

*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,

March 6, 2024 5:30 PM

**Meeting Convened:** 5:30 PM

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

#### In Attendance

**Board Members:** Dana Castano, Brandi Crandall, Amy Goulter-Allen, Shannon Gubbels, Greg Martin, Pam Zielinski

**Key Volunteer:** Rebecca Turner

**Guests:** Joseph Billington, FFA; Jill & Scott Ingalls, Ingalls & Assoc.; Melanie McCabe, 4H; Victor Sanchez, board member applicant

**Staff:** Denise Clark, Sarah Coutley, Chris Eppley, Cody Walterman, Kelli Weese

### **II. Public Comments- None**

**III. Approval of February 7, 2024 Meeting Summary notes;** Greg made a motion to approve the notes; Amy seconded. Motion passed.

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

4H- Melanie

All of their judges have been hired except for the **swine** judge. There is not a lot happening regarding fair.

FFA- Joseph

The students are figuring out what animals to bring to fair.

### **V. Financial Report- Denise**

The changes reflected in the color blue indicate changes requested from the retreat discussion. Those items in yellow are the year-to-date changes.

Brandi had previously asked why the Operations costs had jumped up \$20,000. Denise said she looked into it and that the formula was working correctly. It had to do with re-organizing items (moving from other categories into here) and some of those items increased in cost.

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

Budget Change Request Form- Jill

Jill indicated that we are over budget on Agfest. The figure is over budget by \$11 at \$511. This figure includes both the booth fee and the volunteer tickets purchased. (She said she may need to buy more tickets in the future if there are more volunteers.)

The question was raised as to when a budget change request form is needed. Discussion ensued. Denise was asked to draft a policy regarding minor line-item changes and include a set threshold. This will allow for a minor item not to have to be brought back to the fair board, instead can be approved by the county manager, Kelli Weese.

Amy made a motion to approve the budget change request form, increasing the line item for Agfest by \$11; Dana seconded. Motion approved.

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

##### Fair Volunteer Recognition- Sarah

Sarah noted that there is \$500 in the budget for fair volunteer recognition. She asked how the fair board would like that utilized. Board discussion followed.

- Members now receive a t-shirt; one free admission ticket for another day separate from their volunteer day; and snacks in the hospitality room.
- Have a light meal at the evening orientation and on in-take night for those participating.
- Perhaps a sponsor would want to provide food.
- Greg suggested giving them a “challenge coin.”

##### Strategic Plan Suggested Changes- Kelli

Following the retreat, folks were told any changes that they wanted made to the strategic plan could be brought forward to this meeting. The strategic plan is a “working/living document” that is reviewed in each monthly meeting. If something needs changing, we make the recommendation within the meeting. No changes were suggested.

##### Eventhub- Denise

Denise said that Eventhub has been launched and it is going well. All exhibitors (food vendors, commercial vendors and authors’ table) participants will submit their application through this platform. She manually entered all of the existing vendors that had already submitted a hard copy application for the coming fair. All they need to do is go in and confirm their information and proceed from there. She hasn’t received any pushback from vendors.

#### **VII. Ingalls’ Report- Jill**

They are considering the new \$5 parking fee and its impact on gate admission. She did some research to compare what other county fairs are doing. Benton County (which is the most similar to our fair) charges \$10 for admission and a \$5 parking fee. Linn County has a \$10 admission fee and charges \$12 to park. She said that fairgoers are used to paying for parking. The State fair charges \$10 to park. Discussion ensued. The fair board feels that there is no need to adjust our gate admission of \$9 at this time. Jill said they will “advertise aggressively” the opportunity to purchase discounted tickets early.

Kelli said that she has received a response from Kim at state fair. They are willing to work with us on the parking fees. Fair staff and fair board members will receive free parking passes. Vendors will be charged \$2. 4H/FFA participants camping will hopefully obtain a weeklong parking pass for \$2. If they are not camping, it will cost \$2 per day.

We still need to clarify the process for getting parking passes into participant's hands. Jill will work with Dani (state fair) on logistics. The state fair will give us x amount of parking tickets to sell. Jill will investigate whether we can return any we don't use.

Scott confirmed that the large DSP picnic will be returning again this year; they will be charged \$2 a car for parking.

Jill announced that the All Alaskan Racing Pigs will not be coming this year; she is in the process of looking for something else to replace that event.

Scott said that sponsorship is going well. He said we lost one account because their business is slowing down. He is in the process of prospecting for new ones.

## **VIII. March Strategic Plan Items**

*3.2.10 Work with PW van pool to arrange for Big Name Entertainment transportation van if needed.* Jill said that Pat, our entertainment buyer, will see if it can be included in the bands' contract. It was suggested to change the wording in the strategic plan to "Arrange transportation for big name entertainment."

*4.1.1 Respond to requests to participate (entertain) that come into the fair office; relay to Entertainment Coordinator for a response. Hold meeting between the Event coordinator and the Entertainment Coordinator to identify openings on the main stage.* Denise explained the new process for submitting an application to be on the stage. An entertainer completes the application found on-line and Jill's office screens and selects the participants from the submitted applications.

Jill noted that she doesn't solicit stage entertainers. She does send information to performing arts groups. The Community Stage will have people on all days of the fair. There will be more entertainment this year than in the past having the two stages.

### *4.3.3 Discuss any needed changes for 4H/FFA*

Shannon will talk with Melanie about any needed changes. Melanie indicated that the 4H/county fair contract is good until 2025; she has reviewed it for accuracy. Any changes for the fair will be work order adjustments and placement of items. The new rabbit cages have been ordered; they should arrive the week before fair.

Jill said that Andrea, the new life stock agent for state fair, wants to have a meeting. They usually request that we set the barns up the way they want them for state fair. It is difficult as we don't set up the pens the same way they do. Jill will schedule a meeting; Melanie and Shannon want to participate.

Melanie said one of the differences is that the state fair uses one show ring, our fair uses four. She said the fair participant numbers are up this year. She doesn't want the bleachers staged in the pavilion as they were last year as placing the bleachers there doesn't work for our needs.

4.4.1 *Inventory ribbons, order exhibit tags, update dept. classes per superintendents' requests.* In process.

4.4.4 *Place Public Competitions application and information on web site.* Rebecca suggested April 15 be the target date for posting the handbook on-line. She also has some leads for creative arts and floral superintendents.

4.5.4 *Vendor issues- complaints; hand holding; sales (sell booth); vendor/fair expectations; improve inside/outside layouts.* The state fair has done some remodeling to the exhibit hall. Scott noted that Columbia Hall has new sliding roll-up doors. There is also a new HVAC system.

The state fair has indicated that they are not going to allow camping in Oak Grove this year. Shannon asked that fair camping be put on next month's meeting agenda.

## **IX. Other**

Denise said the food vendor applications are due March 22. After that date, the food vendor committee meets to review and score the applications. She asked who wanted to be on the committee. Interested parties were Amy, Dana, Victor, and Brandi. (Denise and Jill will also participate.) Denise will send out a Doodle poll for finding a meeting time. If a quorum is present, the meeting will need to be publicly noticed.

Denise said that there is a commercial vendor asking for approval to sell knives, from pocket to hunting type. She also sells plushies, purses, jewelry, and Anime swords. The Fair board said that they will not allow the knives to be sold. Denise will relay this back to the vendor.

Kelli asked the fair board for their response to the retreat facilitators from Salem Leadership Foundation- Sam Skillern and Kyle Dickinson. They responded they liked the facilitators and having a "working lunch" was beneficial.

Kelli said the 2025 RFP for Event Coordination and Marketing is drafted and being reviewed by Finance. They will publish it next week; it will close April 17. She will seek a recommendation from the fair board on May 1. She asked who would like to be on the review subcommittee. Interested parties are Rebecca, Brandi, Shannon, and Amy. She is looking at the week of April 22 for the review.

Victor, Dana, and Greg's appointment to the fair board will be acknowledged next Wednesday, March 13 in the Board of Commissioners' regular board session.

The Fair Board/BOC work session will be held **April 18 at 9:30 AM.**

Jill said that she is working on setting up a meeting with the BOC to plan Thursday's opening day activities. She would like to see some new ideas developed for that day.

Greg said he appreciated being able to attend the recent Oregon Festivals and Events Association (OFEA) conference in Seaside. He recommends others attend in the future. He went to some interesting sessions including a review of the incident in which shots were fired at a large event; non-confrontational techniques and de-escalation; and what happened to horse racing at fairs. He also learned the difference between a tribute band and a cover band. The tribute band's music is all from one artist; a cover band plays various artists' music.

Dana asked if we are advertising to find additional key volunteers. Denise said it is always listed on the county's volunteer page, so it's an on-going opportunity. She said there is no scheduled press release for it. However, she can see that one goes out. Everyone was reminded to reach out to their field of influence to get more key volunteers.

**X. Adjourned- 6:43 PM**