

To promote the diverse agricultural and cultural heritage of Marion County through active participation of its citizens.

Marion County Fair Board
Monthly Meeting- By Zoom
April 7, 2021 5:30 PM

In Attendance

Board Members: Mike Adams, Mark Banick, Joel Conder, Shannon Gubbels, Ken Outfleet, Pam Zielinski

Key Volunteers: Colleen Busch, Heidi DeCoster, Amy Goulter-Allen, Lesley Johnson, Rebecca Turner

Guests: Jill & Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Melanie McCabe, 4H; Margie Tipton, 4H

Staff: Denise Clark, Fair Program Coordinator; Tamra Goettsch, Community Services Department Director

I. Call to Order/Introductions

II. Approval of March 3, 2021 Meeting Summary Notes. Mark made a motion to accept the meeting summary notes; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

III. 4H/FFA Reports

4H- Melanie McCabe

The sheep, goat, and swine weigh-in will be May 6-7. Fair registrations closed April 1st. She will have an idea of fair participation numbers in the next couple of weeks. A rabbit disease (RHDB) has broken out; it was discovered in Milwaukee. The American Rabbit Breeders Association (ARBA) is the organization who identified the outbreak. They do not allow rabbit showing within 250 miles of where it first broke out. There is also a 60 day window for this; it was identified two weeks ago. There is an information meeting tonight at 6:00 PM for all 4H/FFA participants and other interested parties. (Melanie or Margie will be attending that meeting.) This raises the possibility that no rabbits can be shown at county fair. Animal incidences like this (viruses/diseases) come around every couple of years. Two years ago no water fowl was allowed at fair.

There are no in-person club meetings until counties reach “moderate” or “low” levels on the state matrix; when hits “low” can hold indoor meetings. No information has been given from OSU about fair participation yet.

FFA- Amy Goulter-Allen

High schools are allowing kids to attend in-person; there are hybrid offerings of half days or every other day. Every school is different; Stayton HS is going to a 4-day school week. This year’s state contest will have both virtual and in-person participation. Some schools will offer summer school for those that need to make up lost credits.

IV. Financial Report- Tamra Goettsch

There has been limited activity in the last month. Activity includes the City of Salem banner hanging refund;

event coordinator payout; and county administration charges. Ken made a motion to accept the financial report as presented; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

V. Items of Special Interest

COVID Restrictions Update & Fair Plan Options- Jill Ingalls

All previous fair plans (A-D) are “out the window.” A meeting was held with state fair last week. In attendance were Denise, Mike, Jill, and Scott and state fair personnel- Wayne, Karl, and Kim. They walked the grounds to discuss area use. They also met with the vaccine parking coordinators who feel that they may still be in place on the grounds during our fair. We will need to build our fair outside of their areas of use. We can use the pavilion, the horse stadium, outdoor arena and possibly part of the livestock arena. There will be no access to the barns as currently vaccine customer cars are being routed through them. They are currently vaccinating 3,000 people a day and are told that they need to ramp it up to 9,000 vaccines a day. Perhaps we will just have animals hauled in for the day to show and then leave.

Have done calculations and measurements on the grounds. The new plans include:

- Not using Columbia Hall and having all vendors outside.
- The pavilion is a smaller footprint than Columbia Hall. There is no air conditioning but it does stay somewhat cooler in the heat than many of the other buildings.
- The fair main entry would come off Sunnyview Road through the orange gate.
- There is plenty of parking in the area and the carnival could be accessible without paying fair gate entrance fees.
- Will need 400'-500' of fencing.
- Fair entrance would be through the pavilion.
- The lawn outside the pavilion will hold music and animal attractions.
- This is the plan that can be put in place now, as more is learned, the plan can be adjusted.

Melanie asked if they could re-route the vaccination cars. Jill said possibly, they need to have more discussions with the vaccination parking people.

If can't use the big sale ring for the auction, perhaps will use the horse stadium.

Melanie is looking at a haul-in show as she doesn't know if camping space will be available. Jill agreed that she should take exhibitor camping “off the plate” for now.

The entire state fair grounds are a mess from the ice storms; there hasn't been enough fair personnel to get it all cleaned up.

4H/FFA Animals Discussion:

- Show one species per day? Answer- not sure of the specifics.
- Would like to fit all of the animals in the Forrester Pavilion if possible.

- Bring animals in Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; have animals ready for sale on Saturday.
- Haul animals back in for the auction.
- Linn County Fair hauled animals in for just one day last year. (They did leave sheep there on the grounds.) They held an on-line auction.
- Perhaps have kids go through the auction without the animals.
- The auction committee is considering a hybrid auction so don't have to have buyers in the stands.
- Only use fairgrounds for loadout to the meat processor after the auction.
- Some of the animal wash racks won't be available, with current vaccination site practices, without the kids having to cross vehicle traffic.

Jill asked folks to write down their specific logistic questions in order to not consume more this meeting's time. Once Ingalls go back to talks with state personnel, they can be armed with, "This is the minimum we need" information. The state can then consider possible modifications to the traffic flow.

This new plan will have overall budget change impacts. The state fair agrees that this smaller footprint should reduce our fair budget costs. (Also keep in mind we didn't use the grounds last year, so that was a cost savings.)

Without trees for shade in the area, we'll need more tents; we currently don't have money in the budget for tents.

Possibly hold both the public competitions and the 4H displays in the pavilion.

It was asked where the fair office would be located? Answer- possibly in "nooks and crannies" in the pavilion. Another option is to bring in travel trailers for the fair office and for the volunteer hospitality room.

Wayne, of state fair, is working on determining the occupancy load based on square footage with the current COVID restrictions in place.

What impact will this have on security? Answer- may reduce the need, or possibly stay the same, depending on the need for COVID restrictions compliance monitoring.

May try to get a petting zoo and look for other animal attractions for fair goers.

The *Quest and Discovery- Enhanced Visitor Experience* (Warren Franklin's app.) is a possible application that we could incorporate and it is sponsor-able.

Scott has had a conversation with Funtastic; they are fine with the new plan. They can run the carnival outside of the fair boundaries and establish their own hours. (They do have to be open our fair hours.) This could possibly generate more revenue.

Scott is looking for "inventory" such as "Honor the Canyon" and "Ag Day" the latter needs 4H/FFA animals present.

Ingalls don't think there will be a big demand for commercial vendor space.

Melanie said there may be a mix of some people wanting to leave their animals on the grounds and some not. They usually have around two hundred 4H/FFA campers. It was suggested potential campers, that live a certain distance away, be allowed to camp on the grounds if there is a limited amount of space available to camp.

Camping increases costs as more sanitation units are needed. The fairgrounds' RV hookups are currently not being maintained and are in disrepair. Livestock exhibitors are dry campers; horse exhibitors have the full hookups.

Horse folks are looking at a haul-in, single day, horse show and not camping on site.

Tamra would like to present a 2021 fair proposal to the Marion County Board of Commissioners (BOC), giving them a "heads up" on the fair board's plans. She'd like some direction from the fair board.

Jill indicated that we will need to negotiate back and forth with the current state fairgrounds' users. She expressed that this plan is a new direction with the goal being to provide the kids a place to show and also a celebration place for the public while keeping in mind COVID restrictions. She is working on the budget; we can't hold a fair if it's going to lose money. She'll know more once she hears back from state fair and the vaccination center.

The question was raised as to what happens if this plan is put in place, then the vaccination clinic concludes and moves off the grounds, can we pivot back to the traditional footprint of the fair? Answer- it depends on when they move out, if in May then possibly yes, if after the first of June, maybe not as we will already have public messaging out there as to the fair layout and how to enter the fair.

The state fair doesn't know if they are even going to hold their fair which is scheduled a month after our fair; they don't know how much money to risk up-front. Jill said that we won't be as extended as the state fair would be with our size, and our purpose is different than theirs.

Ingalls will be watching and learning from what other states are currently doing.

Tamra wants to ensure we have the ability to back out of contracts if needed should the vaccination "activity" result in blocking our fair from occurring. She wants Jill to make sure *force majeure* language is in place in all of the contracts they enter into.

Some fair board members are feeling pessimistic with this pandemic's unknowns; it's hard to plan when we don't have something concrete to work with. We should put forth minimal upfront expenses and move forward cautiously. It was expressed that if we don't have enough gate to cover the costs of the fair, we can't do it. We need to move forward carefully, and "not blindly."

Mark said that he has been in talks with folks about doing a joint pickle ball tournament with the fair. Jill said that she had followed up with Brandon, from Travel Salem, on Mark's referral and that the organizers were interested in possibly participating in the 2022 fair.

Jill indicated that a virtual only fair is still “on the table,” but on the “back burner.” We don’t make much revenue with a virtual fair and it doesn’t hit our goals including letting the kids have the opportunity to “show and shine.”

Public Competitions coordinators are working hard on modifying the departments for a hybrid model if needed.

We need a fair; it can look different this year. It’s important to keep the fair alive as long as we can.

Melanie expressed that an event bouncing back after being off for two years is very difficult. 4H folks “hated” the virtual only fair last year; however, it was the only solution at the time. The kids are missing out on the belonging and communication piece; the positive youth development core of 4H is missing when conducting a virtual fair.

For indoor events, maybe we have a one-way walk through (entrance and exit.)

Jill said that no money will be spent if the risk is too great. We may reserve things (like tents) but will insist on the right to cancel if needed. We will continue establishing “cliff dates.” If too risky, and not turning around, we won’t go forward.

Joel noted that the entire state of California is opening June 15 according to their governor. He feels that since we are one of the first fairs of the season, we have “the opportunity to shine.” He asked if a date can be established in which we decide whether we can pivot to a regular fair or not. Answer- Jill said that they can’t set a date right now for pivoting. However, Ingalls and Associates have the experience, and ability, to expand an event if it deems reasonable. Things have been put aside that can be reinserted if there is a revenue stream for it. The current fairgrounds are full of traffic; the organizers are saying they don’t see the ability to pull out until mid-June. We have to plan for the area they are willing to give us at this time. They did say that they might be able to make some concessions with their traffic flow.

The question was asked whether the state fair will be ok with putting livestock on the new footing in the arena. Answer- for show pens only, however, will probably have to put down plastic first.

Ken made a motion to move forward with the current plan as Ingalls presented it; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

Oregon Fairs & Events Association (OFEA) Ovation Awards- Tamra Goettsch

Two of Marion County Fair’s nominations for the OFEA Ovation Awards won the award. The first, The *Impact Award* was given for the fair board’s response to the wildfire relief and all the hard work done on that. The second was for *Sponsor of the Year* award which Pacific Stair won. Scott said that there was a lot of competition for the *Impact Award* as lots of fairgrounds opened up their grounds for wildfire evacuation sites. Marion County Fair was chosen unanimously by the committee. He also said that receiving the *Sponsor of the Year* award is a big deal as there is only one winner chosen.

(Tamra asked Denise to be sure and save the “chat” conversations of this Zoom meeting.)

Food Vending Committee Meeting Date- Denise Clark

Denise gave an update on the 11 food vendor applications received by the deadline for submission. She also asked who would like to be on the Food Vending Committee this year; Jill, Denise, Pam, Ken, and Mike indicated their interest. (Denise will also send an email to anyone not present in this meeting to see if there are other interested parties.) Denise will find a meeting time that will work for all. Mike said that he is rescinding his application (Adam's Rib) as he has decided to retire from that part of their business.

VI. Strategic Plan Items- April

It was decided that we didn't need to go over each of the April items at this time due to the unknowns of the future fair, instead we just need to be aware of the items.

VII. Ingalls' Reports

Ingalls are in the midst of moving between houses; they sold their home and are moving into a new home. They are busy with that and working on the new fair planning at the same time. She said that the Ingalls Reports are included in the meeting packet as to the actions they've been taking. Scott is working on sponsorships; however he doesn't have enough information currently to garner sponsor commitments.

VIII. Other

Denise said that she spoke with Krista Ulm, the departments' Contracts Coordinator. Krista is working on a Request for Proposals for the Big Name Entertainment Buyer. Krista will be sending the draft out to all fair board members for input. She also would like to know who would like to be on a review committee once those proposals come in.

Jill proposed holding another fair board meeting before next month's scheduled meeting. It was decided to schedule one for April 21 at 5:30 PM. Denise will send out an appointment. (If there is no new information to present, the meeting can be canceled.)

Scott and Jill will meet with the barns coordinators to determine their animal facility needs. Following that, they will meet with the vaccine providers to see where they might make some concessions. (Jill expressed that the organizers were really positive at the last meeting and want to see our fair be successful.)

Tamra referred to the BOC written letter in support of the House Bill #3173 that was included in the meeting packet. The bill requests increased funding for fairs. Marion County has a slot to give testimony on Saturday, April 24 from 1-3 PM. People can sign-up to provide testimony. Tamra encourages folks to do so. (Paid staff cannot participate.) Oregon fairgrounds provide a vital infrastructure and gathering space during disasters. In addition to the BOC letter, Oregon Fairs Association has provided sample talking points in the email that was sent out to all fair board members previously.

IX. Meeting Adjourned: 7:35 PM.

Zoom Meeting Chat:

00:15:13 McCabe, Melanie M: We are not allowed to do any in person events until we hit moderate or lower at the county level

00:21:28 Margi Tipton 4-H: Thanks everyone, I'm off to the next zoom meeting.

00:21:52 Colleen: Bye, Margi!

00:58:00 Colleen: I need to go to my next meeting. It all looks great!!

01:07:14 Amy Goulter-Allen: would the poultry barn be used?

01:14:12 Amy Goulter-Allen: or could it be

01:14:44 Rebecca Turner: Currently the vaccine traffic drives between the poultry barn and forrester

01:25:27 Amy Goulter-Allen: I think we should move forward if we can do it within our budget.

01:45:34 McCabe, Melanie M: here is my initial thought:
extend out days before that week like do horses on Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, Goats and Beef on Wednesday, Swine Thursday, Sheep Friday, Auction on Saturday with the Auction being done in the Stadium Arena. and shows being done in the outdoor covered arena

No camping, haul-in for livestock for the Auction and pen them by processor.

01:47:28 Amy Goulter-Allen: maybe do pigs the last day

01:47:51 McCabe, Melanie M: There are more of them and I was thinking about turn around time for the Auction

01:48:04 Rebecca Turner: PIGs seem to me to be the least easy to haul so putting them last makes sense so they don't have to return for the auction but would already be there

01:48:40 McCabe, Melanie M: good point @Rebecca, but if there is no place to hold them over we have an issue

01:50:42 Amy Goulter-Allen: Melanie I have an advisor meeting the 12th what so you want from us?

01:52:58 Amy Goulter-Allen: ok if you want me to met with you to go over things let me know.

02:00:30 McCabe, Melanie M: The Trailer will be at Ag Fest