

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, June 27th, 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 9:03 a.m. and called to order by President Lacayo.

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

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

Guests Present: Charles Southwick, Fairs & Expositions, Carla Alvara, Richard Conrad, Burt Handy, Leon Rousso, Tom Kiskan, Kirsten Martinez, Phil Ranger, Lucas Hook, Joshua Medrano, Andrew Goodwin, Meredith Hart, Justin Martinez and Mike NLN.

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Long 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)

Burt Handy, Leon Rousso, Meredith Hart (with the City of Ventura) and Charles Southwick (Fairs and Expositions) introduced themselves.

President Lacayo welcomed CEO McGuire who is very familiar with the Ventura Fairgrounds and is also the large Livestock Superintendent and the Board is very happy to have her. She also welcomed the newest Board Member, Betsy Chess. She is a long time resident of Ventura County, with one of the founding families in Santa Paula. She has a lot of interests' with the museum, arts, etc. and has been on many boards. She has known Ms.

Chess mostly through her public service throughout the years and invited her to make a few comments.

Director Chess stated that she is thrilled to be here and to work with the Fair Board. It is a cliché that our Fair is a gem and looking forward to helping make good decisions as the Board moves forward. She explained her involvement with the Fair growing up and thinks this Fair is terrific and looks forward to working with everyone.

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.

Mr. Handy – He explained that he walks along the beach almost every night and the security guards close the gates right at 8 pm. He would like the hours of operation to be changed to a half hour past sunset unless it is during the winter then maybe changed to 6 pm or 7 pm. He asked the board to look at adjusting the hours and thanked the board for their consideration.

V. Approval of Minutes

A. May 23rd, 2023 Board Meeting minutes

MOTION: To approve the May 23rd, 2023 Board Meeting minutes.

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

B. May 25th, 2023 Board Meeting minutes

MOTION: To approve the May 25th, 2023 Board Meeting minutes.

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

VI. Financial Report

A. Financials ending May 31st, 2023

Mr. Yepez reviewed the financials.

VII. Committee Reports - None

VIII. Old Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding the 18th/31st DAA

President Lacayo stated that this is the agreement for CEO McGuire and it is a rough draft with corrections that the Board needs to vote on. It basically says that the 31st DAA is the primary employer and the 18th DAA is going to reimburse the Ventura Fairgrounds.

Director Cuevas asked if the 31st DAA is paying for CEO McGuire to travel back and forth between the two districts.

President Lacayo answered yes. The 31st DAA will be paying a portion. The 31st DAA will be paying 75 percent and the 18th DAA will be paying 25 percent.

CEO McGuire stated it will be state mileage that will be paid and a mileage log will be kept.

Director Cornejo stated that the corrections made it more clear with the relationship between the 31st DAA and Bishop (18th DAA) and that the 31st is the primary employer, as opposed to dual employers, and we are being reimbursed for 25 percent. She felt that was the main point to the corrections that were made.

President Lacayo noted that this is a contract not an MOU between the two DAAs.

Director Morgan-Carter asked about the line that says "The 31st DAA and the 18th DAA may share resources such as staff, equipment and volunteers" and wanted to know if this was to cover the CEO or other staff, equipment and volunteers we are considering.

President Lacayo stated that if CEO McGuire has somebody would work well for us during fair or any other time or vice versa we will share staff and equipment. We already share now with other Fairs.

CEO McGuire stated that a lot of Fairs already do this with staff and resources. There is a lot of staff that works at one Fair and gets contracted to help another Fair out. It is really difficult to find Fair staff that specialize in certain niches of the Fair, so there are many Fairs that do that. It is more of a relationship between a big Fair and little Fair, so it is like big brother and little sister kind of relationship.

Director Morgan-Carter asked if Bishop has approved this contract.

CEO McGuire stated yes. They approved the first round of it and once this final contract is put in motion it will go back to Bishop for final approval to put in their minutes.

MOTION: To approve the agreement between the 18th and 31st DAAs.

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

B. Discussion and possible action regarding policy

President Lacayo stated that there is an update on two items in the policy manual that are reflected for this year's Fair. She thanked Director Morgan-Carter and Director Cornejo for trying to put this together because it really has been a challenge for both of them due to the timing.

Director Morgan-Carter thanked President Lacayo for giving them this task. They were very ambitious getting started and made strides to identify areas that needed to be reviewed, revised and there has been quite a bit of research but with the staff changes as well as personal issues they had to step back from the progress. What is being presented today are two items that have taken precedence and additional recommendations will be made after the Fair.

Director Cornejo stated that the last thing they wanted to do in all this transition is to give staff a bunch of policies and procedures to go through, so as important as it is they knew that some things could wait until after the Fair. However, there are two time sensitive proposals to go over and vote on today. The first one is in the section of the board's policies and procedures, section 204 Standing Committees, 204.02 Membership of Standing Committees and the recommendation is to amend the second paragraph. This change would reduce the minimum number from three to two for a standing committee.

MOTION: To approve the recommendation to reduce the minimum number of members from three to two for a standing committee.

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

Director Cornejo stated that the other amendment being recommended is in section 604 Entertainment under 604.01 line d add “an admission fee of a minimum of \$5.00 will be charged for rodeos for all seats. Tickets will be issued for all seats in the arena for rodeos.” The reason for this proposal is that there is already line c that refers to charging for Motorsports and we do not have anything in our policies and procedures for the rodeos and need to do so before the Fair.

Director Cuevas recommended that the board not put a set amount and rather refer to a fee, so the board doesn’t have to go back and change the policy.

Director Morgan-Carter explained that one of the reasons the committee looked at a minimum of \$5 was because the Marketing Committee already made a recommendation to look at fees and staff found out there were expenses, so the \$5 covers those costs and we aren’t losing any money.

MOTION: To approve the recommendation to charge a minimum of \$5.00 for Rodeos for all seats and there will be tickets issued for all seats in the arena for Rodeos.

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

IV. New Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding Fair

CEO McGuire sent the board a recap of all things being worked on. There are no action items, but things are moving along. One of the main focuses she had coming in was all things Fair and getting the facility ready for Fair. She gave an update on the equine virus, which is the latest breaking news. It has made its way to Ventura County, which effects horse shows and two of them have already cancelled for Fair, The Cattlemen aired on the side of caution and cancelled two of their shows. She is working close with Dr. Mike Giacomuzzi, who is our official Fair vet, who is working close with the State. There are protocols in place which are pretty much health checks. It can affect the livestock show so they are being pro-active and putting protocols in place. She will update the Board as she gets more information.

B. X-Games Update

Mr. Amelio explained that staff is in daily communication with the X-Games. They had a traffic meeting yesterday with the City, VPD and all the responsible bodies and looked at mitigating all the possible traffic issues. They are effectively going to use the same plan that the Fair uses at fairtime, so it is a plan everyone knows works. They are going to start moving in trucks and equipment at the end of the week and then in full they will start moving in around July 5th. From there on it is full build until the event opens.

There was a full discussion regarding traffic for any events.

C. 150th Celebration of the County

President Lacayo stated that Vice President Long, Director Chess and herself were all at the museum for the 150th Celebration of the County kick-off event which was terrific.

CEO McGuire stated that there is a pop-up coming to the Fair August 4th and the location will be right in front of the fountain, which Ms. Johnson and Ms. Patrick have both been working hard on.

D. Fairgrounds Improvements

CEO McGuire stated that she had sent a few photos with a recap of some of the things being done. One thing that is so simple but makes a big difference is washing the Quonset huts. Another thing is the Morgan Arena facelift, funded by the Wood Claeysen Foundation. There are new chutes on order, new roping boxes, new announcer booth and new slabs being poured. There is also the Livestock and Floriculture bathroom remodel that the Foundation hog funded that has been done. Staff is going to pressure wash and paint the floriculture buildings which will give it a whole new look. Staff is working on new awnings for the Anacapa and San Miguel Buildings and she believes one has been completed so far. There are new lights installed throughout the grounds which make things pretty as well as makes things safer. The Raceway bleacher retrofit has begun and she will let Mr. Howell talk more about that. There is a landscaping company coming in to do some basic grounds work along the perimeter. She found in Bishop that it is easier and more cost effective to outsource some services like landscaping because they bring their own employees, equipment, etc.

Mr. Howell stated that they have been busy. The lighting project has been done and explained the areas where new lights were replaced. The Quonset huts should be done in about a week or so. They are waiting on brackets and partitions for the bathroom remodel and once those are installed the project will be completed. As far as Fair, they are starting to clean up, move stuff around, pressure wash the auction barn, etc. As CEO McGuire stated they are laying the cement blocks for the horse show announcer's booth. As far as the Raceway project, contractors are coming in, meeting with CCA and the engineer and hopefully the project should be completed before Fair.

E. Committee Meeting Schedule

CEO McGuire stated that she would like a Livestock and Equestrian Committee Meeting, so she would like to get that into the works.

F. Discussion and possible action regarding adding Dan Long as a check signer

President Lacayo stated that the former Vice President needed to be removed and the new Vice President needs to be added as a signer.

MOTION: To approve Dan Long as a check signer on the fairground's account.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Bradbury (Second)	X		
Director Chess	X		

Director Cornejo	X		
Director Cuevas (Motion)	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Long	X		
President Lacayo	X		

President Lacayo wanted to step back and get reports and updates from staff on the Fair.

CEO McGuire stated that she wants to start off with Ms. Hook because there are some great things happening in marketing. She explained that this time last year presale was right about \$19k and right now we are way above \$80k on presale tickets. So, there are some great things happening in marketing and they are doing a great job.

Megan Hook, PR & Marketing

- Full on advertising with print and digital, especially social.
- We are in production now for TV streaming English and Spanish, which are being produced. On day one of Fair there will be a commercial filmed which will air by the first Friday of Fair.
- They are working on production for radio, so those scripts have been written and ready to go out.
- There is a number of give aways on local radio and social media.
- They just had the poster unveiling on Friday and thanked Director Cornejo for being there and representing the board. VC Star was there to cover it, which made the newspaper and was posted digitally as well. The poster has been printed and is available at the Fair office for anyone who would like one.
- The entertainment posters have been printed and they are both on the same side so they could be posted in the store windows and are also available in the Fair office.
- Auction cards have been printed and are available to send to buyers. It gives credit to last year's Foundation animal buyers and what that money went to.
- The Read and Ride Program, which Ms. Inez in the front office is managing, wraps up this Friday. Anyone that reads four books gets six ride tickets.
- She didn't know where we were at with online tickets last year, so it is exciting that we have sold about \$130k tickets as of this morning. We are in the last week of Early Bird ticket sales with no fees and then we move to general admission with fees. All ticketing data is being analyzed in real time, which will help with the advertising budget for next year.
- She and CEO McGuire had a call with Black Angus and there will be a grill-off, so she will be working with them on all the details. This is something new and exciting to bring to the Fair on top of all the other things that are coming.

CEO McGuire stated that her background is marketing and to work with Ms. Hook and The Toland Group is awesome because data is so important and we've never collected data like this before. Everything is going to be new; new layout, new food options, new entertainment and staff is really going to market the new, the bigger, the better. We are also doing something new this year, a pre-opening reception which will be by invite only. It will be called the Taste of the Fair which will be the day before Fair and it will be funded by the Foundation.

Madalyn Johnson, Commercial and Food Vendor Manager

- She and Ms. Patrick met with Marisa from the Museum of Ventura County and they are going to have a great tent with a lot of activity in it. They have another meeting with them this week.
- She is in full Fair mode and is excited to be working and communicating with Ms. Hook to explain to her all the commercial and food vendors and then see Ms. Hook take all that and turn the information into exciting posts. She has had a goal over the past few years to have vendors more local, more unique, etc. and we've really made great strides with that this year.
- She continues to work on collecting the vendors payments, insurances and contracts.
- She is also working with Ms. Martin on community members who want to be a part of the Fair.
- Every day she has had at least one call or email with the Health Department and is continuing to work with them.

CEO McGuire commented that one thing Ms. Johnson has been very instrumental with is the Floriculture area. Last year, they launched a new craft beer area but it is being improved this year. Ms. Johnson brought in Extreme Backyards who will be doing a display and the details are still being worked out. There will be a stage where there will be a guitarist and violinist, which is also new.

Shannon Patrick, Exhibits Supervisor

- Due to technical difficulties, CEO McGuire reported that Ms. Patrick has been busy working on facilitating the move-in with all the Superintendents into the buildings. Staff is working out logistics with the X-Games.
- There is a Superintendent's Meeting next week that she is preparing for.
- Online entries have been open for a while and entries have been coming in.

Jason Amelio, Sales Manager

- Explained that Mr. Maynard is working hard to get the credentials and mapping system improved overall to make it more user-friendly for everyone.
- The Board of Directors parking will be directly in front of the Derby Club, which will help with the Director's Room being back in the Derby Club so it should be easy to get in and out of there.

Heidi Ortiz, Executive Secretary

- A new front office assistant was hire and her and Ms. Inez are already working as a great team.
- Box seat letters were sent out and reservations are starting to come back. There have been some cancellations so she will work on getting those filled.
- She continues to work on contracts: grounds, service, sponsorship and carnival and is making sure each one has an updated insurance certificate.
- Finalizing the park and ride agreements and getting updated insurance certificates for those which include the bus certificates. Her and CEO McGuire had a conference call with State Beach, which we were able to get a lot of the details ironed out, but there are still items they need which she will work on getting them to complete the agreement.
- Working on hiring employees for the souvenir booth and working with Ms. Inez to get the company finalized and the order submitted.

X. Board Correspondence

XI. 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 Chess	X		
Director Cornejo	X		
Director Cuevas (Second)	X		
Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Long	X		
President Lacayo	X		

XII. President's Report

- President Lacayo stated that she is excited about the Fair and CEO McGuire coming on board. She has hit the ground running along with all of the staff.
- She is happy to relinquish her duties as CEO but thanked the State and all the powers to be to help through the transition.
- She was invited and attended the Fairgrounds Foundation Meeting, along with CEO McGuire, she believes to reassure them that the fairgrounds was going to be in good hands and business was taking place as usual which is where CEO McGuire and the Foundation came up with the Taste of the Fair event.
- She looks forward to seeing everyone, probably at the X-Games.

XIII. Directors Comments

Director Cornejo

- She had the pleasure of being at the unveiling of the poster for the Fair. It is so exciting for the artist who are very excited for being recognized and hearing how far and wide their artwork will be seen.
- There have been a lot of posts on Facebook and other social media and encouraged to not just look, but to like and share because it makes a big difference to the numbers that we reach. Since there was an overage in posters, there are posters to be distributed to get in windows to get that advertising as well.
- The poster is beautiful and bright which will be so pretty on all of our shirts, sweatshirts and everything else which she thinks will help them sell.

Director Cuevas

- Looking forward to Fair and everything that is new. She is looking forward to a Fair that embraces and promotes the technological advances that will ultimately save us money and costs from print materials. The more we can use scans, QR codes and technology to keep our costs down the better and she is very excited about that.
- She would like CEO McGuire to think about a cashless Fair. It is easier for tracking and better for cash management. She thinks this is the way of the future and lessens the probability of theft or misappropriations. In the meantime, we are moving the needle and that is a good thing.

Director Bradbury

- He thanked CEO McGuire. She is an incredible person and has done a great job in the short time of being here.
- He is a detail-oriented person and likes the report CEO McGuire gave and encourages her to continue to give that kind of report to the board.
- Encourages the board to do a sponsorship for the livestock auction in one way or another. It is one of the highlights of the fair to encourage our kids to stay involved in agriculture and things of that nature here in our county.

Director Morgan-Carter

- Welcomed Director Chess and is excited to be working with her because she has such a long history and knowledge in and of Ventura County, which she will be a wonderful asset to the Board.
- She is also excited that CEO McGuire is on board and looking forward to having a conversation with her and appreciates her extending that opportunity.
- She has expressed it in the Marketing Committee and as the Board knows she is a proponent of data, being aggressive and forward-thinking and we are doing all of that.
- She thanked Ms. Hook because she was at the Juneteenth event in Oxnard and she was pleased to see the Ventura Fair as a sponsor. She wore her Fair t-shirt and was talking to people about the Fair.
- After we get past the Fair there are other things she wants to bring forward and wants to make sure that we represent all the communities, and she has some suggestions for post Fair.
- She thanked all the other board members and their contributions.

Director Chess

- She is letting everything wash over her and she has lots to learn and thanked everyone.

Director Long

- Explained that the board is happy to have Director Chess on the Board with all her expertise and background, which will be very useful on the Fair Board.
- He reminded everyone that we still need a couple more board members.
- He appreciates the wonderful staff and all the work they have and are doing. He explained it helps make CEO McGuire's job easier and the board's job easier. He doesn't know how CEO McGuire does it, but the Board trusts and sees that she is doing the job and explained that if she needs help from any of the Board members to feel free to reach out.
- He is open to a Livestock Committee Meeting.

President Lacayo stated that Vice President Long was kind enough to bring Senator Monique Limon's two representatives from her office down to the Fairgrounds and they all went for a tour of the grounds. There is a Senate Bill 624 that is reinstating some Fair funding. She encouraged the Board who have friends in the Senate to reach out to them and let them know your interest in getting that bill passed.

CEO McGuire stated that the bill did pass last week. She doesn't have details, but it is a very good thing for the Fair industry.

XIV. Future Agenda Items

1. Fair Update
2. Equine Virus Update

XV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 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