

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, June 25th, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.
Ventura County Fairgrounds – 1st Floor Derby Club

I. Call to Order

Roll Call

Declaration of Recusal or Conflict of Interest

The meeting convened at 11:01 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.

Director Absent: Cecilia Cuevas.

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.

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Mack led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

- A. Charles Southwick, Fairs and Expositions
- B. Judy Wagner, 18th DAA Fair Board

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.

- A. Kathie Moore- Thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak and shared how pleased she was with the work done to improve the grounds.

V. Presentations – Wagner Consulting Group not present.

- A. Wagner Consulting Group was deemed non-responsive and as advised by CDFA legal the Board can now either reject the low bid and go forward with the second lowest bid or move forward with the lowest bid.
 - a. Directors discussed the difference between the two lowest bids.

MOTION: In regards to the vendor for carnival ride inspections, we reject the low bid in favor for the next lowest bid.

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

VI. Approval of Minutes

- A. May 28th, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the May 28th, 2024 Board Meeting minutes.

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

Director Morgan-Carter	X		
Vice President Ceja	X		
President Long	X		

VII. Financial Report

A. 2024 Financials

a. CEO McGuire explained that this is not the format they were hoping for and that until 2023 is closed out there will not be an expenses and revenue balance sheet. Ms. Martin stated that CFSA is having difficulty after changing the accounts, and is anticipating having 2023 closed out within the next week.

B. Discussion and possible action regarding 2023 STOP

a. CEO McGuire stated that she included an email from the CFSA accountant regarding the Statement of Operations report. The email details the variances that were adjusted.

b. Director Lacayo commented on her confidence in the report based on the clean up work that the accounting team at CDFA has done.

Motion: To approve the 2023 STOP report.

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

VIII. Old Business

A. Discussion regarding policies

Director Morgan-Carter recommended that the item be tabled to be revisited after the fair. President Long and Director Lacayo agreed.

B. Facility Update

CEO McGuire shared how complementary people have been on the ground improvements both inside and out. The entire facility has been repainted with the exception of the Quonset hut roofs. CEO McGuire also shared that Ron Murphy, the longtime maintenance supervisor who had retired, has returned to oversee maintenance through fair. Mr. Duran detailed additional improvements that have occurred on grounds.

C. 2024 Fair Update

Ms. Hook, marketing and Publicity

- Ticket sales are very high in comparison to last year, a contributing factor to this has been CEO McGuire's new stream of revenue through VIP concert tickets. Admission tickets alone have increased significantly, at this time last year ninety thousand dollars in tickets were sold and this year we are at two hundred and forty-five thousand dollars. Over 100 thousand dollars of ticket sales occurred on the day that Gabriel Iglecias was announced.
- 10 different influencers have been contracted to create content in collaboration with fair.
- Negotiated deals with the auto center billboard to be featured for 5 weeks, and with photographers, videographers, radio, and community groups.
- Email marketing has been a large part of the ticketing strategy, a third of ticket sales have come through that alone.
- There will be a poster created for the tribute bands that are featured on the 805 Stage. Additionally, designing the Media kits and programs.
- New signage coming this year. Most signs on the grounds will be redone.
- Accompanied CEO McGuire to the California Women in Agriculture meeting last week, where she was the guest speaker. CEO McGuire's progress and future ideas for the fairgrounds were incredibly well received. Ms. Hook shared about the groups' increase involvement in the fair moving forward.

Ms. Johnson, Concessions and Commercial

- Passed out a map book which was created in collaboration with Mr. Maynard. Many hours of work went into the book, and it was a project she was hoping to create for many years. Mentioned that Ms. Inez was also instrumental in the process of the maps, assisting in measuring and planning along the way.

- Mr. Amelio touched on the main entrance redesign and the Garden St. entrance reopening. He shared the ways they adjusted the entrances to increase efficiency, security, and safety.
- Plans to make a dollar per square foot of concession stands, to be able to create a better understanding of what stands should be in each location.
- New and improved area between the Quonset huts featuring outdoor living vendors. Adventures in Shopping is sold out, Ocean Avenue, and Art Walk and Shop is full as well.
- Mr. Amelio added that the maps created by the team are second to none and will be incredibly useful for interim events moving forward.

Ms. Inez, Exhibits and Junior Fair Board

- Entries are streaming in and on trend with last year.
- Final Livestock tag ins went well. Entry numbers are up ever so slightly.
- Auction Sponsors are at seventy-two thousand, goal of eighty thousand.
- Buckle sponsors are also increased, with special thanks to Ms. Moore for assisting with that.
- Save the Date cards were sent out for the top 200 auction buyers.
- Agriculture building will be getting a redesign for this year, redesigning produce displays and the addition of the Commercial wine competition.
- Read and Ride entries are picking up.
- Junior Fair Board members attended and Ms. Inez spoke about the skills they learned about in past meetings.

Mr. Lieberman, Sponsorships

- Sponsorship numbers are increasing, and it is projected to be about thirty sponsors.
- Sponsors enjoy having on-site space.

D. X-Games Update

Mr. Amelio is pleased with how much the X-Games has done. They have a goal of twenty five thousand attendees daily, which is an increase from last year. The size of the event has increased in size as well. The tear down of the event is only 7 days, and they will be leaving a significant portion of the dirt to be allocated for grounds improvement. The revenue from the event is expected to exceed what it was last year.

IX. Board Correspondence

President Long elected to take the agenda item out of order, and it was heard immediately following public comment.

- A. Letter from Kerrie Allen – Discussion and possible action regarding JLA petition to tag a new animal.
- a. Mr. Spiker shared that his swine had to be put down at the recommendation of a veterinarian, he then asked to be granted the approval to acquire a replacement animal.
 - b. CEO McGuire clarified that the Board has the authority to grant a second chance animal and that the Large Livestock Superintendent approves the award of a new animal. She explained the state ownership rules and that some exhibitors will tag in an additional animal. With the increasing cost of feed and animals, CEO McGuire stated that many exhibitors cannot afford to raise the backup animals any longer. Her recommendation is that the Board grants Mr. Spiker’s appeal, but the new animal is not eligible for any champion or reserve champion awards.

MOTION: To allow the exhibitor to purchase the second animal.

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

- c. Ms. Allan stated that Ariana Vargas lost her goat 7 days after tagging it on June 1st. Ms. Vargas then told the Board about her goat project and asked to be granted an additional animal tag.
- d. Cody Hicks was not in attendance.

MOTION: To allow the exhibitors to purchase a second animal.

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

X. 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 Agenda, items A 1-4.

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

Director Cuevas(Not Present)			
Director Lacayo	X		
Director Mack	X		
Director Morgan-Carter (Second)	X		
Vice President Ceja	X		
President Long	X		

XI. CEO Report

- CEO McGuire shared about the new appointments to the Foundation. They decided on quarterly meetings for the Foundation. Revising their by-laws and vision to align with the Fairgrounds.
- Partnerships and outreach have been a huge focus over the last month. Connecting with members of the community and establishing relationships is especially important to the future. Thanks to Director Chess, a relationship with the Ventura Rotary Club to explore the potential of hosting the annual 4th of July Firework show.
- Cattle drive on July 31st, through the downtown Ventura District. Clearance has been granted by the city and downtown Ventura.
- Player's Casino and Derby Club, the owner of the Derby Club passed away so legal counsel has been taken to generate next steps.
- Staff updates: Ron Murphy has returned, as previously mentioned. Recognition to Ricardo Rodriguez and Travis Childs for officially becoming state employees.
- The Fair Sales report is historical. Season passes being sold at twenty-five dollars was very successful and the fair will recoup the discounted rate in revenue the patron spends on grounds.
- Gas line restoration is complete. FEMA application is in the works for reimbursement on that.

XII. President's Report

President Long highlighted the Foundation goal of thirty million dollars of donations raised. Amazed by the turn around in the last year in the ground's restoration.

XIII. Directors Comments

Director Ceja

- He is looking forward to the summer events and appreciates all of the hard work that the staff has put in.

- His Local union will be at the fair.
- He is appreciative of all of the local tourism the fairgrounds events brings to the area.

Directo Cornejo

- She thanked the staff for their enthusiasm and extra effort they have been putting forward.
- She is very excited for the Grandstand and Tribute band concerts.

Director Chess

- Her head is spinning and she is thrilled to be a part of the organization.

Director Mack

- She will be presenting a poster to the Oxnard City Council on July 16th.

Director Morgan-Carter

- She echoed everyone's comments on the incredible job everyone is doing.
- She thanked Ms. Hook for her assistance on a Juneteenth presentation and give away.

Director Lacayo

- She thanked the staff for doing an incredible job.
- She is happy to see the return of the Junor Fair Board.
- She is thrilled about the X-Games return this weekend.
- She is looking forward to the fair.

XIV. Future Agenda Items

- Policy Manual revisions
- 2024 Fair Updates

XV. 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 12:22 pm.

President Long reconvened at 2:51 p.m. President Long reported out that CEO McGuire resigned from the State of California and the Board thanked her for her service. In a unanimous vote, the Board passed that Ms. Ortiz along with Dal Long would be Co-Interim

CEOs. President Long stated that CEO McGuire cited medical issues as her reason for her resignation.

Public Comment was given by Judy Wagner, 18th DAA Board of Director. She spoke about CEO McGuire's love of the Ventura Fair and all of the wonderful things she has done in Ventura and in Bishop. She spoke on her hesitance of the arrangement from the beginning and her disappointment of the outcome today.

XVI. Adjourn

President Long adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

Submitted by: Emilee Inez
Emilee Inez, Exhibit Supervisor

Approved by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, Interim Co-CEO

Approved by: Dan Long
Dan Long, Board President & Interim Co-CEO