

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

Marion County Fair Board
Monthly Meeting- By Zoom
February 03, 2021 5:30 PM

In Attendance

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

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

Guests: Jill & Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Melanie McCabe, 4H

Staff: Tamra Goettsch, Community Services Department Director

I. **Call to Order/Introductions**

II. **Approval of January 6, 2021 Meeting Summary Notes.** Mark made a motion to accept the notes; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

The request was made to add an agenda item under Special Interests- *New Entertainment Concept for 2021 Fair*. Mark made a motion to add the agenda item; Pam seconded. Motion passed.

III. **4H/FFA Reports**

4H- Melanie McCabe

- Nothing new; waiting for decisions to be made.
- Enrolling new members.
- February is Marion County 4H Trivia month; the activity is occurring on Facebook.
- There is a beef weigh-in this Saturday February 6.
- Participation numbers are currently down slightly.

FFA- Amy Goulter-Allen

- Opening up schools, but it is restricted to limited hours and the number of kids.
- The state convention is in March, it will be virtual.

IV. **Financial Report-** Brandi Crandall

There are no major changes for the month; minor changes include:

- A \$78 adjustment under Miscellaneous Advertising regarding a refund for the Liberty Street banner fee as we didn't use it. (Denise had sent out an email explaining this previously.)
- Investment interest earnings
- Long distance charges
- Public Officials bonds paid
- Administrative charges

Mark made a motion to approve the Financial Report as presented; Ken seconded the motion. Motion passed.

V. Items of Special Interest

Added agenda item- *New Entertainment Concept for 2021 Fair*- Joel Conder

Joel reminded folks that the fair board had decided to not have big name entertainment for the 2021 fair, instead just engage local entertainment. Joel proposes to pay the booking fee out of his own personal funds at no cost to the fair for bringing in a big name act. He is willing to pick up the entire cost for putting on the event. He indicated that he had presented this concept to Tamra who had taken the idea to Legal Counsel. Legal said that we already have a contract with Romeo Entertainment to do the booking for our fair. Joel said that he subsequently spoke with Romeo Entertainment and that they are willing to wave that contract.

Tamra said that she checked with Legal to see that this is do-able; she has not spoken personally with Romeo. She found that it is possible to amend the Romeo contract and not be in breach of contract. The fair would be released and Joel would work with Romeo instead. However, Legal is concerned that the fair board members are public officials and need to comply with ethics and procurement rules. We cannot “pick and choose” vendors or service providers. Legal indicated that an exemption of the procurement rules is possible.

To change the contract from Romeo to Joel for producing a concert, Joel has the potential not only to expend money, but also to make money. This opportunity would therefore need to be put out for bid. The safest way to protect all parties is to do an open 7 day, procurement process. We would review all bids to ensure that they were compliant with Oregon’s procurement rules.

The fair board needs to make a determination as to the process they want to move forward with and give an approval. This would then need to go before the county commissioners for approval at a regular board session.

Tamra went on to say that this would be considered an “event inside of the event.” The fair board has done such in the past with the Latino concert a few years back. Joel would need to be under contract with the fair and he would need to initiate a package proposal as anyone else would.

Joel indicated that he would hold the concert at the LB Day Amphitheater and that he would be responsible for any costs incurred in putting on the event.

Discussion followed:

- Joel would use Dean Sweeney, of Sweeney Promotions, to develop sponsors for the event.
- The issue was raised about there being a conflict with concert promoters going after the usual fair sponsors and therefore competing for the same dollars with this being an “event within an event.”
- Joel proposes a separate ticket event, from gate entry to the fair, for the concert.
- The fair would need to receive a percentage of the concert ticket sales for being allowed to use the grounds for a concert during the fair.
- The question was asked of Joel whether he was considering this as a donation or is he taking on a “risk” and would seek reimbursement. Joel responded that he hoped that through sponsorship and ticket sales that he would “get his money back; or breakeven at least.”

- If the concert event is successful and money is made, Joel would benefit from the event.
- We would need to modify the current marketing plan as it does not include reach for a big name event. This will have budget impacts as currently it is gauged down for a potential virtual fair. It would need to be shared, or unified, marketing.
- Ingalls would not be interested in providing a list of sponsors as the fair does not do targeted sponsorship; it is a pool of sponsor money. The fair board budgets for the fair and then the Ingalls attempt to get as much sponsor revenue as possible.
- The plan for COVID modifications changes things dramatically when adding this event; getting folks moving all the way to the amphitheater through the fairgrounds could incur greater costs to the fair.
- In staying on top of the legal requirements for COVID, “the duty of care” is still unknown. How much control will the fair have over its grounds?
- Jill indicated that they’ve currently gotten quotes for a smaller stage and sound adjusting for local entertainment only. She however, did say that this can still be changed.
- We currently have Fair Plans A, B, C, D; this event would add another layer and we would need to come up with additional plans to consider the impact on the fair.
- It was asked if there is a drop dead date in which we could get out of the contract if we end up with only a virtual fair. Answer-most contracts do have a COVID “Force Majeure” clause if no mass gatherings are allowed. This provides protection for both parties, the venue and the artist.
- There would be no additional expense to the fair for the use of the amphitheater as our rental fee is for the whole grounds and all of the structures contained therein.
- With a larger footprint, this will also increase security costs as more man power would be needed. Joel indicated that he would pick up any, and all, costs associated with the event.
- There are currently families being housed at the fairgrounds; those folks will be gone by July. The Marion County Fair has rights to the grounds for two weeks covering setup and break down. (Tamra will double-check this with Kim, the State Fair Interim Director.)
- It was suggested that the fair wouldn’t go out for a loan to make this event happen. This raises the question as to why we would be willing to go this route with Joel; why is this a good option when the fair had decided in past discussions not to have a big name act for the 2021 fair?
- The fair has events within an event that come with established participants like company picnics, the church service, and the talent show.
- The act Joel would bring in is Randy Houser, the same act we identified for last year’s fair.
- This event would only occur if Plan A, a regular fair occurred.
- With all of the future events that are being cancelled because of COVID, is this a realistic conversation to be having at this time?
- Tamra will elements of this discussion back to Legal Counsel for further consideration, specifically the marketing and sponsorship components and the impact on Ingalls and Associates’ responsibilities.
- Joel indicated that he has a drop dead of February 23 to make a verbal commitment to the artist.

Pam made a motion for Tamra to move forward in researching the possibility of this event including discussions with Legal Counsel about the fair board’s concerns; Mark seconded the motion. Motion passed. Tamra will bring her findings back to the fair board who will then make a recommendation to the board of commissioners.

The fair board will hold a special meeting for the discussion; Tamra will send out a virtual poll to find out when everyone is available.

OFA (Oregon Fairs Association) Convention Updates

Amy said that she went to a couple of sessions. She talked with one of the acts (service members.) She felt good about the things she attended. Folks seemed hopeful for the coming fair year. There was a problem with the link for getting into the Area II meeting so many folks couldn't attend.

Mike said that the OFA lobbyist is trying to get an increase in the funds given to fairs. Jill said that there is going to be a request for a 1% increase; the argument being that the fairgrounds have really stepped up in their response to wildfire assistance.

Colleen enjoyed Senator Betsy Johnson's enthusiasm for county fairs. She also enjoyed seeing one of the service member's roving act.

COVID Restrictions Update- Jill Ingalls

She attends OHA (Oregon Health Authority) updates. Tomorrow, Feb. 4, there should be some new information given.

Commercial Exhibitor Booth Fees- Jill Ingalls

If we have a Plan A live fair, commercial exhibitors booth fees will remain the same, ranging from \$275-\$325. We will refund partial fees if we end up with a modified or virtual fair. If we only have a virtual fair, Jill suggests reducing the cost of a booth; she recommends \$75 for a virtual booth. The vendor would have an on-line presence as long as the virtual fair is live.

Mark made a motion to set the virtual fair commercial exhibitor booth fee at \$75; Ken seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Jill suggested she will reach out to the "Etsy type" folks to participate so we can "boost" their notice.

Ovation Awards- Jill Ingalls

She would like to see fair board members nominate folks for the Oregon Festival and Events Association (OFEA) Ovation Awards. These recognize those that are the best in the events business across the state of Oregon. There are many nomination categories. She said that Denise has already drafted something for one of the categories. Categories that we might participate in are Volunteer of the Year, Event of the Year (wildfire evacuation event?), Sponsor of the year, etc. Jill said that she cannot participate in producing these as it would be a conflict of interest for her. Scott said that anyone can access the award forms (categories and parameters) on-line at Oregonfestivals.org. The deadline for submitting is February 10.

The OFEA conference registration is now open; it's a virtual event to be held on March 5 and 6. They will be using the same Event Hub platform as Oregon Fairs Association used for their conference. The registration fee is \$99. Denise can help with getting a person registered.

VI. Strategic Plan Items- February

1.2.6 *Negotiate agreements with State Fair on parking and fairgrounds rental include dates for move-in/move-out.* Jill has been in contact with the state fair folks, telling them of our intentions. Our dates are penciled in. Tamra will ask Kim for confirmation that we are on the books for holding the fair.

2.1.9 *New fair logo for fair.* The logo has already been updated, adding *Made in Marion*. Jill sent out an image of a suggested newsletter header, "Happenings." There was a general positive response to it. She is working with Jolene Kelley, out of the Board of Commissioners Office, on a new product, a newsletter for fair fans. A different newsletter will be sent to those that participate in the fair (public competitions, volunteers, etc.) This will be sent from Marion County's server.

2.2.4 *Explore other venues (library/mall displays, chamber press outlets, Saturday Market, First Wednesday, Iris Festival, etc.)* Jill said they try to find new events that they can attend to promote the fair. Many of these are not happening now with COVID but they'll keep their eyes open in case something opens up.

2.2.5 *Target chamber newsletter articles.* Jill said that this will be a coordinated effort with Jolene Kelly. They want to get others to sign up for the newsletter; she will try to cross reference with other agencies. These are important items in the COVID times marketing strategies.

2.2.6 *Create activities that draw cross-cultural participants.* Ingalls have "been in survival mode", so haven't looked at many new things. Perhaps do an on-line, virtual talent contest with potential cultural classes; however, there are inherent challenges with the bandwidth. If you have ideas, please let Tamra, Denise, or Jill know.

Colleen suggested a resource might be OLLN- Oregon Latinos Leaders Network; Jose Dominguez and Roland Herrera are potential contacts. Jill thinks that the talent show committee coordinator is already reaching out to Roland.

3.2.10 *Present fair layout (including booths) to fair board.* Jill said that we will use the same layout as in the past. It won't be changed until it is known what the 2021 fair will look like. However it will change if the amphitheater is included in the footprint this year.

4.3.4 *Update or develop MOU with public competitions animal groups (pygmy goats, llamas, mini herefords, etc.)* Shannon said that she will contact them once we know if we are having a regular fair, Plan A.

Our drop dead dates for changing to a different plan level are A- April 1st, B- April 25, and C- May 30. Plan D is an all virtual fair. Jill said that they are basically planning for all four fairs; they remove elements vs. adding elements.

VII. Ingalls Reports:

Scott said that with the four fair plans, he's reaching out to the sponsors with four packages. He will start at the top level. When the fair notches down a little, he will reduce the package with the sponsor.

Jill said that the public competitions coordinator meetings are going well. She has found a new textiles superintendent, Colleen Roberts. Colleen is currently a superintendent for multiple other fairs. She is already looking over the classes to see what might need changing. Jill is working with Melinda to get Colleen, and her team, into the volunteer system. Irene Taylor has confirmed that she will be the superintendent for photography; she has been working alongside Glen Bledsoe in the past.

Mark said that he has been in conversation with some folks regarding recruiting a superintendent for foods.

Ingalls are attending lots of meetings with discussions on what the future holds.

VIII. Other

Colleen noted that the Iris Festival is having trouble finding a carnival provider. Scott responded that 3-4 of the carnivals have shut down in the past year. Existing carnivals aren't interested in going to small venues anymore. MC Fair is probably the smallest they will go to.

Rebecca is interested in joining the Public Competitions Coordination Committee; Jill will send her the needed information and include her in all communications.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:15 PM