

Marion County Fair Board Meeting
August 4, 2010, 5:32 PM
Marion County Public Works

Minutes by Denise Clark

Members: Diannah Dolby, Shannon Gubbels, Phyllis Johnson, Nathan Leao, Terry Sol, Kelly Walther, Pam Zielinski

Commissioner Liaison: Janet Carlson

Staff: Denise Clark, Joel Conder, Sara McDonald

Guests: Cassie McFarland (Sweeney Promotions), Pamela Rose (4H)

- I. **Call to Order:** 5:32 pm
- II. **Public Comments:** None.
- III. **Approval of 6/30/2010 Meeting Minutes**

Shannon made a motion to approve the June 30, 2010 meeting minutes; Nathan seconded. Motion passes.

IV. **4H – (No Report as Pamela arrived after agenda item scheduled)**

V. **Treasurer's Report – Joel Conder**

- Most of the revenue has been received other than sponsor money, still paying some invoices that are coming in.
- Joel asked when the money from Wilco's ticket sales might be received. Cassie said she will call them.
- General Fund money still to come in.
- Numbers are way down. Gate receipts down, just waiting on Wilco (around \$2300).
- The state subsidy has been received.
- We received \$46,600 in gate revenue. The fair budget is based on \$60,000 in gate revenue.
- 4H/FFA camping fees and stalls fee revenue remained the same.
- The concert generated \$10,000 in ticket sales, we spent \$42,000 on the concert. (However there is additional income in food and retail sales generated.) Joel thinks we paid too much (\$32,000) for Lonestar
- Joel said Denise did a great job staying in budget with the temps.

Kelly asked how we might use the Community Development Block Grant money. Answer- we'll ask Janet when she gets here.

The Tents line item was over budget as Real Heroes ordered more tents than expected. Nathan said he would get the money reimbursed.

Pam made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report; Diannah seconded. Motion passes.

VI. Items of Special Interest

OFA Decision-Kelly

Kelly said she recently received a letter from the Oregon Fairs Association (OFA) regarding the state subsidy. She gave some background information. To receive the state subsidy, we must submit the Annual Report. She read the letter that discusses re-instating the merit system of rating county fairs that was discontinued back in 1993. At that time the state money was distributed on a points earned basis. An OFA county fair commissioner would visit the individual fairs and judge it on general appearance, cleanliness, involvement, etc.

Kelly is concerned that this topic has never been discussed at an OFA board meeting; this was all new to the members receiving the letter. She said it is a very subjective process; a commissioner might be biased. Lincoln County fair's event (discontinued the fair board and then deposited the state subsidy into their general fund) could have prompted this discussion. (In Lincoln County's case the state stopped payment on the check until they were in compliance; was handled internally.)

This fair board feels the process is too subjective. Nathan said not having a fairgrounds, makes us different than most fairs. Kelly said Multnomah County Fair doesn't have their own grounds; they hold the event at Oaks Park in Hillsboro. They also have a "Friends of the Fair" organization, not a traditional fair board. This works for them.

It was suggested that if this process was put into place, there would need to be an appeal process.

The board would like to keep same system as currently is in place.

State Fair Meeting Attendance- Denise

Denise reminded folks of the upcoming OFA meeting held at the state fairgrounds during State Fair. It is Wednesday, September 1, at 10:00 AM. She needs to send in confirmation of the number attending. Kelly and Phyllis and a staff person (Denise or Joel) will attend. Denise reminded folks that their OFA membership card will get them into the gates for free. (Kelly said there is also the State Fair Foundation dinner the night before at the fairgrounds.)

Vendor Feedback Forms- Denise

Denise distributed copies of the feedback forms received from vendors. Kelly asked her to highlight anything that needed to be brought to their attention and folks could read them at a later time outside of this meeting. Denise said the fair hours and security in the Americraft building were a concern of some.

Pam Z. shared the notes she had taken; vendors would like:

- An emergency telephone number (fair office) listed in their vendor packets.
- Have the stage placed in the opposite end of the building.
- Change the layout to an east/west walkway versus the north/south it is currently oriented.

Kelly said we can discuss the hours at a future meeting and any changes to the layout can be decided by Pam and Dean.

Jr. Market Auction Food Handling- Denise

This year the head of Risk Management was concerned about how the food was handled for the market auction. She was hoping it was supplied by a professional caterer. It is not, parents provide the food with some of the food prepared off-site, and some on-site.

Kelly said the decisions on permitting and handling are up to the Marion County Health Dept. She wondered if they inspect the event. She will just go with their regulations. Kelly said she would be glad to email the county department contact. Denise said she had sent an email to Mina Hansen (Risk Manager) asking how she would like the fair board to proceed on this now that the fair is over and we have time to address it. She is waiting for a reply.

Request for Refund- Denise

Quetzal, a commercial vendor, is requesting a fee refund due to health issues that forced them not to participate this year. The board recommended that we follow the policy that states a vendor may get up to 40% of their fees back (excluding the non-refundable deposit) if the request is made after June 1. However, this vendor only paid the deposit, so the board decided no money would be refunded.

There is also two requests from 4H campers for refunds. There is currently no policy regarding the refunding of 4H camping money. Kelly said if we have not yet given a figure to the State Fair as to how much camping money we received, then it's not a problem to refund. Kelly said that the Denny Williams request of \$60 is easy to process as it is a formal request. The Candi Willis request of \$100 is not an actual request for a refund, rather a compilation of emails regarding the refund process. She said Ms. Willis needs to submit a written request to the fair board. The board authorized both refunds with the understanding that Ms. Willis will submit a written request before receiving the money. It was suggested a refund request form be made. (Denise will do that.) Sue Pilcher (4H Secretary) would be able to fill out the form for an individual if needed.

VII. September Strategic Plan Items

Kelly said we have previously not had an August fair board meeting because our office was on the state fairgrounds and they were getting ready for fair in August. They preferred us off the grounds so that we weren't in their way. Since the office is now moved off the grounds and back to the Silverton Road campus, we can hold an August meeting. This past year, she had Denise move strategic plan items up one month on the meeting agenda in order to not be, "...running a month behind". She liked having items handled in advance and will continue this practice. The Strategic Plan will be updated accordingly.

4.1.3 Have a big name act? We've already signed an agreement with the State Fair to have big name acts to increase attendance. It is a 5 year agreement with, a year to year review.

Discussion- We lost money this year on the concert, but they were a lot of people in the amphitheatre. We had an excellent turnout for the concert for having started so late in the year. (The act was picked the 2nd week of May.) For the coming fair we need to get the act determined earlier, perhaps in October and then notice earlier getting the word out to the public. Janet noted that State Fair advertized who was performing at their fair prior to our fair being held.

Most agree the attendance numbers would be better if it was a Friday or Saturday night event instead of Thursday night. Saturday night could be a conflict with the market auction. We could start the concert later to accommodate the auction. Terry said it depending on the act brought in, a strong act will draw people no matter what night they are performing.

Perhaps the concert could be held in the afternoon. Joel said we collected over 1,000 concert tickets before 6:00 PM that night.

Everyone felt the heat affected this year's attendance. With summer weather starting late in the season, people didn't have time to adjust from 70 degree weather to 100 degree weather in one day.

Joel said that Eric Marcuse (the concert booking agent) said the heat, the economy, the concert being on a Thursday night, and the group chosen, were are all variables that affected attendance.

As far as having another big name act, we already have an agreement with the state fair to continue doing this. We need to have that discussion with them if we want to change that.

Joel asked whether we take on the concert responsibilities ourselves, or do we let the State Fair take the lead as was done this year. It was suggested we let the State Fair give us options; we do have the right of refusal.

The concert booking agent would like to sit down with us earlier, like in October.

Kelly said we are still learning this concert business, that it's a learning process. We made the best decision we could for the timeline we had.

VIII. Other

Nathan-

Prizes for the grill-off contests- the wrong winner was announced on stage and given the prize of a BBQ grill. We now need to buy another grill for the real winner. Nathan says perhaps we should give them gift cards instead. The State Fair already has two sets of prizes available for purchase as two county's dropped out of participating. Pam made a motion to purchase the grill from State Fair; Diannah seconded. Motion passes.

Pam-

Marion County Fair Foundation needs \$50 to complete the paperwork required for setting up the foundation. Diannah made a motion to provide them the \$50; Phyllis seconded. Motion passes. The foundation is going to have start-up costs. Janet said we'll need some paperwork like a letter of invoice to provide the money. She said the county's Legal department can help figure this out.

Phyllis-

Will we be having a Volunteer Appreciation night again this year? Cassie said they've discussed this at Sweeney Promotions and has suggested dates of Sept. 22 or 29. Board members will check their calendars to determine the best date. Phyllis said Sue Thompson, the Art Superintendent, has offered to have the event at her house as she has plenty of room and parking.

Phyllis said the superintendents would like to have a meeting with Denise to discuss the open class registration process including judging sheets. She thinks if Denise calls the meeting they might be more likely to show. She has previously set meetings and only one or two people show up for it. Denise said she could do that.

Cassie-

She has notes on items to discuss with State Fair. This meeting will need to wait until after the state fair is over. She said that the fair went well and thanked everyone.

Parking and gate issues need to be discussed with security.

Joel said we also need to stipulate what personnel will be on grounds when working on the security particulars. We'd like the people working the fair to be the ones who attended the training meeting(s).

Commercial vendors complained that security was not present in the commercial building. However, after it was brought to security's attention, they were present in the building. We will discuss these things in future security meetings.

Joel-

Joel said they had too few security personnel on-site; they worked people 16-18 hrs.

Janet and her husband entered through the Green Gate and didn't feel security was aggressive enough.

Joel said the \$8,000 spent on the main stage entertainment was not well spent. He doesn't feel we got good value for our money. He said only 10-12 people were sitting in the audience during these main acts. The money should be spent on something that draws people in, not just people that are on the grounds and happen upon the entertainment.

Joel asked Terry why the main stage was empty around 10-11 PM on Friday and Saturday nights? Terry said it wasn't on Friday night, that the Talent Show was going until 10 or so. Joel said he was out there before 10 and it was empty.

It was suggested we use more local acts; they cost less and have their own following. Many of these people don't even want to be paid, they just want stage time or exposure. Denise said however, there needs to be a screening process for these local acts as we had a couple of complaints as to how bad an act was or how loud they played.

Pam Z.-

The main stage needs to be moved. It's in a bad location; it should be moved back across the grounds to the grassy area where there is trees and shade.

Pam Z. said she received a complaint that we didn't have "wet floor" signs. (Denise said this is a state fair issue as they are responsible for the janitorial/maintenance of their buildings; we wouldn't provide such signs.)

She said there was also a complaint that the handicapped parking area wasn't marked. We need signs out in front of the building. She had another complaint that the "black boys" music was foul. (This was on the Teen Day stage in the Americraft building and coordinated by Mid-Valley Mentors.) Terry said the main stage has a screening process. Participants are told that the stage manager will "pull the plug" if they are foul.

Shannon-

She said the grounds in general were very dirty and not up to par as has been in the past. She said there was mud everywhere. There definitely needs to be a barns meeting in the coming years and not allowing canceling by State Fair.

Janet said discussions, requests, and agreements with state fair need to be in writing, such as by email, not word of mouth. She said Denise needs to be copied on these things so that she's in the loop and for tracking invoices.

Cassie said there were some emails that went around regarding such agreements. She recalls Pamela Rose asking in writing about the work days around the July 4th holiday.

Sara-

Sara made an announcement about the Buckaroo Ball. This is a benefit, being held Saturday, September 11, 2010. She distributed a flyer. The fair foundation is one of the groups benefitting from the event. She said it will have a Wild West theme. Tickets can be purchased from the Fair Foundation- Pam Z. had tickets available for sale at the meeting

Meeting adjourned: 7:10 PM.

Next Meeting: September 1, 2010, 5:30 PM

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