

Marion County Fair Board

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

Monthly Meeting

Virtual Meeting by Zoom

May 6, 2020 4:00 PM

In Attendance

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

Key Volunteers: Colleen Busch, Heidi DeCoster, Amy Goulter-Allen, FFA; Lesley Johnson, Key Volunteer; Michael Mendrin

Guests: James Conley, 4H Leader; Rebecca Laframboise, 4H; Jill Ingalls & Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Abby Lewis, 4H; Melanie McCabe, 4H; Margie Tipton, 4H

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

I. Call to Order/Introductions

Denise requested to have two items added to the agenda- Fair Contracts RFQ (Request for Quotes) submission for decorator, sound/stage/light, and sanitation. Also to add 2020 Ribbon Order Cost Increase. Ken made a motion to add the items to the agenda; Mark seconded. Motion passed. *(They will be added under Items of Special Interest after 2020 Fair Direction.)*

II. Public Comments- None

III. Approval of April 1 and April 15 Meeting Summary Notes- Ken made a motion to approve the meeting summary notes; Mark seconded. Motion passed.

IV. 4H Report- Melanie McCabe

- 4H Central sent out a new list of activities for youth to be done at home
- 4H University (4H U) is a newly developed series of on-line classes from coding to painting. Classes are for all age groups; rolling it out the website the middle of May. It is an interactive program; one hour a day for 4 weeks.

V. FFA Report- Amy Goulter-Allen

The discussion for holding premium payouts at the fair has been “put on the back burner.”

VI. Financial Report- Tamra Goettsch

- No real change in activity.
- The Fair Administration revenue is based on interest received
- There was an expenditure in administrative fees

Colleen asked about the costs associated with Real Heroes. Answer- it is for coordination of the event; payments are made throughout the year.

Mark made a motion to accept the financial report as presented; Ken seconded. Motion passed.

VII. Items of Special Interest:

COVID19- Jill

- No new developments
- The governor is doing regular news releases.
- Don't anticipate being able to fully open by our fair time.
- Oregon Fairs Association (OFA) meets every Thursday AM. The OFA lobbyist is at the governor's office regularly; they are trying to keep fairs open.
- Another press release tomorrow (May 6) at 11 AM.
- The projected next mass gathering opening is around July 15.
- We cannot purchase enough products to provide fairgoers safe entry into a mass gathering like ours.
- Unless we can roll through the governor's opening phases quickly, we won't be able to hold the fair.

2020 Fair Direction- Tamra

- Jill feels that there is no reason to hold off until the end of May to make a decision as to whether to hold the fair or not.
- The St. Paul rodeo, which is held the week before us, has canceled.
- The Marion County Board Of Commissioners(BOC) is submitting a county plan to the governor for opening up the government starting May 15. The plan has to be accepted by the governor and we must move through all the state's phases.
- Other counties that have less COVID cases, may open before Marion opens.
- Have been meeting with 4H/FFA weekly. Need to make a decision as to what kind of fair we have.
- We have general fund, state subsidy, and OSU Extension money (for STEAM activities) to work with, minus what we've expended so far. The Event & Sponsorship Coordination still gets paid per contract; this covers their base payment \$35,000 for one contract and \$8,000 for the other.
- Afton is clear about not delivering services May 1.
- Tamra has a meeting with the BOC tomorrow morning to inform them of the fair board's decision regarding canceling the fair.

Discussion:

Joel suggested using soft language such as "postponing" the fair until the following year versus "cancel."

Brandi questions using the word "postponed" as there are connotations with that. She wonders how the students that are graduating, and won't be around next year, might feel about it.

Jill suggested that there are other terms that are positive such as "rescheduled" or "carried over."

We don't know if the fairgrounds will be available; it's state property and under the governor's jurisdiction. Tamra has not received a response back from Mike Paluszak (State Fair CEO).

There are too many unknowns out there should we say that there will be a fair and then we have to go backwards as the quarantine takes its course.

Linn County has made a decision to hold a youth fair only.

Melanie indicated that OSU is not allowing in-person programming until June 30. She had sent a compilation of responses from a fair survey they did with the livestock participants. Their interest had to do with the environment and the connections they are making at the fair versus the competition component. Melanie feels the fair board is doing really great work.

Pam wondered if there will be compensation for students if there is no fair and they can't sell their animal at auction. Answer- Melanie said that all livestock participants were surveyed and 207 responded; 54.6% said they wanted to participate in some sort of 4H/FFA sponsored event.

4H Survey Results:

- 70% of responders are interested in a virtual market sale.
- For a virtual breeding show, 56% responded yes they were interested.
- Only 35% of small animal participants were interested in a virtual show. Melanie suggested that maybe there could be something for them later as they don't have such a small window in which to show.
- 77.2% were interested in a one day haul-in show. However, the quarantine restrictions can't accommodate the number of people that would participate.
- Auction committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow (5/7) will proceed with planning after the fair board makes a decision tonight.
- Ribbon placings of blue, red, and white only; no champion ribbons.
- Questions will be raised as to how to manage the sold animals such as where to do the slaughtering, and sharing meat with Marion/Polk food share.
- Only 140 youth registered for fair to date; half the amount usually lined up by now.

Shannon noted that it would be helpful if the fair board made a decision sooner than later as it would help families save on their special feeding costs. Melanie responded that the standards for student's animals participating in a show will remain the same.

Tamra has asked Mike Paluszak (State Fair council) for a quote on the cost to use a section of the fairgrounds. Existing expenses are at \$58,000 to date spent; this will come out of general fund from the county. To add in an alternative event, and its associated costs such as judges for 4H/FFA, the \$70,000 (from county general fund) is almost gone. Since there is now no revenue coming in, she asks if money should be saved for a really big comeback in 2021.

Joel noted that since state lottery dollars are losing millions of dollars each day, county fairs may not be getting the same amount of revenue from the state subsidy next year.

Jill suggests facilitating a 4H show. Ingalls will reach out to the sponsors who have already paid, asking if they want to “roll their support forward” to the next year or help 4H get through this year. Perhaps have some in-kind contributions.

Melanie said they might hold a “youth fair” that would be for both 4H and FFA.

Mark made a motion to postpone holding a regular fair and also to assist 4H/FFA with a show of some kind; Pam seconded. Tamra indicated that the budget has approximately \$10,300 dollars dedicated to 4H/FFA judges, anything above that could potentially impact the budget. Motion passed. Tamra will take the recommendation to the BOC.

The fair board would have a role supporting the “virtual fair”; the “virtual auction” is the Jr. Market Auction committee’s responsibility.

Melanie notes:

- The biggest expense for our regular fair is the judges, just over \$9,000. (The auction committee does contribute to that.)
- A virtual fair would cost between \$5-6,000. Not as many judges will be needed and they won’t have travel and housing costs.
- Horse exhibitors hope to hold an event later in the year; she would like to see the fair budget help with that.
- Many less static exhibits. The current plan is to hold a virtual show. The program cost has a base price of \$250 then another \$.80 per entry. Should end up costing between \$1400 and \$3,000. She proposes the participants be charge a small fee to guarantee their participation. This would cover the ShoWorks (Fair Vault) expenses.
- There is no good way to pay premiums. When paid out during our fair, at least 50% goes back out into the fair as people make purchases on the grounds; an investment in both the kids and the fair.
- Holding a small event would have expenses of approximately \$6,000 for the cost of judges. Have t-shirts that say “Youth Fair” on them (versus “4H” or “FFA”.) The t-shirts would cost around \$1500. The total costs for the event would be around \$7500. (It would cost more to do a one day show, around \$9,000, as the judges have to come to the site.)

Jill has a meeting with the Marion County Farm Bureau next Wednesday (May 13); they may want to sponsor the t-shirts again. She will ask if they want to contribute further to a 4H Youth Fair.

Tamra asked if a physical location was needed for a youth fair. Answer- Melanie said that no location is needed; in a virtual auction the animal is shown from home. Animals are sold by the head and not by the pound. The only physical location needed would be for delivering the animal to the meat packer. A smaller, one day, show for smaller animals could be done at a physical location as 4H owns their own cages. (Cannot do for large animals.)

Brandi asked if 4H has reached out to another fairgrounds such as Polk, Linn, or Yamhill. Answer- Polk said they were open to conversations; we would just need to consider the costs of renting their grounds.

The scope of grounds needed is large, would need 225 swine pens (2 animals per pen); and would double that amount for sheep and goats. Jill said the scope of the need is too large; only another fairgrounds could meet the need; we’d need to negotiate the cost of use. The sponsors could possibly help with the costs.

Amy noted that at one day fairs, and “jackpots” (community animal showing competitions) personal animals are kept in their own trailers between showing.

Tamra suggested that perhaps a committee could be put together to consider the costs of having an on-site location event and a virtual event, bringing back a recommendation to the fair board in two weeks. Melanie said that she will put together more cost figures, and bring back other ideas, to the next fair board meeting.

The 4H/Marion County Fair exploration group meets virtually on Tuesday mornings at 11; those will continue. *(Anyone is welcome to attend. For meeting details, contact Denise.)*

Sample messaging regarding the fair is canceled was shared. Jill feels that this message needs to get out ASAP before rumors start; she wants to stay ahead of the media. The messaging needs to be consistent. She’s put together several messages for the different recipients- vendors, volunteers, sponsors, and public competitions participants. She will include, “Keep watching our Face Book page for updates.” The message will go out on fair board letterhead and be signed by the fair board chair. Mark made a motion to distribute the message and have it come from Mike and Jill; it was seconded by Brandi. Motion passed.

Vendor Booth Fee Refunds:

Denise noted that there is a fair policy regarding vendors receiving refunds and the time frames in which they can request them and how much can be returned to them. She also said the booth deposit of \$100 is classified as “non-refundable.” Discussion followed. It was decided that the vendor will be given the opportunity to have their money refunded or carried over to the next fair. Brandi made a motion that given the COVID19 pandemic, vendors be refunded the full amount of fees paid (including the \$100 non-refundable deposit) upon their request; Pam seconded the motion. Motion passed. Ken recommended that the letter contain a message saying that the decision they make is final. Denise will include a form with the letter for them to indicate what they’d like done with their money; we will then have record of their request. Denise will bring back a report to next month’s meeting on vendor refunded fees.

Fair Contracts- Tamra

There are 13 fair contracts that need wording changes due to the fair being canceled; they will be minus one year of their contract. Contractors need to be sent an official notice. The department is working with Legal Counsel on this. There are some contracts that are ending this year; some have more years on the contract and don’t need to be cancelled.

Fair Ribbons Budget Increase- Denise

Denise indicated that the current ribbon order cost is coming in higher than allotted in the budget document. She is seeking direction from the board as to how to proceed, the options are:

- She submit a budget change request form for the board to approve the increased cost.
- Cancel the ribbon order due to the fair being canceled.
- Pare down the order to meet budget.

The fair board decided to submit the order as is because the ribbons will still be needed for next year’s fair.

Mark made a motion to increase the budget line item for Public Competition’s Ribbons and Trophies from \$350 to \$462.21; Pam seconded the motion. Motion passed. *(Denise will produce the budget change request form*

retroactively and date it as approved May 6, 2020.) The board authorized Denise to purchase the ribbons and also the entry tags to be used for the 2021 fair.

Denise asked the board if they would like her to seek a refund from the City of Salem for the Liberty Street banner permit (\$486) that has already been purchased. The board asked her to do so but only after a public notice has gone out on the fair cancelation.

Fair RFQ's

RFQ's went out for decorating, stage/sound/lights, and sanitation. Tamra suggests canceling the RFQ's and re-issuing them again in 2021. Mark made a motion to cancel the current RFQ's; Pam seconded. Motion passed.

Food Vendor Appeal Update- Tamra

A previously regularly returning food vendor was not chosen for the 2020 fair. The vendor's application did not receive high enough points from the food vending committee. A letter in response to the vendor's appeal had to go out in a timely manner as there are legal requirements regarding the time the appeal is submitted and the county's response. Shannon (as vice chair) was the signatory on the letter in Mike's stead. (Mike did not sign due to his potential conflict of interest as a food vendor himself.) Denise spelled out the points criteria and explained why the vendor received the low score.

VIII. May Strategic Plan Items

Mike indicated that since the fair is being cancelled, there is no reason to address the May Strategic Plan items.

IX. Other

Jill reminded folks to not say anything to anyone about the fair being canceled as she wants to be the one to tell vendors and suppliers before rumors reach them. The fair board's recommendation to cancel the fair will be taken to the BOC tomorrow morning (5/7) by Tamra. She will work with the county's Public Information Officer on developing a public message. Jill wants to keep fans engaged on Face Book. Tamra asked that Jill cc Denise on each of the messages she sends out.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:08 PM.