

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: Heidi Ortiz, Interim Co-CEO

Tuesday, February 25th, 2025 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 9:00 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

Directors absent:

Staff present: Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Jason Amelio, Sales Manager, Jenny Martin, Accounting Supervisor, Megan Hook, PR and Marketing, and Eryn Johnson, Office Assistant

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)

1. Brad Conners, Deputy City Manager
2. Alex Magone, Ventura City Council Member

IV. Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda - None

V. Presentations - None

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. January 28th, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve January 25th, 2025 Board Meeting minutes.

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

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

VII. Financial Report

A. Preliminary financials ending December 31st, 2024

VIII. New Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding Building Naming Rights

President Long invited Edgar Terry, Foundation President, to discuss naming rights. Mr. Terry highlighted the *Lassoos & Legends* event on March 23rd and stressed the need for clear board policy.

Director Mack emphasized developing a policy and later motioned to remove the \$25,000 minimum, allowing the Foundation to proceed without a set minimum. Director Morgan-Carter raised concerns about exclusivity and vetting donors. Mr. Terry supported flexibility, suggesting \$25,000 as a starting point for smaller naming opportunities.

Director Cornejo advocated flexible terms (e.g., 3-5 years) and clear boundaries between the board and Foundation. CEO Ortiz provided Monterey's CDFA-approved guidelines as a baseline.

President Long clarified discussions leaned toward 3–5-year terms, with agreements requiring board, Foundation, and CDFA approval.

Vice President Ceja motioned to set a \$25,000 minimum. After briefly rescinding, he recanted, and the motion failed (3 for, 4 against).

Director Mack motioned to authorize the Foundation to proceed, encouraging flexibility. Director Cornejo suggested adding "pending a formal policy," supported by Director Chess, who questioned if a policy could be finalized before the March 23rd event. President Long noted a special meeting would be required.

MOTION: To approve a \$25,000 minimum for naming rights bids.

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		X	
Vice President Ceja (Motion)	X		
President Long	X		

Due to a lack of support, the motion did not pass. A new motion was then proposed by Director Mack.

MOTION: To authorize Foundation to move forward, with flexibility, for potential naming rights donations – pending formal policy.

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	X		
Vice President Ceja (Motion)		X	
President Long	X		

B. 2025 Fair

CEO Ortiz confirmed ticket prices will remain the same as last year: \$15 for children/seniors and \$20 for adults. As this is outlined in the policy manual, a vote is required. She also highlighted ongoing promotions to make the fair more accessible for local and out-of-county visitors.

Director Cornejo recommended revising the policy to eliminate the need for annual price approvals, simplifying the process. Director Lacayo supported this recommendation. President Long noted efforts to address this issue had already begun and would continue, referencing recent policy reviews. CEO Ortiz added that last February, admission prices were narrowed to CEO-recommended rates and brought to the board for approval.

Director Chess connected holding the line on pricing to the WFA award, which recognized last year's \$25 season pass promotion for addressing inflation. CEO Ortiz clarified the award specifically recognized this promotion.

IX. Committee Meetings

A. Executive Committee Report

President Long reported on committee updates, including finalizing the disbanding of the Livestock Committee and reconsidering the Marketing Committee, proposing Ms. Hook provide monthly updates instead. He suggested replacing chair and vice chair roles with co-chairs for equality.

Director Cornejo motioned to approve changes to committee structures or names, which Director Lacayo seconded. Director Morgan-Carter sought clarification on the reasoning behind specific name changes.

President Long noted uncertainty about the Business Development Committee's purpose, as business development has historically been viewed as the CEO's role. Director Morgan-Carter affirmed committees' value, in general.

Director Cornejo amended her motion to approve President Long's recommended changes, including committee organization, which Director Lacayo seconded.

MOTION: To approve President Long's recommended changes to standing committees including the organization of them.

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

X. Board Correspondence

A. Memo from Mike Francesconi at California Dept. of Food & Agriculture, Fairs & Expositions: 2025 State Rules for California Fairs and Enclosures

CEO Ortiz presented the updated 2025 state rules and noted they would be sent to Emilee, the exhibit supervisor, who ensures enforcement across departments. He mentioned she may join the State Rules Committee to stay informed on updates and discussions, ensuring timely communication. This was the only item in 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

President Long noted that consent agenda items are routine and will be approved in one motion unless a member or the public requests an item be pulled for discussion. He asked if anyone wished to comment or pull an item.

Director Mack congratulated Vice President Ceja on the upcoming marriage and suggested he abstain from voting on the rental agreement due to a potential conflict of interest.

Vice President Ceja abstained from voting on the rental agreement related to him but participated in voting on all other consent agenda items.

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

XII. CEO Report

CEO Ortiz invited Ms. Hook to provide a marketing update.

Ms. Hook shared:

- A new logo for the Fairgrounds and Event Center will replace fair-specific imagery.
- A sponsorship brochure has been created, with Mr. Lieberman leading outreach.
- Planning for the 2025 Fair, the theme *Waves of Fun*, is underway, including an expanded poster contest (K-12) and affordability-focused promotions.
- Oktoberfest and other events are in brainstorming.
- Facility renderings for naming rights and event marketing will be showcased at the *Lassoes & Legends* event on March 23rd.

Director Chess asked if the sponsorship brochure includes set pricing. Ms. Hook explained it does not allowing flexibility for tailored agreements. Director Mack congratulated Ms. Hook on the recent awards. Ms. Hook expressed pride in the VIP concert arena's success, which has drawn interest from other fairs. Director Morgan-Carter praised the marketing efforts. Ms. Hook thanked Ms. Johnson for securing sponsorships and in-kind deals.

Director Cornejo commended Ms. Hook on the new Event Center logo and effective implementation of the "Ventura County Fairgrounds and Event Center" name. Ms. Hook emphasized the need for a versatile design reflecting the fairgrounds' year-round role. President Long expressed pride in Ms. Hook's achievements and thanked her and the fair staff for their hard work.

CEO Ortiz provided updates:

- Fair planning continues, with Oktoberfest decisions pending.
- The budget will be sent to the board for review.
- CEO Ortiz will attend a CDFA meeting in Sacramento.
- A new Assembly Bill (CA AB258) seeks fair funding, and a support letter template has been circulated.

- The audit is nearing completion, with findings to be reviewed by President Long, Vice President Ceja, Ms. Martin, and CEO Ortiz.
- Reminders included submitting Form 700 and attending the next board meeting on Friday at 2:00 PM.

Director Chess commended the CEO report's format. CEO Ortiz credited Miss Johnson for compiling it.

Vice President Ceja proposed renaming the union apprenticeship program as the "Labor Trainings School" to attract other trades. CEO Ortiz highlighted the program's value, and Director Mack sought clarification on the official name. Vice President Ceja confirmed it operates under a fair agreement and suggested the new name.

Director Lacayo asked about RV parking solutions during fair time. CEO Ortiz noted construction will reduce camping spots from 90 to 50, impacting revenue. She mentioned partnering with Ventura RV Resort, where Ms. Johnson secured spaces for vendors, and encouraged board members to suggest nearby parking options.

XIII. President's Report

President Long thanked everyone for the productive discussions, particularly on naming rights, acknowledging its complexities. He expressed satisfaction with the progress being made and the positive direction of the board's efforts.

XIV. Director's Comments

Director Mack

- She thanked CEO Ortiz and the team for their continued hard work.

Director Cornejo

- She expressed gratitude to the staff and excitement about the consent agenda, particularly the approval of contracts signaling progress. She shared enthusiasm for this year's fair, building on last year's successes, and praised the new Event Center logo as a significant step forward.

Vice President Ceja

- He thanked the staff for their hard work in advancing plans for 2025 and expressed excitement for the upcoming *Lassoos & Legends* event. He noted that county supervisors have requested a tour of the fairgrounds, and he sees the event as an opportunity to showcase the facilities and progress to elected officials.

Director Lacayo

- She echoed Director Mack's thanks to CEO Ortiz, adding her gratitude to Ms. Hook for her hard work in marketing and to all staff for their efforts.

Director Chess

- She noted the meeting's productivity and the exciting progress from the Foundation. She emphasized ensuring alignment with policies to avoid backtracking and highlighted the importance of recognizing the individuals behind the work, not just the organization.

Director Morgan-Carter

- She had no comment.

XV. Future Agenda Items

- A. Naming Rights Policy
- B. Budget
- C. 2025 Fair

XVI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m.

Submitted by: Eryn Johnson
Eryn Johnson, Office Assistant

Approved by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by: Dan Long
Dan Long, Board President CEO