

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

**Marion County Fair Board  
Monthly Meeting**  
Commissioners' Board Room and by Zoom  
December 1, 2021 5:30 PM

In Attendance

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

**Key Volunteers:** Colleen Busch, Amy Goulter-Allen, Lesley Johnson

**Guests:** Jill and Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Melanie McCabe, 4H; Pat Wood, Source Management

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

Meeting Convened: 5:33 PM

- I. **Call to Order/Introductions**
- II. **Public Comments-** None
- III. **Approval of the October 6 and November 6, 2021 Meeting Summary Notes-** Mark made a motion to approve the notes; Ken seconded. Motion passed.
- IV. **4H/FFA Reports**

**4H- Melanie**

Judges are all set; working general tasks that need to be done this time of year. It was asked about club membership numbers. Answer- interest is up; participation will be similar to last year's numbers or slightly better. Plans are to have overnight camping in 2022 and hold their regular schedule of events. They may change the horse show schedule. They are also discussing developing a new "fair footprint."

**FFA-** No report; Amy was unavailable until later in the meeting.

V. **Financial Report-** Tamra Goettsch

Tamra indicated that the financial report is the latest version and includes up-to-date expenditures. The yellow font indicates figures that have been edited since the board retreat in November. Only \$60 remains as unaccounted for out of the \$530,000 budget.

- In-kind items are listed; these may be a variable if an item doesn't end up getting sponsored.
- Public official bonds payment of \$350 is listed. These are required by law; we pay when a board member's bond expires.
- Administrative charges for the last year are reflected.

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

## 2022 Budget Document Layout- Tamra Goettsch

- The layout has been change for ease of reading and to be more transparent.
- Changes to the layout are only on the Operations pages.
- Items were compiled where they would “naturally land.”
- Competition related items are listed together such 4H/FFA, horse arena grooming, Public Competitions, etc.

It was suggested that more money might be needed in the Public Competitions line item. More money can be allotted if the board deems it appropriate.

“Office” items have been moved out of Administration and placed in Operations as having a fair office is essential for operating the fair.

New under “Printing” is Spanish translation, design, and printing of day sheets.

Some line items are detailed out, some not, like promotions.

The current proposal indicates that the Operations costs are approximately \$394,000 a year.

There are a lot of costs associated with paving. Tamra has set aside enough money from the paving projects to cover rent up to the year 2027 for an added total cost of \$489,064.

Mike and Colleen expressed their preference for the new layout.

Jill said the new layout is easier for them to reconcile expenditures with Lorrie post fair.

## 2022 Proposed Budget- Tamra Goettsch

Tamra said that her style is to budget low on revenue and high on expenditures; if we make more money at the gate than projected, great. However, the COVID19 pandemic makes it hard to predict what will occur in 2022.

Budget Thoughts:

- If we go over \$80,000 in sponsorship, we can increase the \$24,700 listed for commission payout.
- Added is \$500 for parking signs and infrastructure.
- The budget has been increased for an air conditioning rental unit (\$1000); what we currently have in the office isn't working well.
- Bottled water is usually sponsored, so it isn't budgeted. If Ingalls can't get it sponsored, they would bring the subject back to the fair board for discussion.
- The office will need a printer/copier. We don't know if we'll have a sponsor for it as we have in the past. We may have to rent one for \$2,000.
- Marketing and Advertising is listed at a top level, it is not broken out intentionally. Jill can provide the fair board specifics when needed.
- Local entertainment has been increased from \$6,000 to \$8000.

### Big Name Entertainment Discussion

It was brought up that at the fair board retreat, Big Name Entertainment (BNE) was to have a total of \$60,000 listed, that figure to include catering costs and other act associated items. It is now listed as \$60,000 for the act alone, with the additional items adding up to \$73,400.

Ken indicated that he made the proposal of \$60,000 in total for the act and all of the additional items (backline, catering, etc.) based on the fair board's discussion at the retreat. Ken said his motion was intentional, to be all encompassing.

Pat Wood feels that if only \$47,000 is available for the act, with the rest of \$60,000 going for the incidentals, this will make our event "weak." The pandemic has impacted entertainers; some are wondering if they should stay in the business. Those coming back are higher priced, probably to recover some losses from no shows due to the pandemic. Spring of 2022 the casinos will be bringing BNE back. We could get a decent act for \$47,000 to fill a Saturday night slot. Friday would have to be a local or regional act. He said there is a real gap between acts available at \$35,000 vs. \$60,000.

The question was asked if a big name act will bring people to the fair. Answer- it is unknown. Jill feels we can't rely on the act as the main draw to get people in the gates.

Mike said that with all of the events going on around us at fair time, our fair doesn't have the reputation for drawing crowds via the big name act.

Pat said that with really big names, fairgoers come for the show and then leave. He suggests we want to pull people in to share the full fair experience. He said that if you bring in someone with name recognition for example Billy Ray Cyrus, it's a genre and a demographic pull. Those folks will come and share the fair experience other than just to see the act alone.

Social media is "king" right now. If someone personally hasn't heard of an act, but then social media promotes it, they'll come and the fair will feel the impact.

Pat indicated that when he provides the fair board with a list of possible acts, he's already vetted them and knows of their availability; he isn't just dropping an unknown list on us.

Jill asked if we should put all of our efforts to make one day strong, like Saturday, or do we get a familiar name on both nights for their own unique reasons? Answer- you want an event within an event (with a theme) such as Saturday is "the day" to go to the fair. If you want to build another day, evaluate what you want to achieve on that day.

Pat suggests spending \$45k-60k on a Saturday night act.

It was asked about having the listed three-in-one country package. Answer- It's all up to your social media marketing. The music press bills it as "hit and hit after hit." Radio and TV interviews would help to promote such a thing.

We must settle on our objective. Is it to sell beer, draw new people, or what?

Brandi indicated that her preference is to spend a total of \$60,000 for the two acts (Friday and Saturday nights) as the current proposed budget indicates.

It was decided at the retreat that the purpose of a big name act is to give back to our fair patrons.

Brandi made a motion to put \$60,000 in budget for “talent fees.” This figure does not include backline, catering, etc. The total for big name entertainment is \$73,396 when including those items. Mike seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The entertainment committee needs to be involved in the discussion. Also, we don’t want throw all of our resources at just one night, both nights need to be addressed.

Mark made a motion to split the \$60,000 for acts to cover two days (Friday and Saturday) Mike seconded. Motion passed.

Pat wanted confirmation on who he is to be working with. Tamra said a nimble entertainment subcommittee will be established that he will work with; there needs to be more than one person involved in the entertainment discussions.

If the Veteran’s Celebration event is to include live music, that cost would come out of the local entertainment budget.

Brandi made a motion to adopt the proposed 2022 budget with the suggested changes; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

## **VI. Items of Special Interest**

### Member Reappointment Policy Review- Denise Clark

Denise indicated that the reappointment policy has been presented to them multiple times in the past. Recently there has been a change in the Board of Commissioners (BOC) processes.

Tamra said that the BOC wants to approve all appointments and reappointments to boards and councils. All reappointments are to be presented to the BOC at a Management Update meeting. When an opening exists on a board, the BOC wants to engage in the recruitment of potential members. The difference between the fair board and other advisory boards is that the fair board is its own authority with different rights than other boards/councils. The fair board can sign contracts, write checks, and manage its own budget. This can be done outside of the county. Currently the fair board is adhering to the BOC/Fair Management Agreement and utilizing county resources. The fair board has a system to use key volunteers to fill open board positions unless there is a skill set that is needed that our existing key volunteers are not able to fill.

Brandi moved to accept the reappointment policy that Denise drafted with the suggested change of the reappointment being presented to the BOC in a management update meeting; Mark seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mark made a motion to approve the recommendation for reappointment of Mike Adams, Shannon Gubbels, and Ken Outfleet to the fair board for another three year term; Brandi seconded. Motion passed.

### Member Roles and Responsibilities

Changes include:

- The barns education ambassadors will be Brandi and Shannon.
- Remove the rodeo and Awesome Day listings as those events no longer occur.
- Mark will be the back-up to the Treasurer (Brandi).
- Ken will work with Mike on the car show outside of fair time.
- Mike will be responsible for conducting the food vendor meeting the night before fair begins.
- Colleen is willing to help with volunteer training prior to fair. She will work with the new fair volunteer coordinator (once one is in place.) She can assist with volunteer check-in.
- Colleen will be a back-up to Rebecca in Public Competitions.
- Jill indicated that she feels the Event Coordinator should also be a part of the volunteer training that occurs prior to fair.
- Mike said that he doesn't need a backup to the car show as he already has help.
- Amy wants to be added to barns break-down/load out responsibilities.

### Annual Document Review- Strategic Plan, Management Agreement, Bylaws and Conflict Resolution Procedures

Members indicated that they had a chance to review all of the documents; no changes are needed, keep them "as is."

### Holding a Three or Four Day Fair Discussion

Jill noted that suppliers want to fulfill a four day fair contract and make each day strong. The infrastructure stays the same; most costs are in the entertainment, security, and ticketing realm.

We need to build-up Thursday.

The carnival provider may only want to do a three day fair.

Brandi made a motion to hold a four day fair in 2022 with more discussion on the carnival's participation to be held at next month's meeting. Shannon seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Tamra said that there is discussion underway concerning the county's Economic Development program to support/embrace the fair's Made in Marion efforts; would like to see local cottage industries become a partner with the fair. Tamra asked Denise to add this item to the December 16 BOC/fair board work session agenda. Ken made a motion to approach the commissioners about the county's economic development program partnering with the fair; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

## **VII. December Strategic Plan Items**

1.2.1 *Board members set individual goals to recruit new vendors/sponsors to the fair.* Members agreed the wording needed changing. It has been reworded to, “Reminder to members to pursue recruiting new vendors and sponsors for the upcoming fair.”

1.2.2 *Review pricing structure for vendors.* Jill said that some commercial vendors’ businesses did not survive the pandemic. Jill is concerned that we won’t have the numbers we’ve had in the past. She recommends keeping the 2021 modified prices, not reverting back to the 2019 standard fees. It was suggested that this be brought back to the next meeting for approval. The food vendor rates will remain the same as they were not changed for the 2021 fair.

2.1.5 *Reminder to vote on fair theme in January (if applicable.)* Not applicable.

3.2.3 *Identify carnival vendor as needed (next RFP fall of 2022.)* Not needed.

3.2.4 *Identify security/ticket taking agency as needed (next RFP fall of 2022.)* Not needed.

5.5.2 *Make Board of Commissioners work session presentation.* Scheduled for December 16 at 9:30 AM in the commissioners’ board room.

5.2.3 *Review Bylaws and Conflict Resolution Procedures.* Done in this meeting.

## **VIII. Ingalls Reports**

Jill indicated that Ingalls and Associates are trying to “get their finger on the pulse” of what is going on in the market. They are considering new inventory and possibly doing a Quest component for adults, improving the STEAM game.

Signage needs updating; some of the field signs have been disintegrating and they’ve had to toss them. They won’t be putting them up in all of the same locations that they’ve done in the past. However, some in the farming community like to put up field signs on their property.

They are reviewing and updating the fair web pages.

They are working on sponsorship packages.

**Meeting Adjourned: 8:13 PM**