and less sponsors have been showing up to be on stage to present awards. Mr. Hromyak described it as a “VIP group of adults who have this long history with the FFA, as well as our sponsors so we can see this long standing tradition.” He mentioned that there is a lot of great synergy and overlap between those groups. For this year we will see how it goes and all of the idea might not come alive this year. Still, we are hoping for an efficient dinner program to represent people. The hope is to transform it from a standing up in front and reading off names of people for speakers, to more of a story telling, hearing achievements, and hearing from these core groups of FFA on how FFA has shaped them.

### **Workshops:**

Carisa and Kendra will be the officers helping to run these. Wednesday is going to be the big workshop day. Mr. Hromyak has a few sponsors available to give them workshop recordings or potential live presentations. Ms. Handrich is a workshop manager but wants to retire from this year. If the alumni board can help with these too, that would be great. Mrs. Zimmerman is concerned about the number of workshops that we should offer and especially on how many students will actually utilize them. She talked about how even last year there was a virtual workshop with Kolsen McCoy, National FFA President at the time, and only a handful of people showed up. Mrs. Huber mentioned that she is the co-chair with Mrs. Kim Dehn of the Teach Ag workshop. She said she will plan to have one but will email Mrs. Zimmerman with more information. The AgEd signing day falls under Mrs. Huber too.

### **Other Business:**

We had a “working lunch” of boxed lunches provided by the hotel. During this lunch time, lots of conversations were had. To star off the discussion, Ms. Babcock talked about being on the Agriscience committee. There were 41 applications this year and interviews will be held virtually over Zoom on June 16th. There will not be displays at the State Convention for those award winners like in year’s past.

This year there were 31 National Chapter award applications. However, in years past there have been up to 120. The state can send 25 on to the National level. Dr. Tim Buttles at the University

of Wisconsin - River Falls has volunteered to chair the review committee as he was a part of the National judging process.

The virtual talent competition applications are ready to go out next week. They will be held in a virtual aspect, like in 2020. The state Band and Choir directors will be judging them. The plan at the moment is to have the winners invited to perform at the convention. There will not be a talent competition stage in the Expo hall, so the Career Expo will be able to spread out in that hall much more.

State Officers are in the process of developing roughly five minutes of messages/speeches to be virtually shared as State Officer addresses, considerably as mini retiring addresses. Officers will record themselves and will be posting the videos as a count-down to convention.

To help with media and gaining an up-to-date team photo, the State Officer team will be taking pictures with a lady from Edgar during our upcoming week together for convention planning.

Mrs. Zimmerman is working with Pat Sternitzky to revamp the convention registration site. She is hoping for the week of the 24th for the site to be open. She is also ready to release the housing blocks to the teachers through the convention bureau in Madison. As far as for housing and how many rooms will be needed all depends. Looking at the home chapter for our board members, only Denmark and Weyauwega-Fremont school's will allow them to go full capacity at the moment. The other schools all depend on many different variables.

The Ag Artwork contest is still in motion. Katie will be working with Mr. Pinchart from Wrightstown to finalize the details in the near future. One of the changes for this year is the registration will turn into a digital format through Google Forms. Mr. Pinchart and his FFA chapter agreed to run the operations at convention again this year. Katie will work with Mr. Hicken to have judges lined up through DPI art consultant.

Ms. Handrich suggested we should reach out to the State Alumni Board for all things we potentially would need help with. She brought up the point that they are always asking for ways that they can help throughout the year and with this convention unlike past years they could be a good resource.

Mrs. Zimmerman talked about the FFA News Room, or more that she hasn't really thought about how it would look like for this year yet. She mentioned that in years past the office area would become a pretty congested area and was unsure how it would work with COVID protocols. Mrs. Huber and Mrs. Bailey was in favor of it saying that it would still be a good thing that the students can be engaged in.

Katrina brought up an idea Joe and her have been talking about. The idea is to adjust the News Room helpers to a "Media Team". That group of students would be specifically chosen based on their experiences in media, photography, creating graphics, writing, etc. They would potentially help figure out graphics to use on state media pages, run the state media pages for that week, set

up Zoom connections in certain rooms, and take behind the scenes pictures. Mrs. Zimmerman said we would still need to have applications for the Media Team and if we have to put a limit on people for the convention, this may not happen.

There will be no Second Harvest packing stations for the Day of Service like in the past and no service projects out and about in the community. An idea that was brought up that each section would have a list of designated items to bring and the Courtesy Corps students could help make care packages of all the items. Ms. Babcock suggested filling backpacks with school supplies and other toiletries to not deal with food. Another idea was to have a list of items statewide for people to bring and have a contest between the sections, or simply a statewide donation area. Mr. Hromyak says if all goes well in the next couple of weeks, it sounds like we will have the sponsorship that supports the \$10,000 that covers Second Harvest. The Foundation was thinking of ways to put this money to use and food insecurity was definitely their main idea.

Mrs. Zimmerman said there will be no tours this year. However, the Zoo in town will be open and FFA chapters can tour places at their own risk.

Mrs. Zimmerman was talking about options for meals for students at convention and how that might look like in a COVID world. She said again, it depends on if Dane County or the Alliant will require a max amount of participants or people/room, etc. If there were meals offered, an idea for that Monday would be a picnic style lunch in the parking lot - like tailgating. If this does happen, it was suggested that a corn hole tournament should be held.

The Peterson Farm Bros. have been contacted and are in contract through DPI for a mix of a keynote and entertainment. There will be two brothers there and this event would not be charged or ticketed. Mrs. Zimemrman was concerned on how and when they would perform during or after our sessions working with the Brothers and their own contract requirements.

Ms. Handrich suggested putting a fee on registration, similar to how there's a current parking fee. She proposed \$25 per chapter. Mrs. Konkel said schools, like her own, would pay for registration fees but if they see hypnotists and/or an entertainment fee, they won't. Mr. Hicken said we are the only CTSO that doesn't charge a registration fee per student. Mrs. Olson-Rosenbush is in favor of having this fee, but to definitely call it a registration fee. He said it is up to the Board to see what we want to do this year. He said the association is financially stable and has reserves to crack into. The hypnotist show by Al Synder is \$2500. **Katie moved for the State Association to pay for the Peterson Farm Bros. and Al Synder hypnosis show fees for this year. Carisa seconded the motion, no discussion, and unanimously passed by the officers. Advisors sustaining action approved.**

Mr. Hicken is looking to have delegate stuff happen all before the state convention so each chapter will have the opportunity to cast their votes. He will work this over more with Mrs. Zimmerman, Joe, and Katrina. Plans need to be made and to make sure it follows the State's constitution and bylaws.

For LDE's at the State level, each officer and their advisor(s) will be in charge of a particular area. Mrs. Bailey suggested each of us to submit names and email addresses for good judges. The state leaders will place the judges in spots that they think will fit best and work together between all the contests. Obviously, if you have students running in that contest, there can not be teacher or family ties to that contest. Quiz Bowl will need two teams of three judges for semi-finals, plus three judges designated for the finals. Arrangements are below:

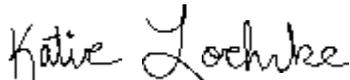
- Section 1 - Ag Issues
- Section 2 - Extemporaneous
- Section 3 - Creed
- Section 4 - Prepared Speaking
- Section 5 - Employability
- Section 6 - Marketing Plan
- Section 7 - Conduct of Chapter Meetings
- Section 8 - Quiz Bowl
- Section 9 - Parliamentary Procedure
- Section 10 - Conduct of Chapter Meetings

As far as for the next in-person Board meeting, plan for a meeting at 2:30pm on the Monday of Convention to go over last minute details and get things rolling.

Joe said to be on the lookout for a virtual meeting that we will be having soon to finalize everything from today. Hoping for a quick turnaround time!

**Jackie moved to adjourn the meeting and Melissa seconded. Motion passes and advisors sustain the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,



Katie Loehrke  
State Secretary  
Wisconsin Association of FFA