

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

Marion County Fair Board Monthly Meeting

Board of Commissioners' Board Room

March 1, 2023 5:30 PM

Meeting Convened: 5:30 PM

I. Call to Order/Introductions

In Attendance

Board Members: Mike Adams, Joel Conder, Brandi Crandall, Becky Delurey, Shannon Gubbels, Pam Zielinski

Key Volunteers: Colleen Busch, Amy Goulter-Allen, Greg Martin, Rebecca Turner

Staff: Denise Clark; Kelli Weese, Community Services Manager

Guests: Joseph Billington, FFA; Jill Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Melanie McCabe, 4H

II. Public Comments- None

III. **Approval of February 1, 2023 Meeting Summary Notes-** Shannon made a motion to approve the meeting summary notes; Brandi Seconded the motion. Motion passed.

IV. 4H/FFA Reports

4H- Melanie McCabe

Melanie said she met with FFA advisors; they've agreed that 4H will do the fair ShoWorks registration for both 4H and FFA. Margi Tipton is working on setting that up now in the system.

Other:

- A fair "All Volunteers" meeting will be held the last Monday in April.
- FFA will receive fair information while school is still in session as is done with 4H.
- Stall and camping fees will not be processed through ShoWorks, instead it will be done through the "OSU Stores" program.
- FFA will now be able to show horses at the fair; classes will be in equitation, showmanship, and gaming. Additional horse stalls may be needed to accommodate them.

FFA- FFA information was included in Melanie's report.

V. Financial Report- Brandi Crandall

Changes since last month's report are highlighted in yellow. These changes include Jill's budget change request form items that were approved in last month's meeting. Shannon made a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented; Becky seconded. Motion passed.

Contingency vs. carryover terms were clarified. "Contingency" is a specific figure that is set aside; "Carryover" is the profit carried forward to the new fair from the previous fair.

VI. Items of Special Interest

Open Board Member Position- Denise Clark

With Ken Outfleet's recent resignation from the fair board, we have an open board member position. As per our practices, we first look to our Key Volunteers for possibly filling the position. Amy Goulter-Allen has expressed an interest in filling the position as has Greg Martin. Amy is now available to help with the front-end as she no longer has FFA responsibilities during fair. Denise said that we can do one of two things- consider a Key Volunteer to fill the position or open it up and advertise the position through the county volunteer coordinator.

Greg said that he feels the person with more fair experience is the more qualified person to fill the position. He said that Amy is more qualified, he will withdraw his interest in the position.

Jill said there are many areas needing help such as coordination of the Community Stage and Real Heroes. The person can also help with Honor Day and other tasks. She said the Ingalls are available to help guide them. Mike said either a board member or a key volunteer can spearhead some of these tasks.

Greg said that he could help by shadowing someone. He is available to help with Honor Day as he has served both in the national guard and the reserves and has first responder experience working within corrections.

Jill said that Ken Outfleet has offered to help someone with Honor Day using his contacts with the military. He is also willing to help with development of the *Voice of the Fair*.

Both Brandi and Mike expressed a vote of confidence in having Amy fill the position.

Brandi made a motion to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to have Amy fill the open board position; Shannon seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Member Roles and Responsibilities- Jill Ingalls

Included in the packet is the updated roles and responsibilities chart from the feedback given in last month's meeting. Jill said she should include the words "EDI" which means Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the *Image and Culture* fields.

The name "Grant" in Honor Day should be "Greg", that was a typo.

She said on some of items listed, Ingalls will do the task whether there is a board liaison or not. The listed roles are identifying opportunities of areas for service for members.

Shannon said that she is willing to help with *Image and Décor*.

The *Operations and Physical Plant* category includes help with setup and staging- hanging plants, placing signs/banners, etc. The board chair has been a big help with this in the past; they assist Ingalls & Associates.

Becky will be working with Rebecca on public competitions. She is also willing to help/support activities pre-fair where needed such as Family Day, special events, or special contests. She will be the Treasurer's Assistant at fair time.

It was suggested to add time frames of “pre-fair” and “fair time” to the document.

Jill suggests that whoever volunteers to work in the listed areas could “hone in” on the descriptions. For example, special contests (dog day, hat contest, etc.) coordinates with public competitions. She says this should be a fluid document.

For the Volunteers’ category, Jill said that this is a communications position. She knows the higher level tasks that need help, but that there are a lot of volunteer opportunities that a fair board member knows, for example they need help with the blue gate.

Denise indicated that there is an internal (board member/key volunteer) volunteer request form that is submitted to Sarah, the department’s volunteer coordinator. This document is specific to identifying where they need assistance.

Jill noted that the roles/responsibilities document is not a strategic plan, but instead a tool for board members to know what help/tasks need to be done. Jill would like everyone to continue to work with the document and adjust it where needed.

It was asked to have the fair volunteer web page link included in this document- <https://marioncountyfair.net/volunteer>

Big Name Entertainment- Joel Conder

Saturday Night’s entertainment is Aaron Watson. Friday Night is not yet determined, many acts under consideration have not panned out. Now looking at a tribute band- Bohemia Queen- they would cost \$15,000 plus seven hotel rooms for one night. They are requesting a 50% deposit upfront. Kelli has confirmed that the county is able to cut two checks for the group, one ahead of time and one once they have done their performance. Joel indicated that they would need payment of \$7500 ASAP.

Jill said there is a potential sponsor for a Thursday night act that would coincide with heroes; maybe the army band could do it.

Catering Policy- Denise Clark

(Mike Adams recused himself, noting a potential conflict of interest due to his catering business, leaving the meeting for this discussion.)

Denise indicated that this policy was drafted last August at the request of Tamra Goettsch. We want to ensure that we are “above board,” that no particular business gets special privileges, or opportunities, to cater at the fair. It explains the process for choosing a fair caterer for special events (company picnics and other special groups) and usually involves a sponsorship. There will be an associated 10% fee paid to the fair for the caterer being given the opportunity to make money at the fair. She said that she had Jill review it and make suggestions for improvement. This does not affect the junior market auction dinner at this time.

Jill said that if a sponsor, organization, wants a special caterer outside of our food vendors, the Ingall’s job is to work with them to make it a “turn-key, seamless process.” The fair must make a profit and will negotiate with the caterer on the organization’s behalf, or the organization can get their own caterer. All caterers must meet the same requirements of all of our fair food vendors- licenses, permits, insurance, etc. We need to collect a percentage (10%) to acknowledge the fact that they are getting to do business at the fair.

Gina, of Golden Grill, Adams Rib, and the Dairy Women have participated in sponsorship packages in the past. They either paid a percentage to the fair or reduced the price of what was provided to the sponsor, making sure that the equated percentage benefitted the fair.

It was asked about getting a caterer for the national entertainers which is a requirement in many of their contract "riders." Answer- we need to communicate to the entertainers that our preference is to use our existing service providers (food vendors) first.

We can edit the policy having a section on national entertainers, include that they do need to follow the same rules regarding catering as all our fair food vendors do. They need to provide the same documentation requirements and ensure that they are operating the same.

Joel said that sometimes the entertainers do a "buy-out" to bring in their own caterer.

Jill said we have been fulfilling entertainers needs with existing caterers in the past. In using outside caterers, it would be in our best interest to negotiate a "cheap" catering rate with justifications such as, "We don't ask your staff to come in and serve the food."

Brandi suggested that we respond to contract riders with "This is how much we can pay for a big name entertainment caterer;" we do need to bring in the best we can, but this is the range of price we can provide within the 10% margin.

Joel would like to see a minimum number of people being catered to, listed in the policy.

The fee is enacted for both the fair's food vendor and also the outside caterer. It was suggested that on Point C in the policy to change the wording to the chosen "provider" instead of "caterer," and to clarify as to what the caterer selection is based on.

Brandi said it will be important to keep the accounting of the daily sales of food vendors and the catering sales separated post fair as the figures are different- 22% for food vendors, 10% for caterers.

Jill said the 10% fee is based on an industry standard that most fairgrounds require. She also said that concessions (food vendors) always pay a higher fee than catering.

Add language to the policy regarding exceptions made for catering events for stage acts; something to the effect of, "As negotiated in contract fulfillment."

Denise will make the suggested changes and bring the policy back to next month's meeting.

Event Coordination Contract- Kelli Weese

(Jill Ingalls recused herself as the discussion pertained to their contract.)

Kelli said that this is a continuation of the discussion from last fall regarding the event coordination and marketing contracts that Ingalls and Associates hold. Because of the dollar amount, the fair board makes a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners (BOC.) Last fall the fair board recommended a 2-year extension to the contracts. The BOC responded that they would rather see a 1-year extension with the option to do an additional year. In October the fair board agreed to go with the BOC's recommendation. The two contracts expire September 20, 2023. There is now the opportunity to add a second-year contract extension or go into procurement.

The options before the fair board:

1. Recommend an additional 1-year extension.
2. Let the contract expire and work on procurement.

If the fair board recommends an additional 1-year extension to the existing Ingalls contract, the RFP would go out in January of 2024. This would allow time to have a committee review the previous RFP, look at other RFP examples, and develop a subcommittee.

Staff recommend moving forward with the additional 1-year extension because of the Ingalls' positive performance reviews and because of the timeline necessitating a summer RFP publication, should the fair board want to go for the procurement process now.

Shannon and Joel questioned why this was being brought forward to the fair board for a decision now when it was already voted on last fall to follow the BOC's recommendation to do just a 1-year extension on the Ingalls' contracts. Answer- because the BOC had recommended a 1-year extension with the option to do an additional year.

Shannon expressed that the fair has undergone a lot of changes since the Ingalls first got the contract in 2015. It would be nice to allow for the possibility of new event coordinators having a "fresh look" at the fair. She'd like to see us go ahead with the RFP process now.

Shannon and Joel both expressed that they don't feel it's a tight timeline to get the RFP out; that it could easily be done. Kelli responded that the timeline isn't so tight for the RFP process itself, but more for those submitting the RFP. It would mean organizations would be required to submit proposals right in the midst of their busy season opening in June and closing in July. It wouldn't be fair to ask that of them as they wouldn't have time to put together a quality presentation.

Denise added that our contracts' coordinator is way behind in getting contracts out. It is unknown what her timeline will be for getting to the RFP. Her schedule may not allow for this to get this out as quickly as we would hope.

Brandi said the RFP itself will also probably be changing to accommodate the changing fair.

Joel said as a contractor, they have a boiler plate already developed to respond to RFPs. It doesn't matter what the season is, it's just a "plug and play" process.

Denise responded that historically, we did lose a couple of submissions- one for an entertainment buyer, and one for the carnival RFP, because it was right in the midst of their busy season. We received feedback that was the reason they didn't submit.

Joel said that we don't do extensions on other contracts, he wonders how we can extend a contract when the contract expired in September of 2022. Kelli responded that county contracts do allow for an extension after expiration, especially if both parties are in agreement to do so. The original contract did allow for a 2-year extension. Brandi said the fair board did recommend to the BOC the extension in September; the fair board did their part in a timely manner.

Joel feels we should just go back out for bid (an RFP); if the Ingalls are the most qualified, they'll get the contract. He doesn't want anything to look "shady" or that "something is going on behind the scenes."

Brandi questioned where does it look “shady?” She said that we are just operating on something that is already built into the contract, an extension. She said we are putting our existing coordinator at a disadvantage asking them to prepare an entirely new concept/proposal at the same time they are preparing and implementing our upcoming fair. She feels that appears unfair and a potential conflict. She said that the timeframe itself could be considered a conflict of interest.

Mike said if we extended it, it would provide potential submittal organizations more time to put together their proposal.

Becky expressed with an RFP landing in June or July, the smaller companies may not have the capacity in staffing to put something together during that timeframe. She is interested in getting the best RFP submittals possible.

Joel suggested to move the advertisement of the RFP up from June to May and that would solve the timeline problem.

Shannon expressed that she wished this had been better explained to her last September; she would have voted for just the 1-year extension without a second-year extension.

Kelli said that if the fair board chose to do contract procurement right now, the Fair Board could move quicker by establishing a subcommittee to review the current RFP and make any needed changes. The publication time (4-6 weeks) and the subsequent evaluation timelines are set.

Brandi feels that it is very clear by some of the comments that have been made, that there are some people that have issue with our current contractors. We’ve been accused of being a “divided board” in the past, and this type of behavior confirms that. She said she has a problem with that.

Joel agrees that this whole process needs to be “open” and “a fair bidding process.”

Joel said that he went to the Linn County Fair Board meeting two weeks ago. On their agenda was marketing and sponsorship as they don’t have a marketing/sponsorship person. One person was adamant that he was not interested in having Ingalls & Associates work with their board. Brandi responded that there’s two sides to every story and that there are some potential respondents to our fair’s RFP that she wouldn’t support. She said she can understand someone taking the position of not supporting a respondent if they’ve had some experience with them.

Melanie said that she had worked with Linn County Fair. She noted that that the fair has its challenges; there have been internal struggles with that fair board. She said if she was an event/sponsorship coordinator, she would not work for that fair. She said the actual fair is good, the fair board itself is a problem. She said the blame should not be on the Ingalls.

Pam said that she recently talked with a Marion County Commissioner at a school event, and he indicated that he would not support an additional year extension on the contract, that the BOC only approved a 1-year extension.

Brandi suggested a compromise, she made a motion to move towards procurement with an estimated RFP publication timeframe for the end of August, or first of September, to be reviewed by a subcommittee and then discussed at the October fair board meeting; Shannon seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Kelli noted that this covers both contracts, procurements for event coordination and marketing sponsorship. Drafts are in the meeting documents sent out prior to this meeting. The group decided a subcommittee is the best way to review the documents. The committee will review the RFP’s scope of work for posting and review the submittals. Those offering to be on the committee are board members Brandi, Joel, and Becky, and Key Volunteer Rebecca.

VII. Ingalls' Report

Jill noted that there was a math error on her last month's budget change request form. Puzzlemania and Backyard Adventures require an additional \$900 because of this year being a 4-day fair. The total cost will be closer to \$8400, not \$7500. Joel made a motion to approve the budget change request; Shannon seconded the motion. Motion passed. Jill will submit the budget change request form to Denise.

Other:

- Scott is in the process of conducting sponsorship meetings.
- The digital billboards have been reserved.
- She will be meeting with Ken as to what he's done so far on Real Heroes.
- Tom Hurt won't be helping with Real Heroes this year as he's got another big event going on at the same time as our fair.

VIII. March Strategic Plan Items

3.2.10 Work with Public Work's van pool to arrange for Big Name Entertainment transportation van as needed. *Joel will let Denise know ASAP if this is needed.*

Mike said that he has a suggested artist for the Woods- Mani Martinez who has a jazz quartet.

4.1.1 Respond to requests to participate (entertain) that come into the fair office, relay to Entertainment Coordinator for a response. Hold meeting between the Event Coordinator and the Entertainment Coordinator to identify openings on the main stage. *On-going.*

4.3.3 Discuss any needed changes for 4H/FFA.- *Shannon said that the camping area and gray area parking need to be discussed.*

4.4.1 Inventory ribbons, order exhibit tags, update department classes per superintendents' requests- *In Process.*

4.4.4 Place Public Competitions application and information on web site.- *In Process.*

4.5.4 Vendor issues- complaints; hand holding; sales (sell booth); vendor/fair expectations; improve inside/outside layouts.- *On-going.*

IX. Other

Jill said that Denise is in the process of scheduling a state fair planning meeting (*rental use agreement review*); we'll know more about what changes are happening on the grounds after that. It was asked that once the meeting is set, to send the meeting time to the fair board for them to attend. It was suggested that we don't want to overwhelm the state fair, descending on them with too many people. Shannon indicated that she would like to attend the meeting.

Denise expressed concern that there is a possibility that our costs will go up based on a communication that state fair recently sent out to all of their grounds' users. Joel confirmed that he believed costs would be increasing.

Melanie said that they will need to know by the first of April whether there will be power available for campers.

Amy said that she and Jill are working on a project for the purchasing of a background banner for picture taking. Denise was asked to put this on next month's agenda.

The Fair Foundations' 2023 Swine and Wine event will be held April 20; it is sold-out according to Joel.

X. Meeting adjourned: 7:55 PM