

*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

January 7, 2026 5:30 PM

**Meeting Convened:** 5:40 PM

**I. Call to Order/Introductions**

In Attendance

**Members:** Joe Billington, Dana Castano, Brandi Crandall, Amy Goulter-Allen, Shannon Gubbels, Pam Zielinski

**Guests:** Jill and Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates; Melanie McCabe, 4h; Monica Baker, Silverton FFA

**Staff:** Chip Bury, Sarah Coutley, Laura McClellen, Kelli Weese

II. **Public Comments-** None

III. **Key Volunteer Interviews**

Patrick McKenzie and Jeff Simons were interviewed for a key volunteer position. It was suggested that we include job descriptions when recruiting for key volunteers, advertising what types of job responsibilities we are looking to fill. Patrick wants to assist with the barns, but we have plenty of people working on the back-end in the barns area.

Sarah suggested that the fair board identify their goals along with what areas they need support in. A job description can be built once this information is available.

Jill said we could use help with the community stage and connecting the urban side of the community with the fair; another area is reaching the educational sector, connecting with the schools.

It was decided to recommend Jeff Simons to the Board of Commissioners to fill the role of a Key Volunteer as he has years of experience volunteering at our fair and is willing to assist in the front-end (public competitions, information booths, Will Call, etc.) where we currently need help.

The fair board recommends that Patrick McKenzie Jr. be encouraged to consider becoming a general volunteer at the fair where he can gain Marion County Fair volunteer experience. The fair board recognizes he has interest/expertise in working in the back-end (barns/livestock area). We currently have that area covered with existing personnel and aren't looking for additional help.

#### **IV. Approval of November 22, 2025, and December 3, 2025 Meeting Summary Notes**

Brandi made a motion to approve the November 22 meeting summary notes with the correction of the spelling of Dana's last name; Dana seconded. Motion passed.

Brandi made a motion to approve the December 3 meeting summary notes; Amy seconded. Motion passed.

#### **V. Election of Board Treasurer**

Shannon said she has talked with Dana about filling the role of Fair Board Treasurer. She understands that Dana cannot do late hours during the fair and that Dana is willing to present the financial report in the monthly meetings.

Dana said she will do it, but she's not excited about it. However, she realizes someone on the fair board needs to fill the treasurer's position.

Brandi said that the fair time process can be modified as she changed it over time from how she was originally trained. She is available to train the new treasurer at the coming fair. She wants to pass the information on to the next person so that they can do it the following year when she may not be available.

We can ask security to take on more responsibility in this area; there may be a cost associated.

in the future we can recruit for someone who is really interested in filling the treasurer position.

It was suggested that someone from the county's finance department could assist. This was tried in the past; however, the unusual hours were problematic for the county.

Brandi made a motion to elect Dana Castano as the 2026 Fair Board Treasurer; Amy seconded. Motion passed.

#### **VI. Financial Report-**

No one was available to present the financial report. This will be moved to next month's meeting.

##### Budget Change Request Forms

Amy made a motion to approve the budget change request regarding the Event Coordinator's contract fee increases on line items 525110, 525945, 525715 for a total of \$3210; Dana seconded. Motion passed

Amy made a motion to approve the budget change request form to increase the fee for Microsoft 365 (line item 525449) by \$940 adjusting to meet the annual fee to \$1440; Brandi seconded. Motion passed.

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

4H- Melanie McCabe

Then beef weigh-in is scheduled for Superbowl Sunday.

New year, all students who want to participate in the Marion County Fair must complete a record book which tracks what they do throughout the year on their project. This will help with skill development, keeping good records, and resume building. The club leaders will assist students with this during their regular meetings.

The 4H website now has educational videos available on their 4H You Tube channel. Most of the presenters are current, or previous, 4H members.

FFA- Monica Baker

All of the chapters are getting ready for their upcoming speaking events.

The Mt. Angel chapter doesn't currently have an advisor, but they should have one by fair time.

### **VIII. Items of Special Interest**

Turkey Races- Jill Ingalls

In addition to the pony rides and petting zoo that the fair board has already approved having at the 2026 fair, that company is willing to bring in turkey races. It will cost another \$1500 for three shows a day.

The racing pigs folks are trying to put a run back together for 2027. Jill let them know our fair would be interested.

Intercept Survey- Jill Ingalls

The next survey will include similar questions to the 2019 survey.

Variables:

- It could be a marketing expense.
- Hire temporary staff to conduct it.
- Have a community group conduct the survey for a donation. (Would still need some staff to assist including a supervisor.)
- It would cost approximately \$24-25 an hour in hard costs per person for a total of \$4900.
- It would need a minimum of 450 surveys for a good sample.
- Get 4H students, or interns, involved.
- Can put it off for subsequent years; however, it's good to do a survey every couple of years.

The purpose of the survey is to determine how we are doing. Are they happy with things? How can we improve?

Some of the answers from the previous survey were difficult to compile; will restructure the questions to get better answers. Will try to keep it similar enough to be able to compare the results to the 2019 survey.

Melanie is willing to help develop the survey.

Jill wants the survey to identify the “value” the fair brings to our citizens. The Ingalls have tried hard to build value outside of the big name entertainment. Events that had the national acts as their draw, aren’t doing well.

It was suggested to have a QR code for a person to always have access to a “How are we doing?” questionnaire. This would be different than the intercept survey.

Have a QR code on the booths, or places around the fair, and on the day sheets.

Jill said that we already have one that goes to our website to see the fair schedule. She cautioned we don’t want to have too many QR codes.

We can reach anyone that buys a ticket on-line; Afton can send them a direct message regarding the fair.

Kelli suggested that we need to determine if an intercept survey would impact the Ingalls’ contract.

## **IX. Ingalls Report**

Our entertainment buyer is looking for a second act for Saturday. We already have lined up Casey Donahew and Radio Ready.

Sponsorships- Scott doesn’t know how it’s going to go for the coming fair with the economy the way it is. He was pleasantly surprised how well we did last year.

Scott said we will be meeting with the state fair this coming Friday (January 9) to review the work orders we submit. We want to confirm policy, procedures, parking, camping, etc. We will have a better idea of how things will be “structurally” after that.

Shannon said she participated in the state fair planning meeting. (Also in attendance were the Ingalls, Chip, and Denise.) She said she has asked Denise to reconvene the state fair planning committee that was established in the past to discuss the future without a trade for rent.

The security contract is moving through the processes; it is with Finance. We cannot announce the successful bidder yet.

It was suggested we need documentation as to what is said in the upcoming state fair meeting. Jill said she does a follow-up email after the meeting that says this is what we agreed to. The work orders we submit are a communication tool. The state fair edits the work order and sends it back. It goes back and forth between us communicating any needed changes.

Shannon said at fair time, we need to be sure and take pictures of problem areas.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to have a risk manager on-site to address safety concerns with the state fair.

Scott indicated that even if we were told early on it will be one way, it may be changed by the state fair at any time. We’ve tried to have one point of contact; however, the state fair’s CEO may weigh-in and indicate that something needs to be done differently than what the contact originally told us.

At the meeting, those in attendance will try and capture notes as to what was said.

Kelli said if we want to get the BOC involved with our communication with the state fair, we need something to point to that needs addressing, instead of “hearsay.” We need to capture specifics.

Jill said that her communication practice has been to email them, capturing things in writing, but they typically don’t respond.

**X. January Strategic Plan Items**

1.2.8 *Review theme days (Honor Day, Ag Day, and Family Day)* Friday is the only day that doesn’t have a theme.

2.1.2 *Build on broad-based and segmented marketing approach (TV, radio, internet/social networking, newspaper ads, yard/field signs, banners, etc.)* On-going

2.1.5a *Vote on fair theme (if applicable).* N/A

3.2.5 *Identify and coordinate ground crews to do set-up and takedown.* The county has received assurance that the sheriff’s office will assist with the 2026 fair. Scott said that Deputy Kadin has already texted him to check on event details.

4.1.2 *Work with event coordinator on potential entertainment and attractions as a draw for fair attendance* Already done; it was suggested to move this item to October.

4.2.1 *Identify Performing Arts Coordinator for community stage.* Have a key volunteer do this. Put together a job description for the community stage coordinator. It depends on the person’s capabilities as to how much they can do. *(Per Denise, we already have a Performing Arts Coordinator job description completed.)*

4.2.2 *Contract with sound and lights contractor.* *(Per Denise, the current contract is through 2027.)*

4.6.1 *Coordinate dog related activities (flyball, Rescue Row, K-9 demos, etc.)* – Flyball wants to come back if they can do the camping as was done last year, they really liked it.

We have not done Rescue Row in years.

It was asked what is this item’s purpose? Answer- previously, there was a desire to have the dog shelter more involved with the fair and coordinate parades and contests and such. It wasn’t very successful as it takes a lot of coordination. Also, the logistics to have a citizen’s dog on the grounds is difficult.

Jill said this is just a part of the “attractions” category that the Ingalls do naturally.

It was decided to remove this item from the strategic plan.

4.7.1 *Develop veteran's recognition program with community-based coordinator.* Greg has this covered.

4.7.2 *Convene STEAM partners to organize and develop STEAM projects.* We have the signs, a trivia game, and a sponsor.

**XI. Other**

Chip indicated that the work session for March 19 is being moved further out per the BOC's request. We will let the fair board know when the new date is identified.

Chip introduced Laura McClellum. She said she has been working with the county for 5 years. She was at the dog shelter for 2 years and has been at the Community and Economic Development Department for 3 years now. Her experience with the fair is she has helped in the fair office for a couple of years. Last year, she shadowed Sara doing volunteer coordination. This coming year she expects to be doing more at the fair. Amy noted that Laura also works with the 4H Service District.

**XII. Meeting Adjourned: 7:12 PM.**