

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
Saturday February 20, 2021, 9:30 am  
Virtual Zoom at the OAAS Office  
Stirling, Ontario.



**Call to Order and Welcome**

**President's Opening Remarks**

*Brian Slaughter's remarks*

Brian Slaughter welcomed everyone to the meeting and what would have been our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. He commented on the many seminars available during the very successful Convention and topped off with "The Red Ribbon event on Friday night. He ended by congratulating the award winners.

**Introduction of 2021 OAAS Board of Directors** – presentation of photos of Executive, Board members and staff.

**President** – Beth Howell-Vervaecke; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Liz O'Gorman-Smit; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President – Glen Symes, Past President – Brian Slaughter

**Board** - Valerie Allen, Lauren Armstrong, Carol Cann, Randy Creighton, Heather Dillon, Mike Dupuis, Andrew Iceton, Grace Mullen, Linda Murray, Heather Owens, Leonard Riopel, Angie Robinson, Bart Scherpenzeel, and Andrew Taylor

**O Canada**

**In Memoriam** by 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President OAAS, *Beth Howell-Vervaecke*

**Staff Remarks:** *Kathryn Lambert & Vince Brennan*

*Kathryn Lambert's remarks:*

Kathryn thanked everyone for attending the AGM and joining the Convention over the past five days. In the spring of 2018, the OAAS accomplished the huge challenge of relocating the annual Convention from downtown Toronto to a new location. This week we also successfully accomplished the feat of holding a virtual Convention with the help of our attendees, sponsors, supporters, and volunteers. She thanked everyone for supporting us and coming along with us on this journey and noted that we can't wait to see you in 362 days next year in Richmond Hill

*Vince Brennan's remarks*

He commented despite the year's difficulties there have been many bright spots and positives. Agricultural Societies stepped up and helped their communities as well as coming up with creative and innovative ways to provide entertainment or a welcome distraction to their communities. Thanked everyone for attending the AGM – there was approximately 450 people from 180 fairs registered – attendance is up over past years. Thanks Kathryn, Directors, and volunteers for another amazing convention – attendance at seminars appears to be higher than in past years. Thanked Brian and the Board for their support and assistance. We must continue to shift to what we can do and away from what we can't do. Our members are strong, and our Fairs are resilient.

**President's Address:** *Brian Slaughter*

It has been a very challenging and rewarding year. At this time, I would like to say a few words on behalf of the OAAS Board. Who would have ever thought this past year when we left the Convention that we would turn around and do a virtual Convention meeting? I know I would have said that I was one of those that would have said it never would have happened. But I would like to thank everyone for this year, it certainly has been an enjoyable and challenging year as being the President of the OAAS. As

going forward, as many negatives that have come out this past year with COVID, there have been a lot of positives that have come out of it. We were able to sit with the Executive being invited to a lot of Executive meetings for your Districts, your Spring meetings, your Fall meetings. In normal years we would not be able to take part with Ontario being such a large province. I give kudos to all the Ag Societies that stepped forward when they knew they wouldn't be able to do a traditional fair this past year; they thought outside the box and did virtual fairs and drive ins, fundraisers, or just took the year off and maybe spruced your grounds up or changed the scenery, do odds and ends that you haven't been able to do in the past before.

I would just like to take this time to say a sincere thank you to our manager Vince for all his hard work and dedication and thinking outside the box. Starting early spring Vince came up with 14 information filled Zoom seminars that were presented through out the spring and summer. The countless hours with OMAFRA to help the Ag Societies secure funding that has not gone unnoticed. Thank you, Vince. Our Convention Administrator, Kathryn Lambert – is always looking for new challenges, and believe me she took on one this year with full strength. She eagerly maneuvered our 2021 Convention for it to become virtual and she put many hours together to ensure the members could still have the opportunity to connect with each other. Believe me Kathryn, I believe I can speak on behalf of everybody, you hit this one right out of the park this year. Thank you. And last but not least I would like to thank the Board of Directors who worked very hard on all the committees to help lead the OAAS through these times and to all the fairs' members to your dedication in your local fairs. For many of us it's been a year of regrowth, recharge, and relook at everything but I know for certain because of all of you, we will be stronger than ever and be back next year time comes. Thank you everyone

### **Guest Speakers:**

Vince Brennan introduced Minister Hardeman, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)

Minister Ernie Hardeman brought greetings and congratulations to the OAAS on their Convention on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, food and rural affairs and the province of Ontario. He extended his congratulations on the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the OAAS and stated for 175 years your association has been inspiring and supporting agricultural societies across Ontario to encourage and support agriculture and our rural way of life. He thanked Vince Brennan, OAAS Manager for the work he did in this past year to assist OMAFRA to see what they needed to do or what they could do to help societies because of the pandemic and to maneuver our way through the system and make sure the ag societies weren't forgotten in the recovery.

In the fall of 2020, OMAFRA delivered nearly 1 million dollars to all eligible Agricultural and Horticultural Societies to help relieve some of the burden that they experienced as a result of COIVD's impact on operations. Last month at the Rural Ontario Municipalities conference, he announced the program details of 5 million dollars in additional funding through the *Agricultural and Horticultural Recovery Funding initiative* that was part of the fall budget

He also announced that the OAAS will receive funding from the OMAFRA Grass Roots Initiative funding to assist with the transition to a virtual platform for this year's Convention as well as funding for the OAAS to create Risk Management training for the Agricultural Societies to assist them to deal with holding their fairs and events post-COVID.

He is looking forward to hearing more from the OAAS as to how we can work together to help you with the total recovery and help us all with the total recovery from COVID in the province of Ontario.

Honourable Lisa MacLeod Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI) – via recorded video message.

*Minister MacLeod's remarks:*

Minister MacLeod was unable to attend but sent a video in which she indicated that she is a huge supporter of Ontario's agriculture and rural fairs. She assured us that as we come out of this pandemic, agricultural fairs will be more important than ever before as we look to seek and support hyper-local communities and tourism, encouraging people to eat local, to shop local to experience our rural communities. She encouraged the OAAS to continue to work together, work with her ministry and work with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in the future.

Heather Owens, Provincial Director, District 3 introduced Senator Rob Black

*Senator Black's remarks:*

Senator Rob Black congratulated the OAAS on their 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. For 175 years, Agricultural Societies have come together under the OAAS to learn from each other and to grow their communities. As a result, we have seen some of the very best fairs hosted here in Ontario. The organization has worked tirelessly to support members by providing leadership through outreach, communications and education as well as promoting rural life here in Ontario. This support system has been even more important in recent times as we continue to navigate the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He has risen on several occasions in the Senate of Canada chamber to highlight the role of rural communities in Canada has taken many opportunities to stand for fairs, exhibitions, and agricultural societies in the chamber. He has written to numerous ministers and spoken in the chamber a number of times of the challenges that fairs are facing and continues to push for government support at the federal level in support of fairs. Senator Black hopes it's comforting in some way to you to know that someone in the Senate understands the importance of fairs in our rural communities and will keep fighting for you and for the fairs and the future of all our fairs and exhibitions across Canada and here in Ontario. Despite its many downsides, the pandemic has given us all reasons to re-examine our priorities, develop backup plans, and ensure that we are ready for anything.

*Doug Yeo, Past President introduced Guy Scott*

History about the OAAS 175<sup>th</sup> – from Guy Scott (PowerPoint)

**Motion 1 - Approval of Agenda**

Approve the agenda as posted on our website, distributed via email link, and presented today to the membership.

Moved by Matt Garwood, Flos Agricultural Society & seconded by Jane Armstrong, Iron Bridge Agricultural Society

**Carried**

**Motion 2 - to accept Electronic Meeting Voting via ZOOM**

Approve electronic voting via ZOOM voting polls, and all voting delegates must type – Voting Delegate, their name, and Agricultural Society name in the 'Chat box' so it can be recorded for Quorum.

Moved by Lauren Armstrong, Plympton Wyoming Agricultural Society & seconded by Amanda King Markham Agricultural Society

**Carried**

**Confirmation of Quorum**

We have quorum with 268 voting delegates and total of 379 attending our meeting this morning

**Motion 3 - to approve to minutes of the Annual Meeting Minutes held on Saturday, February 15, 2020**

Approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies held on Saturday, February 15, 2020, as posted on our website, distributed via email link, and presented today to the membership.

Moved by Colin Pool, Ridgetown Agricultural Society & seconded by Mike Dupuis, Walkerton Agricultural Society  
**Carried**

**Review of Financial Reports** - Vince Brennan, Manager, reviewed the report for Review Engagement as prepared by *Lynch, Rutherford, Tozer, Port Hope, Ontario*

Statement of Financial position – more cash than a year ago

Statement of Revenue and expenditures (general comments)

- We had a successful 2020 Convention prior to the pandemic
- Not as much going out of the office as far as stationery and postage
- Board member meetings – significant drop – did not hold in-person meetings due to COVID
- Printing and reproduction down – did not print Directory and Brochures

**Motion 4** - to accept the 2020 Financial Statements - *Vince Brennan, Manager*

Accept the Financial Statements as posted on our website, distributed via email link, and presented today to the membership.

Moved by Liz O'Gorman-Smit, Provincial Director & seconded by George Araujo, Norfolk Agricultural Society

**Carried**

**Motion 5** - to appoint Review Engagement Company for 2021

Appoint Lynch Rutherford Tozer to provide an Independent Practitioner's Review Engagement Report for 2021 Financial Statements.

Moved by Tayler Black, Fergus Agricultural Society & seconded by Harley Bloom, Capital Fair

**Carried**

**Motion 6** - to confirm Acts of Directors and Officers for the past year

That all acts, made, done and taken by the Directors and Officers of the Association, since the last Annual Meeting be and hereby ratified and confirmed

Moved by Barbara-Ann Glaude, Stormont Agricultural Society & seconded by Mary Lichtry-Neeb, Wellesley North Easthope Agricultural Society

**Carried**

**Motion 7** - to receive all reports

Accept all reports submitted as posted on our website and distributed via email link to the membership.

Moved by Joanne Holt, Aberfoyle Agricultural Society & seconded by Marie Saunders, Rainy River Valley Agricultural Society

**Carried**

**Motion 8** - to confirm election of Board of Directors

Confirm the election of the 2021/2022 OAAS Board of Directors.

Moved by Ian Thompson, Caledonia Agricultural Society & seconded by Mary Ann Found, Orono Agricultural Society

**Carried**

#### *Brian Slaughter's remarks*

I would like to thank everyone that took the time this morning to be involved with our meeting. As Rob said this morning, being on rural internet there are glitches and it takes time and I am glad you are patient. I would like to take a few moments to thank you, it's been enjoyable this year as your President. At this time, I would like to thank our four retiring directors for their time, dedication and bringing their great ideas to the Board. At this time, I would like to thank Doug Yeo, Rodger Lyster, Wayne Pfeffer, and Brenda Tipping for serving on our Board, thank you very much.

I introduce 5 new Board Members to the Board – Lauren Armstrong from District 13; Andrew Iceton from District 4; Andrew Taylor from District 7; Angie Robinson from District 2; and Mike Dupuis from District 10. I would like to welcome them and look forward to working with them for their next term. Thank you very much

*Glen Syme, Provincial Director, District 2 introduced Rik Roberts*

**Closing Keynote Speaker** – Rik Roberts – topic “Listen up, Laugh it Up”

Laughter is super important and sometimes we don’t make time for it and are really not serving ourselves or the people around us at all when we are not taking time to laugh.

Laughter reduces stress increases your oxygen flow and I heard this statistic the other day which is probably the most exciting one – that you just laugh for 20 minutes it’s the same as doing a 60-minute cardio workout at the gym. So just 20 minutes equals a 60-minute treadmill workout.

I wish you the best next year, I know how hard it is to do what you have done, I am on several different boards and things and just putting together this meeting alone let alone virtual fairs and virtual options for your people. It’s been a tough year, but I guarantee you this when things open backup and we are all clear and got the green light, you are going to see record turnouts and people cannot wait to communicate and get together in groups again and the fact that you have kept this thing going through the pandemic is just admirable.

**Closing Comments** from 2021 President *Beth Howell-Vervaecke*

The OAAS staff and the board appreciate the struggles this past year have presented our Ag Societies. We all have come to this Convention to share in the history of annually celebrating agriculture through our fairs and to show our ability to adapt by attending a virtual convention.

Congratulations to the OAAS on its 175th anniversary and the celebration will continue in 2021. I wish to thank Minister Hardeman and OMAFRA for working with us to acknowledge the impact agriculture has on our communities and how Agricultural Societies are the pillars to bring communities together.

The 2021 virtual convention was remarkable, offering to all our Ag Societies and service members a great way to connect and stay focused on doing all the good we do in our communities through fair work. Our Provincial Directors and volunteers have worked with the OAAS staff and have outdone themselves to provide this amazing platform.

Our theme for 2021 is Teamwork makes our Ag Societies strong!

To help us build on this theme, please keep your District Directors and the OAAS up to date on any plans that your fairs are making for 2021 so that we can help you to promote them in our municipalities and on the OAAS website.

From the TREIM tourism gathering tool, the OAAS has been able to share with our various ministries like Agriculture and Tourism the impact we make in our communities. Please continue to share with your local news as well as with your members of parliament and local officials the events you offer in your community this year.

There will be more information coming on what the OAAS will be doing during this year. We all need to stay in touch even more closely as the year progresses.

The OAAS staff and its Provincial Directors will be there to support our Ag Societies maneuver through the changes that will come. With the availability of a vaccine, hosting events during COVID will begin to provide our fair goers the safest experiences possible. We will continue to strive to keep you all informed. Please watch our website routinely for updates. routinely

If there is any good from 2020 it was the remarkable big picture thinking that was done by our Ag Societies across the province to share our cherished agricultural traditions through innovative forums that helped us stay engaged with our communities.

Lastly, I want to thank you for looking forward... to bringing even more community building events for 2021. The past year is behind us!

Remember... A rear-view mirror is small for a reason!

Meeting was Adjourned at 11:15am