

Marion County Fair Board Meeting
October 6, 2010
Marion County Public Works

Minutes by Denise Clark

Members: Diannah Dolby, Shannon Gubbels, Phyllis Johnson, Nathan Leao, Kelly Walther

Staff: Denise Clark, Joel Conder

Guests: Cassie McFarland (Sweeney Promotions), Dean Sweeney (Sweeney Promotions)

- I. Call To Order:** 5:35 PM
- II. Approval of August 4, 2010 Minutes:** (Due to cancelation of September meeting.) Shannon made a motion to approve the minutes, Phyllis seconded; motion passes.
- III. Public Comments:** None
- IV. 4H/FFA Reports**

Shannon said she has spoken to Pamela who has now taken on an additional half-time position with the State 4H. She is working with Expressive Arts and Home Economics so her responsibilities are split between the two. She will still be involved with the fair but does have these new responsibilities. 4H is also working on lining up judges for the 2011 fair and holding leader orientation meetings.

No FFA representative.

V. Treasurer's Report- Joel Conder

Revenue

Dean's total for sponsorship is around \$39,000. (Members clapped for Sweeney Promotions acknowledging their good job.) Dean gave credit to Cassie.

We paid the zero waste invoice to Garten and then Environmental Services transferred the grant money into our account reimbursing us.

Joel said the gate receipts number is misleading because Wilco's check for Lonestar ticket sales is inside that number.

From our budgeted projections, food booth fees are basically the same; the concert on Thursday night helped that. Carnival fees are down, camping fees are up. Joel said we only had \$30,000 budgeted for sponsor fees so that line item is up.

Operations

4H sent us an invoice for the remainder of the \$10,000 they had not received from us.

Joel asked for clarification on whether or not miniature horses should be under open class. Shannon and Dean said yes it should be under that activity as it is an open class animal exhibit similar to the pygmy goats and llama shows. Joel said we budgeted \$1000 for miniature horses, but it wasn't used. Dean said the money was going to be upfront money for sawdust and premiums and then they would give the money back to us, a pass through. (The organizers were going to charge a registration fee.) Dean said they ended up just doing a demonstration, versus a show. Joel asked if he should keep the \$1,000 in there for next year's budget? Dean and Shannon said yes, that next year the organizers want to do a show.

Tents and lighting costs were up over \$1,000 this year and golf cart costs were up. Dean and Kelly clarified the golf carts increased costs were approved at a previous meeting. Denise said we are still seeking reimbursement from some Real Heroes HQ participants who rented tents from us. Nathan said yes, he had arranged for Keizer Fire to pay, and is still working on getting DARE's reimbursement.

Security came in \$1400 under projected costs. Dean gave Joel kudos for that.

Dean asked if anything has come out of the contingency, Joel said not yet. Nathan asked if the roll-up barbeque (BBQ) that needs purchasing will come out of that. Joel said he was looking for direction on the purchasing of a BBQ, would it be purchased from the state or from a store? The board said they had previously authorized the expenditure of the funds so to go ahead and buy it. Joel said Marion County Public Works has an account with Home Depot and Lowes so he can just purchase it on account and then have it paid for out of the fair. Dean suggested he go buy it from "Byron" who works in the BBQ section at Home Depot. He is a fair sponsor and supporter of the fair.

There was a question as to how much was actually spent on the big name act concert; Joel and Dean will meet to sort that out.

Dianna made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report; Shannon seconded. Motion passes.

Joel said there is a meeting schedule for Monday October 11 with the state fair to discuss the 2010 invoice that Wayne prepares. Our agreement is we will be billed the same fees for uses of the grounds as we were charged last year (\$80,000) and anything we used above last year's fees, would be billed us. It is expected to be higher because of increased camping fees and increased electricity use.

County Treasurer Laurie Steele has paid for our armored car fee in past years. She says if budget cuts continue as they are, she will not be picking up next year's armored car cost of \$250. Joel said if that's the case, we will need to budget for that. The board agrees this is a valid cost for us to cover.

VI. Items of Special Interest

Big Name Act

- Joel received a document from Eric Marcuse that contained the costs of various artists for a big name act. Denise distributed copies. Eric said we are now in the "buying season".
- Per our agreement with the state fair, any money not used for this year's concert will be carried over for next year's concert. Joel suggests we spend around \$20,000 for next year's act.
- Joel said he and Dean need to meet with state fair to sort out the charges to the concert- what was and wasn't spent, and what will be carried over.
- Joel suggested a committee of three be established to choose the entertainment. (The state picked the concert this last year, with our approval.)
- The question is whether to have one concert, or multiple concerts. Dean said any artist over \$40,000 is a "no".
- It would be good to have a variety of genres on the various nights of the fair, such as rock, country, and the talent show.
- Dean said the *Colgate/Jimmy Dean Country Showdown* (a type of talent show) is looking for a new location. He said perhaps we could be a "satellite" site for it. It has previously been held at the Linn County fairgrounds.
- It was suggested board members look over the artists' list at home and come back in November with suggested acts.

- Discussion was held whether to have one big act, or break the money up into multiple acts. We could cut down on the amount of stages we have (there were four this past year) and use that entertainment money for the big name act. It was suggested we pick two acts- a country act for Friday night and a rock act for Saturday night. In that order the Saturday night concert won't draw away so many folks from the Market Auction.
- Dean said the two concert costs should be in the \$20k-\$30k range; or perhaps have a \$20k range artist and a \$40k range artist. He reminded that this past year's act cost around \$30k. We ended up spending around \$68k with all the costs that go with an act.
- Denise said she recommends *The Band Perry*. They are an up and coming act that has a hit out that her 20 something age kids really like. She says they only cost between \$10-20k right now, and we should consider them.
- Joel would like feedback from the board as to acts they are interested in. They'll take the lists home and review and come back next month with their three favorites. Also for consideration is whether to use a separate stage area and not the amphitheater. The board would like to have the contracts signed by November or December.

Volunteer Appreciation Night

Discussion was held saying last year's Volunteer Appreciation Night format was good and worth repeating. It was asked if there was enough money for the event and where the money would come from; answer possibly "contingency". The event would be held at Public Works, even though Sue Thompson had offered her place (an outdoor venue) as the weather is too unpredictable now. Kelly suggested that if it looks like we are going to hold this event annually, then in next year's budget we should add a \$500 line item for Volunteer Appreciation Night; the board agreed.

Monday, October 25 at 6:00 PM was the date chosen for the event. Cassie will do an email blast. She'll start with last year's email list and would like board members to send her this year's contact information. Pizza and drinks will be provided; board members will each bring a dessert. Dean said he doesn't have any free entertainment available this year. We can do a slide show and presentations and that should be sufficient.

Open Class Exhibitors- Free Entrance to Fair

Denise asked if the board wanted to consider giving open class exhibitors free entry to the fair. An item on the strategic plan is to increase open class participation. She wonders if this might be a little incentive; would more families come because one member has a free entry? Phyllis said that is done with the Dairy Women's Cheesecake contest. It would also be similar to the open class animal exhibitor's getting in free. Kelly said it makes sense, folks might come back to see if they've won anything. It was suggested giving one entry per exhibitor (not per project/exhibit) and is not limited to the number of people in a family. Kelly asked how many exhibitors we had last year; answer- 139. Shannon said more than anything it's a statement of appreciation because they are helping us fill up space.

Dean said the first step in increasing open class participation was in adding several hundred dollars in donated prizes this year.

Phyllis mentioned the upcoming (October 19) superintendent meeting that will be held at Public Works. She said she will be going over the material Dean gave her on how to obtain prizes.

Shannon wondered if Pamela's new job might be helpful as far as networking with her and those in expressive arts and home economics.

There was consensus amongst the board to provide one free pass per exhibitor.

IAFE (International Association of Fairs and Expos)

A state fair representative told Joel that we should send a contingent to the International Association of Fairs and Expos which will be held the end of November in Las Vegas this year. They said we would learn of better ways to run a fair and be able to find a big name act, eliminating the middle man. State fair annually sends several people. Kelly said board members haven't been interested in attending the spring conference that is held in Oregon, why should we send folks out of state? When she attends the spring conference, she goes on her own time and money. She said if people showed more interest in attending the spring conferences in which we are already members, then consideration could be given to out of state conferences. It can't be done at this time as there isn't enough money, but there was interest to revisit this at a later time. Kelly said when the Treasurer puts together the new budget, which is due in December, money can be added to the conferences line item.

VII. Strategic Plan

Items for October

5.2.6 Update Strategic Plan- Denise presented possible changes to the strategic plan (SP). She submitted a document she produced in which she listed the tasks by month. In that document it lists how many tasks are currently in a given month and her suggested changes. The changes include moving tasks to another month, added tasks, and then items to delete because either we don't do them, or they are redundant.

Kelly asked if there should be an August entry on the document, as the document currently starts in September. Perhaps the August meeting should be designed for talking about the past fair and not be looking at the future. Shannon said she'd like the August meeting to be a re-cap meeting, what went right, what went wrong, leaving the SP alone. She said however something may come up that we need to add to the SP. (Denise said Dean won't come to an August meeting; he said that doesn't mean Cassie won't.) Shannon said September is too late for a re-cap meeting with school starting and so many other things that are too distracting.

Kelly suggested instead of going over the detail of the document in this meeting, that everyone review it at home and bring back comments to the next meeting for approval. Kelly said she reviewed it ahead of time and read every line and every page and she thinks it's wonderful.

Shannon suggested the month "August" be added to the document with the task entry being, "Fair Re-cap Session". Joel agreed and also suggested an item, "Attendance Numbers" to be added to August. People could expect to bring their participation numbers. Phyllis asked if they were needed that early. Denise said actually she'd like them at fair time and that is why she puts the spreadsheet on the table in the fair office with instructions to fill in their numbers on it. (Diannah was the only one that did that this year.)

Shannon suggested in the future to obtain attendance numbers from the open class animal organizers that they be given the *Post Fair Report Form* and told they will not get their many complimentary tickets the following fair if it is not completed and turned in at the end of the current fair. Shannon said she personally has a very difficult time getting the numbers from those folks. Phyllis said she also has a terrible time getting the reports completed even though they are given out ahead of time.

Denise said after Alan looked at the attendance spreadsheet that she, Cassie, and Joel did, he asked if there wasn't a way to improve the process. She said she told him of her idea of putting wristbands on all the volunteers with the number being tracked either by the point person who distributed them or by security at the gate. Shannon said even with that, the post fair report should be required of those folks.

Dean said it is very easy to track attendance at Linn County; there are only two gates. He said 4H/FFA participants go in one gate, everyone else in the other; it's really easy to count people. He said are too many gates at the fairgrounds, 9 in all. Denise asked why we can't control the gates, why it controls us. Answer- it is what people are used to. It's not worth the conflict to argue with folks about it.

2.1.5 Maximize use of free media- Dean said they put in hundreds of hours in free PR (Facebook, Twitter and social networking) that we've never had before and it didn't result in increased attendance. He doesn't know why. However, they will do it again. He suggested the wording "social networking" be added to this SP item.

Cassie said they also did a lot more hands-on with the sponsors at the event; POP (point of purpose)- putting up signs at each event.

It will pay off eventually. Denise said something paid off as they (Sweeney Promotions) were able to increase sponsorship significantly.

Discussion on how the extremely hot weather affected the attendance.

3.1.1 Select event coordinator as needed- in process, the current contractor is in the middle of a contract.

4.2.1 Identify Talent Show Coordination contractor- Kelly said to hold this off until next month with the possible entertainment changes. Dean said he will call KRKT about the Country Showdown and see if there is anything there.

5.2.1 Schedule work session with Board Of Commissioners- Denise presented the possible dates that Sara McDonald, from the board's office, provided her. It was decided on December 7, 9-10 AM. It will be held at MAPs Credit Union. Dean, Shannon and Phyllis said they would be going.

November SP Items Kelly said we could look at these and see what "we want to do"; she said she asked Denise to include the following month's tasks on the agenda in case there is extra time to get some tasks done.

1.2.3 Analyze ticket prices, promotions, fees, etc.- This will depend on the concerts for next year.

1.2.4 Analyze expenditures- Kelly said we are doing this as we consider consolidating stages and other planning. Sponsors are value added, doing stuff on the grounds, something that is not a cost. Dean said trade dollars were up (\$99,000). (Some of that was advertizing dollars.)

1.2.8 Determine fair hours- Consider closing the fair at 10 PM on Saturday night if we don't have a concert as the fair was "dead" at 10:30 PM when Kelly was walking through the grounds. We are wasting money in time, security, and staff. It also has a negative impact on vendors. Joel said the main stage was empty at 9:20 PM as the entertainment was over, so that contributed to the fair being "dead".

1.2.9 Determine ticket prices- put on hold.

2.1.7 Develop press release topics and timelines- Denise presented the document Sara McDonald put together last year, a template as to what topic should be posted on what date and by whom. (Denise added a column of when the media release actually went out next to the proposed date.) She said this could be used as an outline for the coming year. The board was impressed with the document.

3.1.4 Identify responsible person for exhibit hall, stage, commercial vendors, etc. - Kelly said this is decided by everyone talking and determining if they want to keep the responsibilities they have been assigned. Diannah said she told Pam she'd like to help with commercial vendors next year. (She said this year she had folks coming to her with questions that she didn't have the answers to.)

5.1.4 Election of officers- next board meeting.

(Denise was directed to bring all of November SP items back to next month's meeting with the exception of 2.1.7.)

Kelly said because of Terry Sol's resignation, a press release went out seeking a new board member. Melissa High was an applicant that was interviewed and is already vetted. Kelly asked the board if they wanted to go through the interview process again or choose Melissa. Denise said the deadline is October 8 for the current advertisement. The board decided if no other applicants came in by the deadline, to invite Melissa.

Kelly announced that this is her last meeting; she submitted a letter of resignation to Denise. She has taken on a new job coordinating a group of companies in the food service industry. She will be splitting her time between the Willamette Valley and the Pendleton area. The job requires a lot of travel. Shannon will stand in as chair until next month's election. We will now need to re-open the process for finding a new board member. Denise will notify Glenis Chapin, county volunteer coordinator.

Dean publically thanked Kelly for her work on the board for the past 10 years, including "fantastic leadership". She said she enjoyed working with everyone. She pointed out that Shannon is coming up on her tenth fair as she came on the board right after Kelly. Denise said Kelly had contributed significantly to the fair and we appreciated all her good work.

VIII. Other

- Denise presented a "Fair Refund Request Form" that the board had asked her to develop for any requests for refunds that come to the fair. Instead of a person having to write a letter of request, they can just fill out this form.
- Dean said the Buckaroo Ball was successful and that proceeds will be distributed to the non-profits. He wants to thank Bob and Pam Zielinski for their efforts; the fair foundation will be receiving between \$600-\$700.
- Shannon said there is a Portland General Electric (PGE) giving fund campaign to benefit 501c organizations; PGE will match a gift \$.50 on the dollar. Shannon will figure out the logistics.
- Dean suggested the board give serious thought to doing an exit poll at the fair next year. Denise said Wayne Peterson of the State Fair, has told her the same thing and that there are electronic kiosks you can rent. Dean says there are costs to doing that.
- Phyllis requested a document to give folks at fair time that has the fair's website listed on it. She was told it's on the fair program at the bottom on the front page and that she can use the previous year's program for this purpose. Shannon suggested that maybe a flyer or business card could be produced for her to hand out.

Next meeting- Wednesday, November 3, 5:30 PM Marion County Public Works

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.