

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, April 16th, 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, M. Cecilia Cuevas, Leah Lacayo, Miriam Mack and Shanté Morgan-Carter.

Staff present: Jen McGuire, CEO, Jason Amelio, Sales Manager, Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager, Megan Hook, PR & Marketing Firm, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, Gerry Duran, Maintenance Supervisor, Joe Hutchison, Maintenance Electrician and Heidi Ortiz, Deputy Manager.

Guests Present: Judy Waggoner, Liz Campos, 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 Morgan-Carter led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

President Long introduced Judy Waggoner, who is the President of the Tri-County Fairgrounds Board of Directors, as well as Liz Campos who is on the Ventura City Council and is the fairgrounds liaison. He also congratulated Ms. Moore on her appointment to the Fairgrounds Foundation Board of Trustees.

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.

Dave Anderson – He explained that he was a security supervisor during the 2023 Ventura County Fair and expressed his concerns with the overall security operation of the Fair.

V. Closed Session: Pursuant to Government Code Section 11126, the Board is authorized to meet in Closed Session for the purpose of considering matters involving:

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

President Long convened into closed session at 9:10 a.m.

President Long reconvened at 10:30 a.m. and stated that there was no action taken.

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. February 27th, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the February 27th, 2024 Board Meeting minutes.

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

VII. Financial Report

A. Financials ending January 31st, 2024

There were no financials to present this month due to the fact that CFSA is still reconciling the accounts from 2023. Once they are done with that, they will be able to put together the 2024 reports.

VIII. Committee Meetings

A. Marketing Committee Meeting, Shanté Morgan-Carter – March 12th, 2024

- They received good follow-up reports and updates from the marketing team.
- The biggest task they had was to look at the mission, vision and purpose statements that were mocked up at the board retreat. There was input from various directors and Ms. Hook, which they took into consideration, and came up with recommended changes. The idea is to adopt these statements into the policies and procedures.
- Director Cornejo had a recommended change to the purpose statement to make it flow better and suggested it read “The Ventura County Fairgrounds serves as the community’s central gathering place, where we come together to proudly celebrate our diversity and shared values.” The directors were in consensus with the change.
- CEO McGuire explained that this could be adopted under item B, Policy Committee, and make it part of the policy manual.

B. Policy Committee Meeting, Shanté Morgan-Carter – March 19th, 2024

1. Discussion and possible action regarding policies.

- The committee has been working hard on this for over a year. At the last meeting there were significant items adopted that were recommended by the CEO so we could move forward with the Fair planning. They had looked at other sections but are not quite ready to present those yet.
- The committee would like to move forward with the mission, purpose, vision and goal statement because those will ultimately be a part of the policy manual.

MOTION: To adopt the mission, purpose, vision and goal statements as part of the board's policies and procedures with the amendment made by Director Cornejo to the purpose statement.

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

C. Budget Committee Meeting, Leslie Cornejo – March 26th, 2024

A. Discussions and possible action regarding Budget.

- This is another committee that has been working hard and there has been a lot of preliminary work done by staff as well as CFSA because there is a lot of clean up that has been done. Efforts were made to organize unclear items and allocate them appropriately.
- The budget was reviewed line by line by the committee and staff. There were some things that staff had to work on and correct and/or update as well as some items that staff needed to work on with CDFA.
- CEO McGuire explained that staff had to go back to the old school way because they had to redefine different buckets and accounts. All the expenses and revenues that staff controls were pulled and reviewed. She thanked Ms. Martin for all her hard work on the budget.
- CEO McGuire explained that they factored in twelve state positions, which currently the fairgrounds is at six. Before the pandemic there were twenty-six, so twelve is a strong number that we can manage financially and keep the facility looking good. The budget also factors in some facility improvements. There are some new events revenue sources; producing our own events like PBR and monster trucks. Staff are predicting a 10 to 15% increase in revenue from admissions and carnival this year due to the fact we are putting tickets on sale much earlier than before. We were heavy on expenses like utilities, which after fact checking staff increased about 40% to be on the safe side so staff is a little heavy on expenses. The budget is still coming out in the black.

- Our accountant from CFSA was here last week and trained Ms. Martin in all things accounting. She also reviewed the budget and made sure everything was correct.
- CEO McGuire explained that once CFSA has all the reports done and all the accounts are accurate, the board will get an actual detailed report that shows what was budgeted, what has been spent and what is remaining.
- Director Cornejo explained that the committee is recommending approving the budget that has been presented knowing that there will be updates and corrections at a later time.

MOTION: To approve the 2024 budget as presented.

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

IX. New Business

- A. Discussion and possible action regarding CalOES designation of authorized agents of disaster grants.
- CEO McGuire explained that staff needs to have on official record the board adopting a resolution, which is in the board packet as Form 130, to formalize the FEMA grant.

MOTION: To adopt the resolution for CalOES designation of authorized agents of disaster grants.

Board Member Name	Approved (Yes Vote)	Not Approved (No Vote)	Abstain
Director Chess	X		
Director Cornejo	X		
Director Cuevas (Motion)	X		
Director Lacayo (stepped out of room)			
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 Mr. Duran has applied for the Senior Maintenance and Operations II position.
- Mr. Murphy, former Maintenance Supervisor, is returning to help out with the X-Games and the Fair this year, which will be a big help.
- There has been a gas leak, but it should be wrapped up tomorrow.
- There is concrete work being done. In area 1, the apprenticeship program is donating their time and materials to pour a new ADA walkway which is partially complete for now and will hopefully be done before the Fair. Director Cuevas recommended donating a brick recognizing the Local 585 for their work and contributions.
- The roof has been completed on the Santa Cruz building and the next step is to fumigate it. In the inside of the building, the ceiling tiles have been removed which exposed the industrial look. It will be kept that way and staff will paint it black and install LED lights to give it a modern look.
- The San Miguel and Anacapa awning projects are on progress, we are waiting for CCA and our state engineer. Once we get the approval on the drawings, we will be able to start work and it should be quick.
- The Raceway bathroom got a remodel. It was flooded extensively this past winter, so Mr. Duran and his crew put new windows in, new paint, new roof, new sinks and looks really nice.
- The Raceway bleacher project is complete, staff is waiting on the final inspection from the State engineer.
- There has been asphalt repair in the main parking lot, which is being done by the apprentice program as well.
- She mentioned the new ADA walkway in area 1 and there is another access point coming off the Gem and Mineral Building side. There is a curb and a slope and that is to be leveled out before the Fair.
- She commended the maintenance crew on the Floriculture area clean-up because she has never seen it look that nice before, especially inside the building. The wood panels around the perimeter have been removed and replaced with some rebar, which will now allow you to see through that area and it looks so much bigger and more desirable.
- The Derby Club HVAC removal project is on the list of projects. The first step will be to remove all the old HVAC units, which she has someone that will donate the crane to remove them which is the greatest expense.
- She has some local people that are interested in possibly sponsoring parts of our facilities. For example, thanks to President Long, there may be a paint sponsor from Benjamin Moore to donate paint for the horse barns and buildings.
- Staff will continue with fixing lights and installing LEDs throughout the facility.
- The arena project is ongoing, there was some delay with the rain.
- The general landscape throughout the grounds is continuous. We use our own maintenance team, and they are doing a phenomenal job. There is an old fountain on rodeo row outside of Floriculture that was hidden by brush and shrubbery and our guys are getting that repaired and functioning again.

- There is a new LED sign out front and the staff is putting together an additional ad program where we can sell advertising on that sign.
- Staff is looking into solar landscape lights for the palm trees down Main Street.

B. 2024 Fair Update

Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager

- She has 64 food concessions, about 141 commercial vendors and approximately 35 community booths.
- She has been working hard alongside a few others to bring in community that we want to celebrate during our 150th anniversary and bring them in. They have to be interesting and diverse.
- She has a waiting list for Adventures in Shopping and the Patio which is great.
- Since CEO McGuire is creating all these new areas, entertainment and allowing her to work on community she is able to curate who fits best to create an experience.
- She and others have spent a lot of time measuring and mapping out the grounds, which has created new space and allows staff to maximize the number of vendors and community we can bring in.
- She explained that there will be maps in front of the buildings, in the main office and at the souvenir booth with QR codes so people will know where things will be.

Megan Hook, Marketing and Publicity

- Ms. Johnson's efforts are extraordinary and she has seen it from two sides because her son has a booth at the Fair so she's seen her deal with a client that way. During the Spring Wine Walk, she and Ms. Johnson went door to door at downtown businesses to talk to them about opportunities at the Fair.
- They wrapped up the Youth Poster contest. It was opened to all grades and the fee was waived. Last year there were 32 entries and this year there were 240. They will be judging that at the same time as the commemorative poster contest.
- Now that the board has approved the four statements, she will be applying those to the website to the things we do.
- They have been designing a lot of graphics and having fun pulling in the 150th anniversary theme where it makes sense.
- The LED sign was mentioned, and she explained that she was trained and there are a lot of cool things you can do with it like streaming, advertising, a Fair countdown.
- There have been a lot of Fair planning meetings like ticketing, layout/mapping, marketing, etc.
- There have also been a lot of meetings throughout the community with local partners. CEO McGuire has been instrumental with those because she knows a lot of people in the community and is open to working with other groups. It is starting to build some bridges with groups like the City of Ventura and Visit Ventura. It is a great way to find ways to work within our community, especially downtown.
- The website is near complete. It is designed to work on the phone the best but will also work on a computer. They have gone through it and worked on the forms and links.

Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor

- In February, she attended WFA's Super School Training in Sacramento. It was three days of all things exhibits, which she learned a lot and met a lot of people who she networked with. She learned about quality as well as quantity. One of her biggest takeaways is "if you make it you take it." There truly is a division for everything and if not, there is always "other."
- All entry guides for the still exhibits are on the website. Her personal goal moving into this role was to make sure the process of online registering is as streamlined as possible. She is working with Ms. Hook to make sure all the information is on the website. The entry guides will also be available in the office in case anyone needs help to register.
- There are two new no cost activities this year which will be an ag trivia night in the agriculture building and the other will be Uncle Leo's piggy pursuit in Uncle Leo's Barn.
- They are introducing a professional wine competition in the Agriculture Building.
- There were 62 steers tagged in this year which is up slightly from last year.
- She explained that Samantha from the Junior Fair Board is present today. They are required to come to a board meeting at some point before the Fair. They did have their first event in March where they co-hosted with the City of Ventura the beach clean-up. There were over 150 members of community members that showed up and the only problem was that there wasn't enough trash. The JFB have decided on the games that they will be running at the Fair such as pie eating and karaoke but will also be doing some new ones like lemon bobbing.
- She announced that she was named to the WFA Young Professionals Association as the Southern California Chair. It is an opportunity for 18-40 year olds in the fair industry to network and participate in professional development and industry education.

Jason Amelio, Sales Manager

- This year during the Fair, he will be working with parking directly. He has secured all the machines to be able to take credit cards and cash with all sellers to help speed up traffic coming in. In addition to that, he will be like a Swiss army knife and help out where he can. He explained that the theme for this year is that the grounds and staff itself are at a whole new level that has not been there for quite some time. We are a top down facility meaning that everything is driven from our CEO down. She allows us to utilize the grounds to the best of our ability and there are spaces that we are going to utilize that have never been utilized before.
- During the period of February 19th through April 7th, we took in just over \$118,179 in rental invoice revenue, which is up from \$68,445 during the same time last year. The increase is due to the additions of the On the Edge Promotions "Home and Garden Show" and Hall of Flowers event. Both events are looking to return in 2025. Parking was down during this same period with \$45,180 this year vs just over \$57,150 last year. The decrease can be attributed in part to the loss of the Punk in the Park event from 2023 as well as the rental time from Mission Church and the Hall of Flowers weekend move in.

- Over the next month we have returning events from Serenity By The Sea, NSSA Surf, Latino Business Expo, American Flat Track at Ventura Raceway, the California Strawberry Festival, Circus Vargas, and a National Gem show hosted by our own Ventura Gem and Mineral Society. We also have a very exciting first-time event in May which is the West Coast Outdoor and Fishing Expo. Produced by the same team that put on the Latino Business Expo, this is a homegrown event that is set to serve the extremely large sports and fishing market we enjoy in Ventura County.
- We are continuing to work towards our spring and summer event calendar including California Strawberry Festival, The growing Summerfest Dog Show, X Games, Seaside Tattoo Show, CBF events and the recently announced Surf Rodeo coming to our grounds for the first time.

C. X-Games Update

- Mr. Amelio explained that he continues to work with them almost daily with one issue or another. They are planning, building, and working on expanding their parking which is the biggest thing right now because they want to do all off-site parking. The Ventura Police Department is engaged as well as the City and things are coming along nicely.

D. Surfers Point Managed Retreat Update

- May 2nd at 5:30 p.m. in the Santa Rosa Hall there will be a Surfers Point Retreat Meeting.
- President Long has attended a couple working group meetings and this meeting will get anyone up to speed on the project.
- President Long stated that construction will start just after Labor Day this year and needs to be finished before the Fair starts next year. It certainly affects our parking and some of the things we have going on at the fairgrounds, but it is not as much parking as we had anticipated.
- Director Cornejo added that the City hired a private firm who is conducting the public outreach for the project so that everyone understands what is intended and planned. They want to get public input on some of the art that is being proposed because there is some funding in the project for that.

XI. Board Correspondence

CEO McGuire explained that the two memos in the board packet came after the board agenda was posted. The first one is from Mike Francesconi with F&E regarding poultry inspections and the other is also from Mr. Francesconi regarding the bilingual services act survey.

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, 1-3, are approved by the vote that approves the Consent Agenda, unless an item is pulled for separate consideration.

A. Agreements

1. Standard Agreements

Submitted by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, Deputy Manager

Approved by: Jennifer McGuire
Jennifer McGuire, CEO Ventura Fairgrounds

Approved by: Dan Long
Dan Long, Board President