

## Marion County Fair Board

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

### Monthly Meeting

Commissioners' Board Room, 555 Court St NE, Salem OR

January 10, 2019 5:30 PM

#### In Attendance

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

**Key Volunteers:** Bry Taylor-Campos, Amy Goulter-Allen

**Guests:** Commissioner Sam Brentano; Jill Ingalls, Ingalls & Associates, Melanie McCabe, 4H; Eric Marcuse, Romeo Entertainment Talent Buyer

**Staff:** Denise Clark, Tamra Goettsch

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

#### II. **No Public Comments**

III. Approval of Nov. 17 and Dec. 5, 2019 Meeting Summary Notes- Shannon made a motion to approve both of the meeting summary notes; Brandi seconded. Motion passed.

#### IV. **Time Sensitive Items**

Board member appointment updates- Dylan Wells resigned; Nathan Leao was not reappointed; Shannon Gubbels was re-appointed; and Mike Adams and Ken Outfleet were newly appointed.

Commissioner Sam Brentano was present to answer questions regarding the recent action by the Board of Commissioners (BOC) to not re-appoint Nathan Leao to the fair board.

The BOC is the appointing authority for all county boards, commissions, and task forces; including the fair board. Commissioner Brentano said that when he loses confidence in someone, he can't support that person being re-appointed. He indicated that he had lost confidence in Nathan.

Joel agreed that Nathan made a poor decision and acted inappropriately at the fair. In moving forward, before the BOC makes such a decision, he would like to be able to "sit down and talk about it ahead of time." He hoped that if a person isn't going to be re-appointed, they be told personally and have a discussion about the process.

Shannon felt that Nathan made a mistake that day at the fair; she indicated that he was "going through a lot" at the time. She said other fair board members have also made mistakes. She felt that this action "left a bad taste in her mouth." She agreed that if there's a concern going into re-appointments, a fair board discussion concerning this should be included in the process. She said that Nathan was blindsided and said, "People deserve grace."

Commissioner Brentano acknowledged Joel and Shannon's input, and stated that he attended the meeting tonight to represent the BOC who made the appointment decision. In the future, new county commissioner, Colm Willis, will be the new liaison for the fair.

Pam commented that the fair board had already decided at its October fair board meeting that Nathan would continue with the fair.

Tamra clarified that the re-appointment process authority lies with the BOC; they make decisions and gather information in their own way. Commissioner Brentano was present at the October fair board meeting and therefore had his own personal experience with the situation. Tamra said that state statues dictate when terms begin and end (December 31 of each year). Moving forward, Community Services Department will be changing the review and appointment process slightly by discussing upcoming re-appointments with the BOC in Sept/Oct.

Brandi expressed that everyone needs to be cognizant of how they talk with each other and also with contracted staff. She said, "We are bonded members of the county and represent the county. Everyone goes through a lot; we can't let that cloud our behavior. We have to own our behavior."

Shannon noted that the fair board has been split the last couple of years; she would like to see it go back to a more cohesive body. Joel agrees and said his number one goal is to bring the fair board back together.

Commissioner Brentano doesn't want to disparage anyone's name so that's why he is just indicating that he "lost confidence."

Tamra indicated that in the future, the process will come to the fair board early; perhaps have a peer review, or a self-assessment. Tamra is willing to meet with everyone individually if the fair board would like. Tamra and Joel can get together to come up with a proposed process. She also indicated that the fair board bylaws state that when there is an opening on the fair board, the key volunteers are the first to be considered. In this instance, she did call all fair board members about the BOC decision and the process to fill the positions, which was then followed by calling the key volunteers about their interest in the open fair board positions. From there it moved forward quickly. She noted that if the fair board positions couldn't be filled through the existing key volunteers, then it would have been necessary to go through an open public request for applications. Shannon expressed that she would have liked an email sent regarding re-appointments and appointments spelling out all that was going to happen. She said she wants "open communication." Tamra agreed that open communication is important and is why individual phone calls were made. Shannon's request for an email will be added to future appointments.

Ken indicated that he is here to serve the BOC and the fair board. Joel welcomed Ken and said everyone is pleased to have him and Mike on the fair board.

#### Eric Marcuse- talent buyer

Eric introduced himself. He's from Nashville, originally ran an artist management company. Romeo Entertainment, which has been in existence for 65 years, took over Ed Dougherty's company from this area and subsequently Eric became the talent buyer. As the talent buyer for the state fair, Eric got to know our fair. He builds the fair entertainment from a "patron's perspective." He views the fair as having four legs: animals/ag, food/commercial vendor, entertainment/attractions, and exhibits. These all have to work together. Eight years ago, Brian Silcott (State Fair Manager) asked Eric if he would help the Marion County Fair. Eric stated that Marion County's entertainment budget is "stagnate;" indicating other fairs are doubling our budget. There are supply and demand issues and Marion County is challenged geographically by its northwest location. Our fair dates are close to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, this increases the challenges. Eric wants to help us improve the program.

Brandi indicated that booking talent as early as possible is the goal. However, we are in January and we are still trying to confirm an act. She asked how the board can expedite the process as we give entertainment budget approval in

November. Answer- buying season starts in October and wraps up late spring; an October start is being aggressive. Artists will hold out on fairs while they look for better opportunities. We rarely get our first offer accepted because of the “moving target.” Also, entertainment agencies close down over the holidays.

We have country artist, Jerod Newman, confirmed for Saturday night. He had big hits in 2011-14. Now we need to determine Friday night’s act. Eric’s job is to provide any viable options. Perhaps moving our budget decision up a month earlier, such as October, could help in the future.

Jill noted that Friday night is a tough night to draw people out. She said it is a “Get off work-go out to dinner-be home early” night. Saturday night is the later night. Thursday nights are becoming the busier night for Salem's downtown core.

Shannon asked whether 90’s pop cover bands are an option for our fair. Answer- tribute acts are a challenge as they can be seen at bars, or other venues, for free. Foreigner is one of the best sellers as people are looking for that memorable experience. Harefest (held in Canby) is competition for us as it is going to be held during our fair time. (It’s usually held the weekend after us.) Eric feels that a 90’s cover band is worth exploring. The chosen acts have to be something that can’t be seen just anywhere.

Jill noted that we are looking to reach the millennial generation. There are cross-over groups that fair goers heard growing up and listening to with mom and dad.

Eric was given direction to look at the older demographics, 90’s country artists such as Blackhawk.

Eric has a contact in Portland that is willing to help us with tribute acts. He indicated that a wide demographic love country music. He said one usually caters to the core fair demographics, but it’s good to go after other targets. The younger demographics are very fickle.

#### V. **4H Report-** Melanie

Pam asked if Melanie had provided a spreadsheet of the 4H revenues and expenditures as was requested at the November work session. Denise confirmed that she has gotten the information needed from Melanie, formatted it, and now Tamra is reviewing it.

#### 4H Report:

- In the process of hiring judges.
- Education Day is happening on January 12 at the Polk County Fairgrounds.
  - 200 people are registered so far.
  - They draw participants from nearby counties.
  - There is no cost to participants.
  - Marion County has a large contingency participating.
  - This year’s topic is “selection.”
  - There are live animals and hands-on activities.
  - Horse education will be around non-competition information.
- Horse numbers have declined at the fair due to the cost of owning a horse. Static numbers (anything that doesn’t have legs) have continued to go up.
- Clover Buds’ (5-8 yrs.) numbers are growing.
- Returning members have to be registered for fair by Jan. 31; new members have until April 1.

- More horned animals (mostly goats) will be in the barns in the future; removing horns can affect the animals' breed standards.

## **FFA Report- Amy**

They are "on schedule," holding meetings, and getting ready for state convention.

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

No financial changes in the past month; the budget is the same as last presented. Pam made a motion to approve the financial report; Shannon seconded. Motion passed.

## **VII. Items of Special Interest**

### Election of Vice Chair

Shannon was nominated for vice chair by Pam; Brandi seconded. Motion passed.

### Review of the Carnival Contract

The purpose of contractor performance evaluations is for accountability to the contract components and to see improvement in performance where needed.

Jill indicated that carnival companies borrow/exchange rides with one another. State fair gave Rainier Amusements permission to camp in our gravel parking lot. Rainier employees attempted to get in for free to "help with their rides" that Funtastic borrowed. Funtastic did not back that position up. The responsibility for this problem should be shared between State Fair and Funtastic as they were not communicating with us regarding Rainier's involvement. Funtastic employees are allowed to camp behind the amphitheater; however, they also tried to drive their vehicles on the grounds during fair hours.

It was suggested a "needs improvement" category be added to the Performance Evaluation Form and that Jill make some revisions to the contract evaluation responses.

We are in year two of a two-year contract with Funtastic with an option to renew until December 2021.

### Replacing Racing Pigs

Jill indicated that the Alaskan Racing Pigs organizers won't be returning this year as they've taken on another venue. We need to look at other options. The Barnyard Adventures does a science activity that would complement STEAM activities. There is also a Pirate's Parrot Show that might be an option. Jill will look for additional attractions at the upcoming OFA convention. She also noted that there are two "good sized" sports tournaments happening in Salem on the same weekend as our fair.

## **VIII. Strategic Plan Items:**

### **January:**

1.2.8 *Review special days (Sr./Teen Day) tickets.* Will not be changing ticket prices. Denise is to add the word "prices" after "tickets." Also to change this to theme days- Honor Day, Ag Day, etc. (instead of Sr./Teen day). Shannon suggested

finding a Mother Earth News type event. Jill said a coordinator is needed for any such event. This could be rotated into the STEAM day stuff.

2.1.2 *Build on broad-based and segmented marketing approach (TV, radio, internet/social networking, newspaper ads, yard/field signs, banners, etc.)* Jill asked for an update on the fair having an Instagram account. Tamra thinks we can use Instagram; she will check with Jolene Kelly. Jill is watching a new rock radio station, the Moon, which has started up in the area.

2.1.5 *Vote on fair theme in board meeting (if applicable)*- Done

2.1.7 *Put together CH2 (county bldg.) window display.* This has been reserved for the month of June. Jill is going to put together a plan that includes “poster type stuff,” 4H, and public competitions information. Jolene Kelly has to approve the plan before it's allowed in the window.

2.1.10 *Determine date for holding BOC board session at the fair.*(This has since been confirmed that it will be held Thursday, opening day of fair.)There needs to be shade cover provided where board session is held. Commissioner Brentano would like to see more cooling mechanisms at the fair. He encouraged the fair board to come to the BOC for financial help with this. Jill found an interesting set up at the Columbia County Fair that used high poles to string up the shade cloth; very attractive. This would require engineering and there would be associated costs. The fair could invest in some water misters. The money request can be made contingent on the need for it. Joel and Tamra will work on this. Jill will put some costs together for them. This will be brought forward to the work session on January 29. (The county's supplemental budget process is due prior to the work session. Tamra submitted a request on behalf of the fair's budget needs.)

3.2.1 *Work with event coordinator to assign tasks, determine which tasks are assigned to coordinator, fair office staff, and fair board members.* Denise was asked to bring the responsibilities chart to the February meeting for identifying tasks for new members.

4.1.2 *Work with event coordinator on potential entertainment as a draw for fair attendance.* In progress; discussed previously in this meeting.

4.2.1 *Identify Talent Show Coordinator-* It is important to have a talent show at our fair as there is no place for local talent to go otherwise. The last talent show coordinators had room for improvement. Jill suggested that we can go back to KLOO to see if they might produce it as they've had some changes in their organization. Jill would like to get a local performing arts committee to organize this. It was suggested to have an assigned board member, or key volunteer, be a point person to such a committee. Tamra noted that we will be looking for more key volunteers.

4.2.2 *Contract with sound and lights contractor-* We are planning on using Cascade Sound. The stage costs will be higher; the sound costs will remain the same. Jill will try to have a hard number by next month's meeting.

4.6.1 *Coordinate dog related activities (Flyball, Rescue Row, K-9 demos, etc.)*-In process.

4.6.4 *Discuss continuing the beer garden, Pretty Baby contest, Real Heroes, Grill-off, etc.* Denise is to change beer garden wording to the “Woods.”(Move time frame for discussing this to November's retreat.) Continue the Pretty Baby contest as they are a big draw, the challenge is finding a good location for them. Maybe move them to the STEAM stage or the 4H Auditorium (on Saturday.) It was suggested changing the name; “pretty baby” is not politically correct. The Woods is being built up. Scott Ingalls is currently in discussion with sponsors and recommends that the area have sound for music

acts. Mike wants to improve the Grill-off, including adding some sponsors. Maybe have the BBQ Relief organization participate; they could also have a booth within Real Heroes.

4.7.1 *Contact Boys & Girls Club and other family organizations re: the children's area.*-Have had contact with SKEF.

### **February Strategic Plan Items:**

1.2.6 *Negotiate agreements with State Fair on parking and fairgrounds rental*- A meeting with State Fair is set for January 29 to discuss the beef barns. Tamra is working on contract amendments to edit the traded value of last year's paving project. A meeting update will be put on next month's agenda.

2.1.1 *Adopt marketing budget*- Done; Denise is to move this item to the November retreat.

2.1.9 *Present new fair theme logo to board (if applicable)*- Done

2.2.4 *Explore other venues (library/mall displays, chamber press outlets, Saturday Market, First Wednesday, Iris Festival, etc.)* Jill noted that one always has to "weigh the costs." We need to work on reaching the younger generations. Heidi is out there going to robotics clubs and school venues. Joel has contacts with Keizer Fest. The BOC has a float in the Keizer Fest parade that the fair could use for fair promotion. The float could also be used for the Stayton parade. Joel would like to see the horse and riders brought back that Denise organized in the past. She said they haven't done that for a couple of years because there hasn't been a flatbed truck and float. Jill said that Wayne White has a flatbed truck. It was suggested we could also have Ima Blueberry walking the fair route and passing out flyers.

2.2.4a *Target chamber newsletter articles.* Jill works with Jolene Kelly who gets the word out in the articles she publishes. We need to get the information to Jolene.

2.2.5 *Create activities that draw cross-cultural participants.*- This is usually in Jill's "wheel house." On Sunday the various cultural acts take the stage. Jill has talked to the state fair's cross-cultural organizer; he's located in Portland. There are a lot of high school participants who are out of school during our fair's operations. Joel suggested getting a key volunteer to organize this. The question was raised about getting the LaPantera radio station participating again. That station has changed hands; there are not many local radio stations like that anymore.

3.2.11 *Present fair layout (including booths) to fair board.* Jill said we start off the year with last year's layouts and it evolves over time depending on what attractions we have and where they are placed. Denise said that the challenge is in providing the commercial vendors a valid layout with real booth numbers for them to make booth selections when submitting their commercial booth space applications; she starts receiving booth requests in January.

4.3.4 *Update or develop MOU with public competitions animal groups (pygmy goats, llamas, mini herefords, etc.)*-This is on the Contracts Coordinator's radar. Shannon said we might need to change the ticketing for the pygmy goat participants. She is willing to get the tickets out to the coordinator ahead of time for her to distribute to the participants. They may need a "will call" set-up. If they do advance registration, Jill will help with it. Denise noted that she and Jill are working to identify all of the potential activity participants' names for developing Afton tickets. This will eliminate so many participants coming in on a generic "complimentary" ticket. This would help us track organizations' attendees.

### **IX. Other- Ingalls Reports:**

Jill noted that a lot of items are increasing in cost this year. Jill assured Melanie that she will arrange for them to have a golf cart; Melanie noted that she has money for it in her budget.

Joel again welcomed the new members (Mike and Ken) and thanked them for volunteering with the fair board.

**Meeting adjourned: 7:59 PM**