

# Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Ventura County Fairgrounds  
31st District Agricultural Association - 10 W. Harbor Blvd. - Ventura, CA 93001 - (805) 648-3376  
Website: venturacountyfair.org Contact: Leah Lacayo, Acting CEO

Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4834214737?pwd=d0FrRzVFQUIUNG9OeUxFM0FuUG5qQT09>

Join Via the phone:

1-720-707-2699

Meeting ID: 483 421 4737

Passcode: 575554

## I. Call to Order

### Roll Call

### Declaration of Recusal or Conflict of Interest

The meeting convened at 9:01 a.m. and called to order by President Lacayo.

**Directors present:** President, Leah Lacayo, Vice President, Daniel Long, Michael Bradbury, Leslie Cornejo, M. Cecilia Cuevas and Shanté Morgan-Carter.

**Staff present:** Jennifer McGuire, Incoming CEO, Jason Amelio, Sales Manager, Cristian Yepez, Accounting Officer, Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager, Shannon Patrick, Exhibits Supervisor, Megan Hook, PR & Marketing Firm and Heidi Ortiz, Executive Secretary.

**Guests Present:** Sarah Pelle, Fairs & Expositions, Charles Southwick, Fairs & Expositions, Cary Glenn, City of Ventura Economic Development Division, Carla Alvara and Alex NLN.

There were no conflicts of interest with any of the Board members that were present.

## II. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Cuevas led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## III. Welcome and Introductions of Guests and Staff

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

Cary Glenn with the City of Ventura's Economic Development Division introduced herself and was sitting in to see what was going on at the Fair.

## IV. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

In accordance with State law, the Board will not comment or otherwise consider Public Comment matters until and unless such items have been properly noticed for a future meeting.

Ms. McGuire thanked the Board for the opportunity. She is a Ventura Fair alumni; three generations: herself, her kids and her granddaughter will be showing a pig next year. The fair industry isn't a Monday through Friday, 9-5 type job and you have to love it which she

truly does. Despite what's on paper as far as percentages, she will give 200% no matter what. She thinks it can bring some great opportunity for both Fairs. She is excited that this is almost a pilot program for this new regionalization idea that Mr. Flores has. She sees the potential it has for cross staffing and utilizing resources like equipment. She wants the Board to know she is grateful, appreciative and she will give it her all.

- V. Closed Session:** Pursuant to Government Code Section 1126, the Board is authorized to meet in Closed Session for the purpose of considering matters involving:

A. Personnel Matters Gov. Code 11126 (a)(1)

The board adjourned into closed session at 9:08 a.m.

President Lacayo reconvened the meeting at 10:05 a.m. and reported that the 31<sup>st</sup> DAA has hired Jen McGuire as the CEO of the Ventura County Fairgrounds. Her start date is June 1<sup>st</sup> and she will be making a salary of \$12,084 a month. The Board is working on finalizing an agreement to share the position with the 18<sup>th</sup> DAA which is in Bishop and the 31<sup>st</sup> DAA which is here in Ventura.

## **VI Approval of Minutes**

A. April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Board Meeting

Director Cornejo commented that because she did not attend the April 25<sup>th</sup> or May 2<sup>nd</sup> board meetings she would have to abstain. Also, in the May 8<sup>th</sup> board meeting minutes there was a small correction in roman numeral 2 motion to remove “minutes” at the end of the sentence.

**MOTION:** To approve the April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Board Meeting minutes.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Bradbury	X		
Director Cornejo			X
Director Cuevas (Motion)	X		
Director Morgan-Carter (Second)	X		
Vice President Long	X		
President Lacayo	X		

B. May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 Board Meeting

**MOTION:** To approve the May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 Board Meeting minutes.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Bradbury (Motion)	X		
Director Cornejo			X
Director Cuevas	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Long (Second)	X		
President Lacayo	X		

C. May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Board Meeting

**MOTION:** To approve the May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Board Meeting minutes with the correction of striking the word “minutes” in the motion.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Bradbury (Second)	X		
Director Cornejo (Motion)	X		
Director Cuevas	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Long	X		
President Lacayo	X		

**VII. Financial Report – Mr. Yepez**

A. Financials ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Mr. Yepez reviewed the financials.

**VIII. Committee Reports - None**

**IV. Old Business - None**

**X. New Business - None**

**XI. Board Correspondence**

A. Memo from Mike Francesconi at California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, Fairs & Expositions: Poultry Health Inspections (PHI) – FY 2023/24 Fair Season

**XII. Consent Agenda: Items hereunder on the Consent Agenda are considered routine, not requiring separate discussion and will be enacted in one motion. Individual items A, 1-4, are approved by the vote that approves the Consent Agenda, unless an item is pulled for separate consideration.**

- A. Agreements
1. Standard Agreements
  2. Rental Agreements – Interim
  3. Concession Agreements
  4. Judging Agreements

**MOTION:** To approve the consent list with items A, 1-4.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Bradbury (Motion)	X		
Director Cornejo	X		
Director Cuevas (Second)	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Long	X		
President Lacayo	X		

### **XIII. CEO Report**

President Lacayo opened the floor first for staff reports.

Heidi Ortiz, Executive Secretary

- Explained she is working on a lot of ongoing tasks such as contracts: grounds entertainment, service and sponsorship.
- Continuing to work on the details of the park and ride agreements and getting those finalized. Trying to get updated insurance certificates for each lot as well as for the buses.
- Setting up accounts at various places, such as Giffin Rentals and O'Reilly, so maintenance can get the equipment they need.
- Retirement: \$25,900.30 for the month of April. It will start going up and peak in August and then start going back down after the Fair.
- Ms. Inez, in the front office, has taken on the Read and Ride program and has already received entries.
- Working with Mr. Leavitt, our Midway Coordinator, on carnival contracts and hoping to get those out by the end of the week.
- Will be participating in a zoom demo with TicketSpice to get an overview of the ins and outs of what the program can do and have a better understanding of it all.
- Had a zoom call with Mr. Marrow, Program Delivery Manager with FEMA, and went over where things were left off on and what still needs to be done. She will have another follow-up call with him at 10 a.m.
- Had a meeting with Mr. Kohn, the Director of the Trapeze Show, along with Mr. Howell out at the Station Stage area to go over their layout and see where it fits best. She is working with Ms. Fatland from Viking Entertainment on scheduling for the Station Stage area because the idea is to have constant entertainment, but we don't want bands overlapping with the trapeze show.

Shannon Patrick, Exhibits Supervisor

- She is continuing with the day to day grind such contracts, judging contracts, exhibit contracts for things that go into the buildings like the Blue Grass Orchard in the Ag Building who are also hoping to do other stages around the grounds.
- The Tortoise Club will be back and is working with them.
- She is working with Ms. Brokaw from the Ventura County Museum on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. We are hoping to get their pop-up tent here at least one day; it would be great to have them here longer, but it is a staffing issue for them.

Madalyn Johnson, Commercial and Food Vendor Manager

- She is working on sending within the next couple of days about 90 contracts. Ms. Martin, Concessions Assistant, is working part time to help with getting the appropriate and accurate insurance from all the vendors.
- The main gate layout is being worked on, which is very exciting.
- She is corresponding and working with the Health Department to get all the required spreadsheets, permits and information to our food vendors.

Jason Amelio, Sales Manager

- Recapped the interim events from the last month.
- There were charity events, non-profit events, two concerts, multiple commercial filmings and a large agricultural festival.

- It was the first time we had the Strawberry Festival on grounds and it was their first year back since COVID. They estimated just over 50,000 people attended over the weekend. He spoke with VPD and it was a really safe and well-run event. We hope that they choose to come back again next year. Should they come back, we will continue to work with the festival organizers, the City including police, fire and traffic to tweak and do what we can to make it run even smoother next year.
- We took in \$217,125 of rental revenue which is up \$172,000 from last year. Parking revenue from the Strawberry Festival is still being calculated and has yet to be paid in, but with that said we did \$25,700 which is up over \$7,000 from last year.
- Coming up in the next few weeks is Circus Vargas, the Gold Coast Gem Show, Ventura County Dog Fanciers, Seaside Tattoo Show and a cat show that was postponed a couple weeks ago.
- He is hoping to get all the security contractors finalized for the Fair. Also, working with Mr. Maynard and Mr. Howell on getting our parking credentials in order and are well ahead of schedule this year.

#### Megan Hook, PR & Marketing

- Working on entertainment line-up final approvals, the poster and assets are all ready to go. They have been sent to all the agencies this morning for approval and the announcement will come very soon.
- In conjunction with that, she is doing ticketing links and presale versus normal sales of tickets which will go live this year with the entertainment lineup announcements so we can sell tickets immediately.
- Working on advertising the entries for the Fair this week. The graphics have just been finalized and she will be promoting the individual departments toward the appropriate audiences to try and reach the most relevant audience.
- Finalizing the youth poster design which will be unveiled and announced to the public as well.
- Started attending the X-Games planning meetings and will continue to do so moving forward. She will also be working with Visit Ventura to try and make sure we are working in conjunction, not just for marketing purposes, but more so for communication purposes which will be very vital moving forward.
- There was a Marketing Committee Meeting, but that will be discussed at Thursday's Board Meeting.
- She is securing advertising like the Ventura Auto Center billboard.
- She is creating a schedule for any sort of print or digital advertising that we will be doing.

#### **XIV. President's Comments**

- She has been busy as Acting CEO. She has been to the fairgrounds a couple times a week. She has spent a lot of time signing contracts and purchase orders.
- Ms. Ortiz and her talk on a regular basis and congratulated her on passing the Deputy Manager test. It has been a long time coming and they are very pleased.
- Everything has been running smoothly and especially with the Strawberry Festival as she understood it was packed, the lines were long and the freeway was crowded, which is all a good sign.
- She met with Ms. McGuire and Ms. Hook and they've had good conversations and is pleased that Ms. McGuire is on board and will be starting soon.



- Ms. Ortiz is on top of all the plans and is very busy. Ms. Patrick and Ms. Hook both with the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is very exciting for them and it is unfortunate that they are only able to staff one day of the Fair, but it is better than nothing. She is sure there will be many events throughout the county.
- She has been in touch with Mr. Lieberman and his sponsorships. He has a possible naming of the livestock building with Toyota. The details of the contract have not yet been worked out, but it is something he is working on.
- She has two pieces of news from the Foundation, one is that they have invited Mr. Lopez to be on the Foundation Board and voted him in and second, they received a \$135,000 grant from the Wood Claeysen Foundation to improve the Equestrian Center.
- She will continue to remain as involved as she can and is looking forward to Ms. McGuire coming in.
- She thanked Vice President Long for being her go-to-guy and talk about things happening at the fairgrounds and making sure they are being supportive to staff and that the staff feels supported. That has been their main goal. Everyone on the call wants to see the fairgrounds succeed and so do they. She thanked Sacramento for stepping in and helping guide the board in making some difficult decisions. She feels they will be better and stronger because of it and thinks that staff is really working as a team, which is really important and wants to see everyone get behind Ms. McGuire.

## **XV. Director's Comments**

### **Director Cornejo**

- Thanked President Lacayo and Vice President Long and anyone else who has been working to get us through all the challenges that we have had and gearing up for all of these amazing events. It is not compensated except for the love of the Fair and seeing things done well and she is most grateful for that.
- She congratulated Ms. McGuire and is very excited to see her coming in as our CEO and looks forward to a great future with her working with the Board on all of those.
- She understands always that parking is an issue for anything we do and when the Strawberry Festival was in Oxnard it was also a challenge, so this is not a new thing for a well-attended festival, but hopes that all the brilliant minds in this county can help solve these parking problems because that's always our big challenge to make it easier to enjoy all the events that go on here. This will be her focus and talk to everybody and just wanted to thank everybody.

### **Director Bradbury**

- He thanked President Lacayo for her work and stepping in for the last month.
- He thanked Ms. Ortiz because she has stepped up to the plate and taken on some big responsibilities and is not sure what they would do without her.
- A big welcome to Ms. McGuire and it will be a great partnership and looking forward to the future of the Fair.
- Congratulated the Board and staff for moving through some interesting times and doing it well. He stated that we are beginning a new era to the Fair and one goal should be updating our fairgrounds and making sure we pay attention to that moving forward.
- Commented that it is a honor to serve with each of the board members and thanked them for their dedication.

#### Director Morgan-Carter

- She thanked President Lacayo and Vice President Long for really stepping up and appreciates that leadership. She felt confident with that oversight.
- She thanked Ms. Ortiz for her dedication and congratulated her and all the staff. It shows how exemplary all staff is with stepping up in all their various roles, which is also appreciated.
- She had the pleasure of going to the Paak.House Foundation fundraiser and she heard someone complaining about the security and having to open their bags, but they were great. They were pleasant, moved things along and knocked down any potential negatives. It was a pleasure seeing the staff do their jobs and the pleasure of the people that came to the event. They all loved the fairgrounds and she wanted to let everyone know that our people are loving the visits and our staff does a great job and it was nice to see everyone enjoying our fairgrounds.

#### Director Long

- He echoed what all the other directors said.
- He doesn't think without the staff, without Ms. Ortiz running things and President Lacayo sign hundreds of documents we wouldn't be able to get through this strenuous time.
- He mentioned Director Cornejo's comments about parking and the freeway because it was a challenge. He thinks for the Strawberry Festival it was very much like us after a few years of not doing one there was that pent up excitement and tons of people came.
- He also heard City Council talk about the event and they had some complaints about the traffic but they did not mention that there was a marathon which blocked off downtown roads so on Sunday from early in the morning until about 11:30 a.m., that's what clogged up the roads. They also mentioned that the X-Games would have half the daily amount and that it would be all the traffic plans that happen during the Fair.
- He saw Anderson Paak videos from a friend which cracked him up and it looked like a wonderful event and would like to have him back maybe even for a two-day event.
- Appreciates Mr. Amelio and all he has done and really all the staff who have all done such a tremendous job not just recently but before that and continuing on. Everyone will all have to work extra hard and they appreciate staff so much and they will do everything they can to help. He and President Lacayo have been working to get some extra volunteers to help the Superintendents to help set up their buildings.
- Thanked everyone again and is excited to have Ms. McGuire to be our CEO.

#### Director Cuevas

- She echoed her thanks to staff and to Ms. Ortiz, especially for always being available, willing and stepping up. She has always known that she is the quiet leader and is the glue to keep things in tacked. She is sure that they are going to have a wonderful future with her and for her as time progresses, so she thanked Ms. Ortiz for her leadership and for your willingness to step up in such difficult times.
- She is very excited for the rest of the staff for the opportunity that they all have to show what they can bring and how they can make a significant impact to the overall operation and successful putting on of the Fair. It really is up to staff because they have a clean slate on what can be done to improve how we deliver the Fair to the community and the community is there for us. They want us to succeed so all we have to do is show up and do our jobs, which goes for the staff as well as the board and she is looking forward to being challenged in a good way and in a like-minded single focus way so we can all get

behind and show up for the community and be a successful Fair. She thanked everyone for their efforts in that regard.

- She thanked her fellow board members for putting their head down and drawing on their single focus of being ambassadors to the Fair and trying to do what's best for the Fair. She appreciates that and hopes that the Board can soon get together on a productive way to map out with Ms. McGuire the long and short term goals so that there is a vision that they can speak to the community about and get them excited and have them support us on our endeavors.

#### **XVI. Future Agenda Items**

1. Fair
2. X-Games
3. 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the County
4. Fairgrounds improvements
5. Committee Meeting Schedule

#### **XVII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

Submitted by: Heidi Ortiz  
Heidi Ortiz, Executive Secretary

Approved by: Jennifer McGuire  
Jennifer McGuire, CEO Ventura Fairgrounds

Approved by: Leah Lacayo  
Leah Lacayo, Board President