

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

November 1, 2023 5:30 PM

Meeting Convened: 5:35 PM

I. Call to Order/Introductions

In Attendance

Board Members- Becky Delurey, Amy Goulter-Allen, Shannon Gubbels

Key Volunteers- Greg Martin

Guests: Jill Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Margi Tipton, 4H; Cody Walterman, Marion County Legal Counsel; Pat Wood, Source Management

Staff: Denise Clark; Sarah Coutley, Fair Volunteer Coordinator; Chris Eppley, Community Services Department Director; Kelli Weese, Economic Development Program Manager

II. No Public Comments

III. **Approval of October 4, 2023 Meeting Summary Notes** Amy made a motion to approve the summary notes; Becky seconded. Motion passed.

IV. 4H/FFA Reports-

4H- Margi Tipton

There are 72 volunteers who completed 4H enrollment. There is a social tomorrow night (11/2) to distribute awards. They are working on getting judges. Denise added that Melanie had sent her a report in her absence:

- 4H Superintendents' meeting was held October 9; they reviewed the 2023 fair and provided information about the coming year.
- There will be minor changes to the livestock schedule.
- Changes in the horse schedule are contingent on the use of the horse stadium on Saturday.
- Upcoming weigh-in dates are February 3rd and May 1 and 2 at the Sublimity Harvest Festival grounds.

No FFA representative present; they are all at the national convention in Indiana.

V. Financial Report- Denise Clark

Denise presented the final budget report for the 2023 fair. She believes all transactions are in and accounted for. The final numbers look good. The final figures include both the contingency of \$95,000 for future rental of the state fairgrounds and a carryover of \$576,868.95 from previous fairs. The net income loss for the 2023 fair from the Operations side was \$55,977.22.

All changes since the last report are reflected in yellow.

The donations and misc. revenue of \$1880 includes the previous \$5 donation (from lost and found) and \$1875. The latter is a credit from the Fair Foundation as we overpaid for FFA premiums. They invoiced us for \$4,000, but the FFA payouts were only \$2125.

Amy made a motion to approve the budget report as presented; Becky seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VI. Items of Special Interest

Oregon Fairs Association Convention Updates

The convention was held at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds in Redmond Oregon October 5-8th. Denise, the Ingalls, and Greg all attended. Greg said he enjoyed it and learned a lot attending various sessions. He said he took a tour of the grounds; they are really nice. He is looking forward to going to the next convention in Seaside. (This is the OFEA convention February 29- March 2.)

Jill said she was surprised as to how many new attendees were present. The opening speaker also was interesting as he spoke on what he learned as event coordinator for the Las Vegas concert in which there was a mass shooting. She and Scott also spoke with him afterwards to further learn from his experience.

Denise said she attended some interesting sessions including advisory board processes. She shared some points that stood out to her. She was surprised by the low attendance numbers at the convention compared to past years. Jill responded that this was a new time of the year to be holding it and perhaps regular attenders weren't ready for the change.

Entertainment Update- Pat Wood

Per the entertainment committee's directive, an offer was put in for Joe Nichols at \$45,000 for Saturday night. The offer is pending as they are looking for other routing options in the area as there are none now. If there isn't a response to this offer in the next 10 days, he said we'll move on to other acts.

The committee was first interested in Sawyer Brown, but he was no longer available.

In reaching out to the Uncle Cracker team for having him as the Friday night act, he currently has a date conflict. They might still be interested if there are some routing changes. If that were to work out, we'd need another \$5,000 to have both Joe Nichols and Uncle Cracker.

Pat's "strategy" is to consider building a "deeper" act list. He said he will work on providing a new list to the entertainment committee. The philosophy for our fair is to have a known country act for Saturday night, with either a trademark act, or a tribute band, for Friday night.

Pat suggests increasing the Big Name Entertainment dollar amount to reach more acts. He said he will endeavor to stay within the original \$65,000 allocated but might need the wiggle room of the higher figure. He said we need to get ahead of this (finding a national act) as soon as possible.

Discussion ensued.

Becky made a motion to authorize up to \$75,000 to seek Friday and Saturday night's entertainment; acts to be identified with the entertainment committees' approval. Amy seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Fair Board Member Applications Update

Denise said that we have received three applications. The applicants are Dana Castano, Brandi Crandall, and Greg Martin. The board directed Denise to find interview times that will work for all. Denise will also draft the interview questions.

New 2024 State Fair Policies

Denise said that there are concerns regarding the new 2024 policy changes received from the state fair. The most concerning are the new fees for parking (\$10 a car), another is using only state fair concessionaires, and lastly, charging for RV parking/camping. The county fair is a non-profit government agency; perhaps there could be an exclusion for the county fair. Discussion followed.

Jill expressed that if we have to charge for parking, we'll need to adjust our gate entry fees. She feels that the fairs' demographics would not tolerate this fee on top of our current gate prices.

State Fair would manage the parking including providing parking attendants.

It was asked if there might be sponsorship options for the parking fee. Jill responded probably not. If state fair is managing/owning the parking, we could not get a sponsorship. (Wilco's sponsorship of parking for the state fair is just part of the sponsorship package state fair gives them.) Our fair's sponsorship money all goes into one pool and then we distribute it out where needed; we would still have to pay state fair the parking fee.

It was suggested that we produce a written response to the state fair regarding this policy change requesting the county fair be given some concessions regarding these new rules. The process would include first bringing the topic before the Board of Commissioners (BOC) in a management update meeting. We would ask for their input and determine if they are interested in being included in the written response. We would also seek advice from Legal Counsel. Once we receive further direction from those two bodies, staff will draft a response. It would then be reviewed by all parties before being sent out. The fair board agreed that staff should move forward with this approach.

VII. Strategic Plan Items- November

1.2.3 *Analyze and determine- ticket prices, promotions, fees, premiums for Public Competitions, and passes, for impacts on revenues.* We will hold this discussion after we have received more information from the state fair regarding the new fees.

1.2.4 *Analyze expenditures to determine where efficiencies can be gained or costs can be borne by a sponsor.* Ongoing.

1.2.7 *Determine Fair Hours-* It was suggested to have more of a “soft opening” on Thursday, making Thursday hour improvements for the vendors, and make it a “county day” in which the BOC has more opportunities for connecting with the public.

It was suggested to not limit the hours in which the military get in for free on Thursday.

2.1.1 *Adopt marketing budget.* We currently have too much to consider before make a decision about this.

It was suggested that Greg submit a budget for Honor Day. Jill indicated she would help with that.

3.1.3. Remove this task- *Seek "Zero Waste" proposals (deadline no later than mid-November)* as we will no longer be receiving a grant from Public Works in the future.

3.1.4 *Update flow chart of board members' responsibilities including back-ups.* Move this item to the retreat when we will have more people in place.

4.1.3 *Discuss whether the fair should feature a "big name act"-* Done

4.6.3 *Discuss continuing events such as "the Woods", Real Heroes, Grill-Off, etc.-* Will discuss this at the retreat.

5.2.5 *Review Strategic Plan-* Save for the retreat.

VIII. Other

TCB Ticket Takers' Contract

Denise said that the county's contracts coordinator (Krista Ulm) said that this contract expired 9/30/23. Krista is asking the fair board if they want to extend the contract for one year or three years. Also, what annual price figure would they like listed as it was previously set at \$13,500. However, the costs associated for the 2023 fair was \$10,267. Krista is asking the fair board if they want to lower the figure on the upcoming contract.

Jill said TCB (also known as *NW Event Pros*) handles a lot of events. She said they do the parking management for the state fair. She also said there are not as many operators in this business as there once was. If the fair board is happy with the service they provide, she recommends not making a change in these challenging times for finding agencies to do security and ticket taking.

Amy made a motion to extend TCB's contract for another three years; Becky seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Real Heroes

Greg said that he wants to approach the armed forces early in the year; he'd like to send out a formal letter next

month. He wants to reach out to the federal building in Portland in order to speak to the topmost authorities. Greg said he would work with Denise to get those letters out.

Jill indicated that these are Real Heroes participants which Ingalls and Associates are responsible for and that she is the person to help him with that.

Denise noted that Greg had her send out a letter to confirm the color guard's participation. A response was received indicating that they were planning on participating; the only caveat is if they were needed for a memorial service at the same time, then they would not be able to do the fair. They asked to be approached again closer to fair.

Greg asked when the entertainment committee would be meeting next. Denise responded that she will set up the next meeting when Pat has more information to share with the committee.

IX. **Meeting Adjourned:** 6:30 PM.