

*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

May 3, 2023 5:30 PM

**Meeting Convened:** 5:30 PM

### **I. Call to Order/Introductions**

#### In Attendance

Board Members- Mike Adams, Joel Conder, Becky Delurey, Shannon Gubbels, Pam Zielinski

Key Volunteers- Greg Martin, Rebecca Turner

Guests: Joseph Billington, FFA; Jill & Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Judy Skinner, Garten; Margi Tipton, 4H

Staff: Denise Clark; Sarah Coutley, Community Services; Chris Eppley, Community Services Director

Public Comments: None

- II. **Approval of April 5, 2023 Meeting Summary Notes-** Shannon made a motion to approve the notes; Pam seconded. Motion passed.

### **III. 4H/FFA Reports**

4H- Melanie said that they will open fair registration May 8-19; fees associated can be paid until May 26. There is a weigh-in tonight and tomorrow for sheep, goat, and swine. Amy is not attending this meeting as she is at that event.

Melanie will have a student intern and an educational assistant at this year's fair; they will need an extra golf cart.

FFA- Joseph said that all of the FFA advisors are "on-board" for how everything is going to work at the coming fair.

### **IV. Financial Report- Denise Clark**

Denise noted that there are not a lot of changes; any changes that occurred during the last month are highlighted in yellow font. Changes are found in:

- Food booth fee
- Commercial booth fees; almost reached our target that was set low for this year.
- Sponsor fees
- The Queen tribute band was paid \$7500 as was required by their contract to be paid 50% of the total fee upfront.

- Administrative Fees

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

**V. Items of Special Interest**

- a. Budget Change Request Form\_ Local Entertainment- Joel indicated that there is some money still available in Big Name Entertainment as not all was used this year. He is suggesting \$5000 be moved to local entertainment. There is a Latino Band he is trying to get. Pam made a motion to approve the budget change request of moving \$5,000 from Big Name Entertainment to Local Entertainment; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.
- b. Budget Change Request Form\_ Public Competitions' Ribbons- Denise indicated that the price of ribbons has gone up and more are needed this year to meet all of the superintendents' needs. Pam made a motion to approve the Public Competitions' Ribbons line item increasing from \$500 to \$660; Becky seconded. Motion passed.
- c. 2023 Fair Foundation Swine & Wine Event Update- Joel said that all of the funds aren't in yet but the are currently "running" at approximately 90% compared to what was raised last year. A student from FFA sang the national anthem and gave a testimonial. There was a dessert silent auction in which local bakeries donated goods; \$4,000 was raised on that alone. Approximately 200 people attended the event which was held at the Zielinski's event center.
- d. Management Update- Chris Eppley  
At the recently held Management Update, fair board communication with the Commissioners was addressed. The BOC agreed to hold two work sessions a year, one in the spring to discuss fair planning for the upcoming fair, and one post fair to receive a report on how the fair went. A representative from the BOC will attend a fair board meeting two times a year.  
They are still discussing whether they will be holding a board session at the fair as they've done in the past.  
They are wanting to continue the Public Competitions' Marionberry pie contest and Commissioner Willis offered to put up the prize money.  
Melanie suggested that If they want to be involved with the 4H/FFA students, that they attend the 8:00 AM 4H/FFA morning meeting to welcome to the kids.
- e. The security and ticket taking IRFPs turned out to be considered "non-responsive" due to not all of the administrative components being completed. However, the IRFP is a method to "test the water" to see who is out there to provide the service. We can cancel it and go ahead with an RFQ process, working with a with a preferred provider if we choose to.
- f. 2023 Food Vendor List- Denise noted that the food vendor list was included in their packet. The food vendor selection committee feels that it is a good line-up. There are 13 vendors with a variety of offerings. New this year is Geppettos Italian foods, a cheesecake vendor, and a Greek food provider.

Jill and Denise have been working on a layout image that can be provided to all food vendor applicants in the future. They will use this to draw the components of their set-up including dimensions of their vehicle/structure along with any extra space needed around their booth area.

Jill noted that a new plumber has been hired by the state fair; hopefully food vendor issues will go smoother this fair.

g. Food Catering Accounting Form- Denise

Denise said that per our new fair food catering policy, she was asked to develop a form for tracking the catering being done and the associated fee 10% fee. Pam made a motion to accept the new food catering accounting form that Denise made; Becky seconded the motion. Motion passed. (Mike recused himself from the discussion and the vote.)

h. Public Competitions' Judges' Contract- Denise

Denise indicated that this has been brought up before. Our fair has not recently been paying the Public Competitions' judges. We did many years ago as Denise found record of them being paid \$25 a day. Jill said that when professionals are brought in, they assume they will get paid. We do bring volunteers in where possible, but also want the ability to pay a professional.

Rebecca said that when she did some research on this, she found that Linn County pays \$35 a day and also mileage. Discussion was held on what to pay the judges. Sometimes a judge might only be there for 30 minutes, and another might be there a full day. Rebecca feels identifying a flat rate to pay them is feasible. The form has flexibility with a fill-in area as to how much a particular judge is to be paid. She feels we can identify what is reasonable to pay an individual judge. At an average rate of \$25 a day, the \$600 listed in the Public Competitions' line item would cover the cost of all the judges we currently use. Shannon made a motion to approve the Public Competitions' Judges' Contract with payouts not to exceed the \$600 budgeted amount; Pam seconded the motion. Motion passed.

i. Fair Revenue Over the Year's Variables- Denise

Denise said that she was asked to provide a report, researching the numbers on fair revenue over the years and to include any variables that may have affected the revenue. Jill said that she was interested in this as a tool for looking at long range performance and identifying the outside impacts. She said the document could be maintained over the years; post fair we could capture the variables of that particular fair. If more information is needed on something the fair is doing, this could be used. One area to watch is ticketing; we are currently selling more \$5 pre-sale, on-line, tickets. She suggested that this be added to the revenue document as a variable.

## VII. Ingalls Report-

Ingalls met with state fair about cross marketing our events. It was suggested we put a flyer on every car on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to advertise our event. For any county fair marketing at this event there will be an additional

cost. Another suggestion was to put an ad on the jumbotron at the Alabama concert. We'd like to see state fair market on their social media; a person could get a discount for our fair when attending their event. Scott said they are going to put us on their fair website banner leading up to the concert. (They have 60,000 followers on their website.) They have the ability to announce our event on the concert stage; we will provide a script to them. Jill feels that there is a value to us offering free tickets to our fair at their event. The difficulty will be finding someone who would be willing to work on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July to hand out the tickets.

Our fair will be impacted by the state fair's big-name concerts- Alabama on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and Lee Brice coming in June. We try not to use the entertainer as a reason to come to our fair. We are focusing on reaching the Latino fairgoer; Jill recently had a meeting with organizers. Perhaps use an agency such as ESO Marketing. Ingalls will need additional money for cultural marketing. Also, money is needed for the yard signs put up at the fairgrounds. Ingalls will be bringing budget change request forms back to a subsequent board meeting.

It was suggested that since TCB is the state fair's ticketing organization, perhaps they could hand out our fair flyers.

Joseph suggested getting fair information into the schools' newsletters, perhaps even into their electronic communication.

The Wasteless quote from Garten came in at \$29,000; this is higher than the budgeted amount. Janitorial came in \$1300 over budget. Garbage in the barns will be addressed by janitorial, not under the wasteless grant.

Jill noted that we may have to set a virtual budget approval meeting in order to move forward as things can't wait until the June meeting. Denise will schedule one if needed.

#### **VIII. May Strategic Plan Items**

2.1.6 *Interface with other state fairgrounds' events occurring at the same time as county fair.* Discussion held earlier in this meeting.

2.1.7 *Put together CH2 (county bldg.) window display-* In process

2.1.11 *Pay for renewal of MCFair.net domain name every 5 years (next 5/24/24)-* N/A

2.2.2 *Increase public participation in Public Competitions' events-* On-going. Jill said had great interaction with attendees at Agfest in getting "show it" flyers into their hands.

3.2.6 *Identify the type of tickets for free entry in Afton's device-* Public Competitions, Participant, FV, CV, etc.- In process

3.2.7 *Further develop state fair/MC fair cooperation- more effective layout; communication of needs; fencing; better signage.-* On-going

3.2.8 *Develop Grange log cabin agreement-* Completed

3.3.3 *Increase clarity of process with security personnel- who does what; informational (print, signs, etc.)* Ingalls said that they would do so once a contract is in place.

3.3.5 *Provide event listing information for program publication to Event Coordinator- On-going*

4.3.1 *Create detailed work orders- TBD* Denise sends work order forms out for people that are responsible for an area.

4.3.2 *Hold meeting with State Fair to address logistics, parking, work orders, barns and other issues. Negotiate horse stadium arena grooming.-* On-going conversations.

Melanie confirmed that “Riffle” will work-up the arena ground. Jill said that she needs a quote ahead of time to budget for it. We pay for plumbing and arena work.

4.7.3 *Coordinate veteran's uniform display.* Jill has not been able to get ahold of the coordinator yet.

#### **VIX. Other:**

Volunteer Appreciation Event- Sarah Coutley

Sarah asked if the fair board wants to continue holding the volunteer appreciation event post fair, and if so, do they want to change the date to holding it closer to fair? She said that there has never been over 50 people (including their family members) in any one year attending. She doesn't feel that volunteers are really interested in attending. Perhaps it would be better to give them a gift and acknowledgement at fair time.

Discussion:

- It was suggested to give “fair bucks” to be used towards purchasing treats at the fair; they could be given at the end of a person's shift.
- Perhaps hold the events at the fairgrounds so people associate more with the fair.
- Denise remarked that the time we held the event at a pizza restaurant was the most attended.
- Sarah said that we already have a supply of backpacks to give out, so we don't need to buy any.
- Jill noted that there is “value in community;” holding an event like this fosters community.
- Minto Brown has a covered pavilion for such an event in the back of the park.

Made in Marion coordination- Denise

From our work session, the BOC suggested that we put out a solicitation to organize and coordinate the *Made in Marion* booths; this is in process. Jill said that she sent some names of coordinators to Adam Franco, the Economic Development person in Community Services.

Jill said that since the BOC wants more kids' things to do at the fair, she has activities planned such as painted rocks, making paper planes, and a crayon recycling booth. Melanie has offered free paint for the rock activity. They are all lacking people to facilitate the activities; volunteers and possible funding for staff is needed. Perhaps find some temporary staff. Chris said the county's intern money cannot be offered to Melanie as there are issues to work out, perhaps next year. Sarah suggested she could possibly find some volunteers for short blocks of time. It was suggested to have an all-county email come from the board's office advertising the need for helpers.

**X. Meeting Adjourned: 7:15 PM**