

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

October 2, 2024 5:30 PM

Meeting Convened: 5:33 PM

Call to Order/Introductions

In Attendance

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

Guests: Joseph Billington, Jill and Scott Ingalls

Staff: Denise Clark, Sarah Coutley, Kelli Weese

I. Public Comments: None

II. Approval of September 4, 2024 Meeting Summary Notes- Greg made a motion to approve the notes; Pam seconded. Motion passed.

III. Financial Report- Brandi Crandall

Brandi indicated that all year-to-date items (changes since last month's report) are highlighted in yellow. All the changes are money that has come in associated with the 2024 fair. Denise added that the fields highlighted in blue are those that are still outstanding. Greg made a motion to accept the budget report as presented; Brandi seconded. Motion passed.

IV. 4H/FFA Reports- Joseph Billington and Shannon Gubbels

4H-

- The Farm Bureau conference room has been reserved for the fair board retreat 11/2.
- 4H registration opened 10/1 for returning members and ends in January; new members have until April to sign-up.

FFA-

- They just held their leadership camp.
- Members are getting ready to attend nationals.

V. Items of Special Interest:

Rules Governing Commercial Vendors Document Update- Denise

The question was raised as to the meaning of "ample time" regarding the amount of time the vendor has to respond. After discussion, it was decided to remove the "ample time" statement as the concept is covered under number 3 "Refund Policy." Pam made a motion to approve the updated commercial vendor rules with the suggested edit; Greg seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Proposed 2025 Acts/Attractions- Jill

Since the last board meeting many attraction options have come up. Jill said that there isn't time to delay this discussion until the retreat as acts are going fast. She referred to the document she had previously sent out with suggestions for attractions, walk-around and strolling acts. We are in a "back-up" position for the racing pigs. The

blacktop area was empty this year because the circus couldn't set up on the blacktop. Jill said that listed are preliminary quotes to get us started; she needs to get acts booked soon.

Suggested attractions are:

- Circus Imagination for the second year.
- Peppy's Waterpalooza- interactive water tables for kids which helps when we have hot weather. They do require a tent. This would replace Brad's Reptiles.
- Puzzlemania- Has been with us many years. This works well with STEAM. They "swap out" a couple of new puzzles each year.

Jill has been researching petting zoos. She has found a couple, but their references are coming back just "okay." Maybe we should have a neighboring county bring in some animals. We need to fill space in the Forster Pavilion.

Brandi made a motion to approve \$34,400 for purchasing the suggested attractions; Dana seconded. Motion passed. Jill noted that if we aren't able to get the Alaskan racing pigs, she is looking for another animal act such as a dog act. A suggested act for the historic horse arena would be Horses- Soul of Gladius. The horses would be on display outside of the show times. This act costs \$23,000 for an hour-long show for two nights. Friday night might conflict with the 4H schedule and she doesn't know if we could make it work. We will discuss it more at the upcoming retreat. (It was suggested that when drafting the new budget, to plug in this dollar figure for such an act.)

Big Name Entertainment- Jill

The Big Name Entertainment Committee has been looking at possibilities. Currently a bid of \$35,000 is in for the country group, Shenandoah, for Saturday night. (We have since learned that Shenandoah is no longer available.) Have a pop rock group on Friday night, such as a rock band of the 90's. It could be a tribute or the original act. Tributes cost around \$15-\$20,000; an original band is around \$45,000.

Discussion Ensued:

- The economy is changing, spending money both on a big name act and a major horse event might not be wise. Perhaps we shouldn't spend \$45,000 on a rock band.
- A tribute band is a better investment, less risk.
- Provide more value on other attractions including adding things into the arena.

Brandi made a motion to have the entertainment buyer look for a tribute band costing up to \$20,000 or an original rock/pop group up to \$40,000. This is to be brought back to the entertainment committee for a decision/approval; Greg seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VI. Ingalls Report:

They are "wrapping up" things for final closing reports. They are also being intentional in keeping track of what's going on in the industry.

VII. Strategic Plan Items- October

1.2.6 *Negotiate agreement with state fair.* The state fair working group met yesterday. The group went over the state fair agreement and amendments. Kelli will be editing a new agreement; this is a "long-term process." We want to improve our communication and relationship with the state fair. The last fair, under the current agreement, will be

the 2027 fair. We need to have something ready by the end of 2026. We want to make things easier in the coming years and determine what it is going to cost us in rental for future fairs. The next meeting will be held before we meet with the Board of Commissioners (BOC) in our work session. If we have a state fair “ask” for the BOC, we’ll be ready.

2.1.4 *Maximize use of free media.* Jill said it seems a little early, however the Facebook posts are on-going.

2.1.9 *Present new fair logo.* This will be done at the retreat. We don’t necessarily have to change the theme or logo. Jill says that from a marketing standpoint, it is a branding issue. The feel for the fair shouldn’t be driven by the marketing theme, it should come from the fair board. Dana requested to see the previously suggested logos; Jill responded she would bring them.

2.2.1 *Fair board members increase public awareness.* On-going. If you are involved with an organization, spread the word. Jill can provide any materials needed. Dana is interested in attending the meetings that Salem Leadership Foundation mentioned at last year’s retreat. Greg said he will be volunteering at Agfest again this year.

5.1.2 *Identify, and submit, OFA and OFEA award nominations.* Jill said she’ll keep an eye out for deadlines. Denise said that the OFA deadline has passed. She says that she is often the one that writes them, but anyone can write a nomination. Jill said it’s okay to nominate your own organization and that this fair has won many. It was suggested to move this item from October to September in the strategic Plan.

5.2.1 *Schedule work session for annual report.* In process, scheduled for **December 12, 9:30 AM** in the commissioners’ board room.

VIII. Other:

Kelli reminded folks that the upcoming annual retreat will be held **November 2**. If you have something you’d like included on the agenda, let Denise and Kelli know.

Chris Eppley, the Community Services Department Director, is leaving our department and moving to the BOC office to become the county’s Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (CAO.)

Retreat Food

It was suggested that Denise obtain sandwiches for the retreat with everyone else bringing complimentary foods- finger foods, chips, and dessert.

The next regularly scheduled monthly board meeting (November 6) has been canceled due to the retreat being held November 2.

Greg reminded folks to submit their volunteer hours to Denise.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:45 PM.