

Marion County Fair Board Meeting
November 3, 2010
Marion County Public Works

Minutes by Denise Clark

Members: Dianna Dolby, Shannon Gubbels, Melissa High, Phyllis Johnson, Nathan Leao, Pam Zielinski

Staff: Denise Clark, Joel Conder, Sara McDonald

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

- I. **Call To Order:** 5:34 PM
- II. **Approval of 10/6/10 Meeting Minutes:** Diannah made a motion to approve the minutes, Phyllis seconded; motion passes.
- III. **Public Comments:** None
- IV. **4H-** No representative present to give a report.
- V. **Treasurer's Report-** Joel Conder
 - Joel said there is not a lot of activity at this point.
 - Revenue sponsor fees around \$12,000 came in over the past month.
 - Operations- not much change other than a climb in Sweeney consulting costs- \$13,000.
 - Engineering Services changes each month.

Pam asked how these numbers compared to last year. Answer- Joel said "pretty comparable."

Pam made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented, Diannah seconded; motion passes.

Due to the recent member changes, Denise passed around a copy of the fair board directory. She asked that folks mark any changes needed on the document so that she can update it.

State Invoice meeting- Joel

Joel said county staff and Dean Sweeney met with Brian Silcott and Wayne Peterson three weeks ago to discuss the invoice they would be submitting to us. Our agreement with the State says anything used at the 2010 fair above what was used at the 2009 fair would be charged us. There were around \$5800 in charges; this was due to our electrical and camping costs being higher.

Any money not spent towards the concert this year will be carried over to next year's entertainment per the agreement with State Fair.

Denise said she was pleased that the atmosphere of the meeting was positive. Dean said they were very encouraging. We discussed possible improvements for the coming fair including their suggestions of giving the fair a new name, incorporating fireworks, and layout changes.

Joel said Marion County Public Works has new electronic portable billboards that are available to loan the fair for promotion purposes. Denise said she had requested to use these in the past, but

since it required a truck hooked to a trailer, it wasn't possible. Don Newell, Operations Manager, approached her this year to say we have new, stand alone, units that are available for use.

Sara asked where the \$80,000 fairgrounds rental expenditure was listed in the budget document. Joel said it was under Big Name Act. (The \$5800 invoice isn't listed anywhere yet.)

Big Name Act Discussion

It's been suggested that we have a country act on Friday and a rock act on Saturday.

The group agrees it would be best to limit the number of stages we have. We will strive for quality versus quantity when it comes to entertainment. It was agreed to have two stages, one in the exhibit hall, and one outside as a main stage.

Pam asked if it wouldn't behoove us to fill-up the small stages with high school musicians/groups. Denise said Cassie and company went to the schools last year encouraging participation and that we regularly put out press releases seeking entertainers. She said if a group is tied to the school year, they won't be available since school has been out a while by the time fair occurs. Dean said we encourage anyone who approaches us about performing, especially those offering to do so for free or at a minimal cost; we don't turn anyone away.

Dean has been having discussions with the Country Showdown folks and with KRKT, an Albany radio station. They are interested in working with us. Dean said we need to consider whether to do both talent shows, our own local show and the Showdown, or just do ours alone.

Joel pointed out that the proposed budget has "Professional Entertainment" money being moved over to the "Big Name Act" line item.

Members were asked if they brought to the meeting any suggestions for acts. Diannah said she thought we should go with the group Denise had suggested at last month's meeting. Denise said it was *The Band Perry*. We have since found out from Eric Marcuse that they are not available and out of our price range now. (They were previously listed in the \$10-20,000 range. They are now fully booked as they are touring and opening for Tim McGraw.)

With the proposed changes in entertainment, Diannah asked if the main stage will sit empty during the day. Dean said yes; day time acts would be on the exhibit hall stage. He said you can't have the various acts using the equipment that is set up for the "Big Name Act". Denise asked if it looked bad to have an empty stage during the day. Answer- it's worse to have acts with no one sitting in the audience due to the poor quality act than having an empty stage.

Shannon asked how soon a decision needs to be made. Dean said as soon as possible. Dean said the fair board can give authority to a body to make the decision, instead of waiting to come back monthly to the fair board for discussion. Doing the latter, we'll loose out on some good acts. He suggests we agree to the amount we want to spend and then tell the booking agent to move forward.

Nathan wonders about choice of music genre with this area being in the shadow of the Portland market.

Diannah said we have more options if we go with two groups.

Dean said there is more entertainment value with two nights because the sound system is used for two different nights, “more bang for your buck.” Dean encourages two nights, and two different genres. He said country music fits with our image.

Dean said the talent show was the most successful thing we had on the main stage last year. They do bring in families who spend money with the vendors.

Dean suggests we explore the KRKT Country Showdown possibility, until we have a suggestion on how to do the other talent show. He said improving the talent show would increase participation.

Diannah made a motion suggesting we try to find two nights of acts staying as close to the proposed budget amount (\$50,000) as possible and that we turn over the decision making power to a committee; Pam seconded, motion passes. Dean, Joel, and Melissa volunteered to be on an entertainment committee.

2010-2011 Proposed Budget- Joel

Highlights:

- State subsidy figure reduced 10% following the current trend.
- Personnel services haven't changed.
- The conferences and training figure is increased as we have new board members and we've run over the allotted amount in the past.
- Raised dues and memberships as we've gone over on that also.
- Dean asked if Administration “Consulting” is from the strategic planning session facilitated by Connie Green. Answer- yes.
- No change in 4H/FFA.
- Open Class miniature horses removing the \$1,000. Dean said if needed, he'll come back to the board at a later date and asked for “pass through” money.
- Credit card use is new; there is a 3% charge per transaction. Denise said this is a convenience to our customers. She will advertise it for the coming fair; it may increase participation.
- The Garten Zero Waste grant is up to \$10,800. Garten said the increase is due to minimum wage going up and them having increased labor in assisting Dean Sweeney's clean-up crew. (Dean said he did not know they assisted him.)
- Barns setup crews didn't cost us this year because Troy Clausen of the Marion County Sheriff's Office crews provided them for free. We hope they'll do that again this year.

It was asked how the new security company (Bravo) did. Joel said reasonably well with the learning curve. He expects we'll use them again for the coming fair.

- Increased State Fairgrounds rental to \$6,000 because of this year's invoice.
- Advertizing spent a little over \$30,000, kept it at that for the coming year.

Shannon asked if we should have a family show like Radio Disney come back. She thought they do a good job. Dean agreed. He says they'd be interested; it could be done within one of the big name acts projects.

- Adding \$1000 for the Legislative reception line item as Dean doesn't know whether he can get that donated each year.
- Adding a line item of \$1,000 for developing our own grill off. Nathan made a motion to not participate in the State Fair's grill off roll-up, instead conduct our own; Pam seconded, motion passes. Denise asked the status of our purchasing a BBQ for last year's winner. Joel said he purchased it and it's in the winner's hands.
- Adding a "Volunteer Appreciation Dinner" line item of \$500.

Discussion was held on whether to pursue the contract with KBZY for conducting the seniorwed game and Pretty Baby contest. Perhaps stop it for a year, and see how it goes. Dean said we should approach them to see if they are interested in doing it and if so at what, if any, cost.

Joel would like to see the budget approved by February.

Revenues:

- Joel is optimistic about the gate receipts based on having two concerts.
- Sponsorship is up due to Dean bringing in more this past fair.
- The Garten grant is under "Special programs donation" which makes it basically a pass through.

Dean asked if the county contribution to the budget might be reduced as the state funds were. Sara said the Board of Commissioners is committed to the fair. She encouraged everyone to come to the Fair Board/Board of Commissioners work session Dec. 7.

Sara asked Joel about the actual revenues from 2010. She wondered if the \$40,000 from the economic development grant was included, saying that it was a one time event. Joel said that was not included in the figure.

Joel asked the board to take the document home for a closer review and to bring back any changes to next month's meeting.

Denise asked if we need to add money for the "Name the Fair" contest. Answer- we didn't have the contest last year; the board did it internally instead. The plan is to do the same this year to save costs.

Food Vendor Pre-fair meeting

Joel is suggesting there be a food vendor pre-fair meeting to discuss vendor placement, z-tape processes, balancing tills, and explain any other expectations. We will also need to explain Garten's recyclable requirements. He would like to require them to setup on Wednesday night with no early morning Thursday setup the day of fair. It was suggested if we raise the standards, we will get better consistency and quality control. The board thought this was a good idea. Pam offered to pick up z-tapes for him as she helped him last year.

Volunteer Orientation Night Update

Shannon said it was great. She thanked all those that helped organize it. Phyllis said the superintendents really appreciated the certificates they received.

Donation Request

Denise handed out copies of a request that came from the Albany Police Department for their Benevolent Association. Even though the document was addressed to Marion County Fair, inside the letter it stated they were approaching businesses of Linn and Benton Counties to contribute the fundraising raffle. Dean said we need to develop a donation policy which includes components such as requests need to be presented to the board in person. The board consensus was to not contribute to this particular request. Denise said she is currently drafting several policies, she can add one concerning fair donations to the list.

Members Responsibilities Discussion

Denise said with the recent resignations and subsequent openings on the fair board, it's a good time to have everyone look at the responsibilities assigned them and see if they'd like to make changes.

Melissa said she'd be interested in doing entertainment. Nathan said he'd like to be the food vendor coordinator. Pam said she would be Nathan's backup. Since Phyllis has a new assistant (Amy Lewis), Nathan can be removed as her backup.

Public Relations role- Shannon can take media calls at fair times, but she is not available to be attending day time meetings as Kelly did. Phyllis said she can go to neighborhood association meetings. Shannon said she can do evening meetings also. Cassie offered to put together a list of fair Public Relations responsibilities.

Strategic Plan- plan by month

Denise asked if everyone reviewed the strategic plan tasks by month document she handed out last meeting and if they would like any changes. Everyone agreed it was good to go as is.

1.2.3 Analyze ticket prices- This was done partially when reviewing the budget. Will defer to another meeting based on what the entertainment turns out to be.

1.2.3 Analyze expenditures- This was done when reviewing the budget.

1.2.8 Determine fair hours- defer to another meeting based on the concert schedules.

1.2.9 Determine ticket prices- defer to another meeting based on the concerts.

2.1.7 Develop press release timelines- done last meeting

3.1.4 Identify the responsible person for exhibit hall logistics- done in previous responsibilities discussion.

5.1.4 Election of Officers

Pam nominated Shannon for Chair, Phyllis seconded. Shannon said she could take on all the responsibilities other than the public relations tasks that Kelly did. Motion passes.

Pam nominated Nathan for Vice Chair, Phyllis seconded. Motion passes.

Other:

Nathan said he has confirmed the Real Heroes HQ reimbursements are in process. Denise said she has sent invoices, but has not heard back from anyone.

Next Meeting- Changed from December 1 instead of December 8 to accommodate Dean being out of town on the first. There will be many agenda items he needs to be present to discuss. It was suggested everyone bring Christmas treats. (Denise will send a reminder of the upcoming work session and the change of date.)

Meeting Adjourned: 7:35 PM.