

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: Jennifer McGuire, Acting CEO

Tuesday, February 27th, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.
Ventura County Fairgrounds – McBride Hall

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 Long.

Directors present: President, Dan Long, Vice President, Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja, Betsy Chess, Leslie Cornejo, Leah Lacayo, Miriam Mack and Shanté Morgan-Carter.

Absent: M. Cecilia Cuevas

Staff present: Jen McGuire, CEO, Jason Amelio, Sales Manager, Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager, Megan Hook, PR & Marketing Firm, Jim Jennings, Maintenance Supervisor, Patrick Maynard, Admissions Coordinator, Shelly Boyd, Sales Assistant, Gerry Duran, Maintenance Staff, Joe Hutchison, Maintenance Staff, Mike Reinwald, OVG Manager and Heidi Ortiz, Executive Secretary.

Guests Present: Tom Kisken, Burt Handy and Kathie Moore.

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Cornejo led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

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.

There were no public comments.

V. Presentations - None

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. January 23rd, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the January 23rd, 2024 Board Meeting minutes.

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

VII. Financial Report

A. Financials ending December 31st, 2023

CFSA does not have the financials ready quite yet. They are planning our year end and the Statement of Operations report, so next month we should have December financials, the STOP and possibly budget.

VIII. Committee Meetings

A. Marketing Committee Meeting, Shanté Morgan-Carter – February 6th, 2024

- Since it was Director Mack’s first meeting there was a bit of an orientation and history given in terms of how the Marketing Committee has worked in the past and how things have changed.
- Since the Toland Group has been hired and Ms. Hook has been the Marketing Director, it has really changed the nature of some of the work that is being done with marketing. She is so dynamic that it has lifted some weight off of the committee.
- It was explained that the Toland Group was contracted, and CEO McGuire explained how that works.
- Ms. Hook gave an oral report of the activities that she is working on. The 150-year theme has taken precedent which everyone is already starting to see some of that work with the theme contest.
- Director Morgan-Carter has asked that Ms. Hook provide a timeline so the committee can keep track of what is being done.
- The committee was also asked to work on the mission and vision statements. CEO McGuire did some research and provided the committee with samples from other fairs, but the committee needed more time to look those over. Director Morgan-Carter asked the board to send CEO McGuire or Ms. Ortiz and recommendations they may have so they can include those in their discussion at their next meeting.
- CEO McGuire explained that Ms. Hook is working on more of a global marketing plan beyond just the fair because there is so much more going on.

B. Policy Committee Meeting, Shanté Morgan-Carter – February 6th, 2024

1. Discussion and possible action regarding policies.

- The committee reviewed a portion of the policies and procedures.
- They did some research and reviewed what other fairs have in place and outlined possible corrections.
- Input is also needed from the State and the CEO.
- Director Morgan-Carter worked with CEO McGuire on more urgent policies and stated that she would like to table some of the other policies that need some refining.
- Director Morgan-Carter stated that they will go over the recommended items to approve today and then ask the board to send recommendations to the CEO to bring back to the committee for further work.
- Director Cornejo added that she wanted to reiterate the reason some of the things being presented today are time sensitive and important to have in place so that this year's fair can move forward without delay.
- CEO McGuire went through the recommended policies:
 - **204.02 Membership of Standing committees**
 - Struck out not more than 4 and not less than 3 directors and added 2 directors.
 - **204.04 Standing Committee Meetings**
 - Struck minutes and replaced with notes
 - Struck out "and submitted to the Board"
 - **204.06 Voting**
 - Struck out entire section and replace with "The standing committee shall make recommendation to the full board for voting purposes."
 - **210.02 Membership of Ad Hoc Committees**
 - Struck out 4 directors and not less than 3 and replace with 2 directors.
 - **600.03 Paid Admissions**
 - Struck out all admission prices and inserting one line that states "Gate admission fees and promotion fees with be directed by the CEO and approved by the board."
 - **603.04 Fees for Outside Exhibit and Concessions Space**
 - Struck out a – e and submit fees, if they change, to the board.
 - **604.01 Entertainment**
 - Struck out fee of \$5 on item c.
 - **604.03 Grandstand Seating**
 - Struck out "be by general admission" because we are going to go "Go free or go VIP."
 - Struck out last two sentences.

MOTION: To approve the recommended revisions of the policies 204.02, 204.04, 204.06, 210.02, 600.03, 603.04, 604.01 and 604.03.

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

Director Mack	X		
Director Morgan-Carter (Motion)	X		
Vice President Ceja	X		
President Long	X		

2. Discussion and possible action regarding ticket and vendor prices.

MOTION: To approve the propose ticket pricing with the addition of the pricing for the box seats.

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

C. Executive Committee Meeting, Dan Long – February 15th, 2024

- President Long reviewed the minutes.

D. Operations Committee Meeting, Bill Ceja – February 15th, 2024

- There was a lot of discussion regarding the flood damage and staff is working on getting funding from FEMA to cover the damage/repair costs.
- Another area of discussion was the concrete needs in different areas of the fairgrounds. The Laborer’s union is pouring a concrete slab behind the Santa Rosa Hall and they will also be pouring in the near future a walkway in area 1, which will be more ADA compliant for our guests.
- There was discussion regarding the Santa Cruz roof replacement project which should be done by June. There will be new LED lights installed and the outside will be painted.
- Mr. Giammanco did a presentation on Surfers Pint.
- There were updates given on the arena, raceway and the Derby Club/Players Casino.

E. Livestock Committee Meeting, Betsy Chess – February 15th, 2024

- Update from Dr. Mike
 - He is unable to do telemedicine appointments unless he has previously seen the patient.
 - Herbal supplements usage is increasing and getting out of hand. All supplements need to be approved by Dr. Mike. See attached document for more information.
 - Calming agents give an unfair advantage and are thus not allowed.

The withdrawal periods on these products is also unknown.

- There will be a leader and advisor meeting on March 6th at 6:30 pm at HGAE.
- Small livestock
 - There will be a meeting before the fair to make sure exhibitors are correctly registered.
 - They have had donations for new tables and décor.
 - Hatch dates will be on the website soon.
- Large Livestock Entry Guides Updates
 - There will not be mini steers this year.
 - Slick and Haired steers will all show together.
 - All champions and reserves will be terminal, this is a state rule.
 - Entry guide should be out soon.
- Prop 12
 - Swine will not be required to be Prop 12 certified.
 - There will be no resale on swine at the auction this year.
 - Custom slaughter and donation to Food Share is still allowed.
- YQCA
 - Everyone is required to complete the training.
 - No changes from last year.
- Tag Ins
 - Steers: April 6th 9am-11am
 - Lambs, goats, and swine: June 1st 8am-11am
- Independent Exhibitors
 - Application must be completed by April 1st.
 - Independent exhibition is a state rule and must be allowed.
- Camping will remain the same.
- Parking Permits
 - Families will be limited to the number of parking passes they are able to purchase.
- The Champion buckle sponsorship page will be available on the website soon.
- Equestrian Updates:
 - Morgan Arena is in the process of being redone.
 - Horse show entry guides will be up soon.

IX. New Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding renaming the arena Jim Naylor Raceway and Arena

CEO McGuire explained that Mr. Naylor has been running the Raceway for forty-five years and doesn't just run the Raceway, but provides his services, volunteers and brings his resources to the fairgrounds. It would go a long way to recognize his service to these grounds and name it the Jim Naylor Raceway. There would still be a sponsor opportunity but it is nice to give him the recognition.

Ms. Moore stated that she has been to the fairgrounds since the late 70's and she believes Mr. Naylor started the Raceway in '78. She explained that he went to school in Ventura County, so he isn't someone that is not known in this area. He's been given awards from a lot of other areas, and it is about time to recognize him at the fairgrounds. He received a number of awards which includes Race Organizer of the Year by the US Automobile Club in 1991, Jim Bunk Reid Memorial award by the USAC, non-wing sprint car race award and is honored every year in the Reno, Nevada for being the best organizer and operator of racing. He has brought in a number of people from all over who started out at the Raceway and made their way up in the industry. He has put his blood, sweat and tears into the fairgrounds just to do what he's doing, and it would be good to honor him because he deserves it.

There was further discussion by the board regarding the reasons why this is something that should be done.

Mr. Handy stated that it would be ideal to have it out on the sign off of Harbor Boulevard that says "Home of Jim Naylor Raceway" to show him how much everyone appreciates him.

MOTION: To approve creating the Jim Naylor Raceway.

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

X. Old Business

A. Facility Update

CEO McGuire stated that most of this was discussed during the Operations report but wanted Mr. Duran to discuss the drainage situation because there are certain processes that we have to follow to get the water off the grounds.

Mr. Duran explained that back by the maintenance shop they are about 16-17 inches below sea level, so they have to pump. There is one 6-inch submersible pump and one 4-inch overhead pump that pumps underground. There are two more 3-inch pumps that pump into a pumphouse that also has a 6-inch submersible pump and from there the water gets pumped underground to water walls that goes to the river mouth. By Santa Cruz there is only one 6-inch pump that takes on that whole area and it takes about four days to clear out after a big storm like the last one. The Fire Marshal, Civil Engineers and CCA have come out and say that they are going work on a design to

mitigate the issue. If there is two to three 12-inch pumps in the design that will help us from getting so flooded. The water cannot be legally pumped straight to the ocean so it has to go through the pumps underground.

CEO McGuire continued with the report and explained that staff is finishing up with the grandstand bleacher project and the retrofit is done staff is waiting on the State to sign off on it. We do have the drawings and plans for both the San Miguel and Anacapa awning repair projects, so that will be started in the next couple of weeks. She explained that the reader board will be upgraded to an LED state-of-the-art sign, which we can sell advertising on and would be a new revenue stream.

B. 2024 Fair Update

CEO McGuire

- Ms. Inez is at Superintendent School.
- Long time Floriculture Superintendent Barbara Scheider passed away. We would like to honor her in some way at some point.
- Staff took a field trip to Riverside County Fair and toured the fair and saw them in action. They are using the same Saffire system that we are using, so we were able to look at their set-up and operation. There were a few vendors that Ms. Johnson wanted to check out, so she got to be a secret shopper and also had the opportunity to talk to them.

Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager

- She explained that she has reached a point where she is in full fair mode and moving forward towards her goals. Her personal goal for the fair is that each food booth gives something back to the fair that is different. The fun part is to curate the areas and place vendors in appropriate areas to make it special and to work. It has been great working for CEO McGuire because she is on the same page and has been great to work with.
- She is working with about 93-127 commercial vendors, 23 community vendors and another 10 vendors for the cultural part. She thanked everyone for their input, recommendations and connections and explained that the fair will be more cultural and integrated than she has ever seen. She explained some of the things that will be brought into fair this year.
- The entire staff has been working on mapping and looking at every square inch of usable space to make sure the fairgrounds are maximized.
- She is working with Mr. Jennings on electrical. Every single vendor gives us a utility operation fee which generates anywhere between \$31k to \$38k.
- She participated in a zoom meeting with Clover and learned how to get fees in the right categories.

Megan Hook, Marketing and Publicity

- The theme contest closed Friday and was open for 23 days. There were over 2600 entries and over 850 email subscribers.

- The theme will determine the youth poster contest which starts Friday. In February they ran the 150th theme contest and in March it will be the youth poster contest and April will be the commemorative poster.
- One way we are incorporating the fair's history is through these contests. If anyone is following along on social media, they will see different things like trivia questions.
- Internally, they have developed marketing themes such as community and communication. The community will be involved all the way up until the fair and communication they are using new platforms to communicate changes to this year's fair.
- She is continuing to work on the marketing timeline, which is fluid and a work in progress. It is dependent on decisions regarding ticketing and entertainment.
- They are continuing to work on the website which will be multi-use and multi-functional. They have been building it from the ground up and starting from scratch to make it more practical and functional.
- She has been involved in X-Games.
- They are working on a beach clean-up which they are partnering with the City.
- They are working on events that are happening at the fairgrounds and creating forms for event organizers to submit their information.
- She will continue to work on the global marketing plan which not only includes the fair but the fairgrounds as an event center.

CEO McGuire introduced Mr. Maynard with Blue Pacific Events. He is running admissions, he helps with logistics, he is doing all of our mapping which has been crucial this year. He is working with Mr. Amelio on traffic flow as well.

Jason Amelio, Sales Manager

- He explained Mr. Maynard and himself are still working on a lot as far as parking and admissions. They are still going to except cash during fair this year for parking, but they are going to try and push credit card sales. They are going to try increase the capacity as far as the number of lines to help traffic flow.
- We took in just over \$104,658 in rental invoice revenue, for the period covering January 19th through February 18th, which is up from \$83,314 during the same time last year. The increase can be attributed to the return of the Anlac Mission event and the addition of the Grimoire Academy as well as a multi-week camping rental we hosted. Parking was down during this same period with \$62,060 this year versus just over \$75,260 last year.
- Unfortunately, this year's Jurassic Quest was heavily impacted by rain and was forced to reduce the hours on the Saturday and Sunday of the event. Additionally, the Train Show and Chopperfest were both coming off their first events post covid during 2023 and had slight reductions to attendance this year.
- In March, we have returning events including The Ventura Gem and Mineral Society Show and A Night to Remember, which is an amazing event put on by Mission Church honoring students with special needs ages 12-25. Each guest is provided, free of charge, a student host, dress or tuxedo, professional makeup and hair styling, a ride in a limousine around grounds, formal photos, and walk down the red carpet

before heading inside for dancing, food, and fun. This event is returning for the first time since before covid and it is one of the most special things we will do all year.

- There will also be two new events next month with Hall of Flowers and a one-day event from Circus on Ice.
- We are continuing to work forward towards our spring and summer event calendar including Hall of Flowers, California Strawberry Festival and Skull and Roses. The team from X Games will also be on site this week to start planning for this year’s event.
- Ventura Raceway will launch this weekend depending on the weather. He also added his congratulations to Mr. Naylor.

CEO McGuire commented that staff is working on a timeline for ticket sales which will hopefully launch soon. She is confirming some of the grandstand entertainment, which she can’t announce yet, but feels we have some good variety. With the VIP upgrades, that will give us a unique opportunity this year.

XI. Board Correspondence

- A. Memo from Mike Francesconi at California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, Fairs & Expositions: SB-616 Sick Days: Paid Sick Days Accrual and Use
- B. Memo from Mike Francesconi at California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, Fairs & Expositions: Meeting and Posting Requirements for the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act January 1, 2024, update, and new CDFA policy for the submission of Notice & Agenda to CDFA F&E 15 days before each regularly scheduled meeting.

CEO McGuire reviewed the board correspondence which can also be found on the Fairs and Expositions website.

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, 1-2, 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

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda with items A, 1-2.

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

President Long	X		
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XIII. CEO Report

- California Fairs Alliance is an advocacy group at the State level, which she just found out she is a part of the executive board. She is also a part of the executive board for the Western Fairs Association. It is about the resources and the networking at that level that can help your facility.
- There is a new bill, SB 1261, to increase the percentage of the AB 1499 sales tax revenue that is given to the fairgrounds. One of the goals of CFA is to advocate for that.
- She sat in her first California Authority of Racing Fairs meeting and there will be a new shift in the Derby Club to fantasy sports. It is now being fully launched and they will do a site visit in March. There will be some funding and revenue opportunities through the fantasy sports program. There could be possible upgrade opportunities in terms of our facility. As she gets more information she will pass it along.
- The Ventura County Fairgrounds Foundation is going to contract with Ms. Hook to do their marketing and PR, which will be a game changer in terms of getting their story told. They are actively recruiting board members, so she asked the board to direct anyone who is interested to let herself, Ms. Ortiz or Ms. Hook know. There has been a new positive momentum, they are enthusiastic about their future, and they want to get out there and do some work for the fairgrounds. We will be working on a huge fundraiser in July, a kick-off to the fair, which will include the Foundation.
- X Games logistics meetings will be starting this week and staff will meet all the players.
- We are really taking the time to re-establish our partnerships with the City of Ventura, Downtown Visit Ventura, Ventura Visitors Bureau, etc. Staff has met with them, and she really wants to make sure everyone is on the same page.
- With large events we want to be able to give them a playbook. It would explain traffic flow, security, list of vendors, etc.
- She wants to get part two of the board retreat scheduled. A component of the CRC grant that she applied for is to have a strategic planning session in which they will have specific guidelines that need to be followed. She is waiting to have more info which she should have within the next few weeks and then she will be able to plan something.
- There will be a beach clean-up day which will be the first community event this year and it is being sponsored by the Junior Fair Board.
- The estimated Surfers Point Retreat start date is September 2024.
- Budget planning has started and there will be a Budget Committee Meeting soon.

XIV. President's Report

- He stated that anytime he meets with CEO McGuire or attends a meeting with her he gets so excited because we keep moving forward and she is doing some wonderful things. He is pleased to see all these things happening and we are moving in a good direction.
- There will be a public art component to the Surfers Point Managed Retreat. The fairgrounds might have to do an MOU with the City on maintaining that art. If that is the case then we would need to talk to the State attorneys as well. We need to make

sure that we have final say on that because we want to make sure it is something that holds up on the beach.

XV. Director's Comments

Director Lacayo

- She congratulated Mr. Naylor on the naming of the Raceway because it is well deserved and a long time coming.
- Explained that it was good to see Director Mack out at the Climate Conference that was held.

Director Morgan-Carter

- She congratulated CEO McGuire for being voted in to the CFA Executive Committee.
- She reminded the board members to forward any ideas or comments on both the marketing mission and vision and policies so they can be considered. She thanked the other directors she is working with on those committees.

Director Ceja

- He also congratulated the Naylor family on naming the Raceway after him.
- He also expressed his appreciation on being on the Executive Committee as well as the Operations Committee.

Director Mack

- She thanked CEO McGuire for organizing and being a part of the inter-governmental meetings because it is important to maintain communication.
- She also congratulated CEO McGuire for her WFA and CFA appointments. It takes a lot of time to network.
- She thanked staff for the business cards.

Director Chess

- She congratulated everyone for such a productive meeting.
- She thanked CEO McGuire and Ms. Ortiz for everything that went into the board packets.

Director Cornejo

- She thanked Ms. Ortiz and the rest of the staff for their hard work.
- She explained that as we are heading into the season of the Strawberry Festival, the X Games and the Fair there is this underlying fear and excitement going on and staff looks very much organized and knows we will get through it and the fairgrounds will shine through it all. She thanked everyone and said it couldn't be said enough.
- She was happy to hear CEO McGuire's report on working with local government and those relationships.
- She made her own shout out at a meeting she attended in Buellton. Everyone was able to say what was going on in their city and Ventura was mentioned that the X Games was coming and she shouted out "at the fairgrounds."

- She thanked her fellow board members for all their hard work. In particular, Director Mack's comments on the policies are very helpful and it just shows the seriousness that the board takes with their job.

XVI. Future Agenda Items

1. Fair 2024 Update
2. Surfer's Point Managed Retreat
3. Surfers Pint
4. X-Games Update
5. Facility Update

XVII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned in honor of Barbara Schneider at 11:16 a.m.

Submitted by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, Executive Secretary

Approved by: Jennifer McGuire
Jennifer McGuire, CEO Ventura Fairgrounds

Approved by: Dan Long
Dan Long, Board President