

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, January 28th, 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 9:02 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, and Miriam Mack.

Directors absent: Shanté Morgan Carter

Staff present: Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Jason Amelio, Sales Manager, Jenny Martin, Accounting Supervisor, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Director Chess led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

1. Alex Magone, Ventura City Council Member

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

V. Presentations - None

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. November 19th, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve November 19th, 2024 Board Meeting minutes.

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

VII. Financial Report

A. Financials ending September 30th, 2024 through November 30th, 2024

CEO Ortiz thanked Ms. Martin for all her work on the September through November financials. Director Lacayo thanked Ms. Martin as well for arranging the Board's training session with the CFSA accountants to help them get a better understanding of how to read the financial statements. CEO Ortiz mentioned that additional training is available if the Board so desires. The Board received and filed the reports.

VIII. New Business

A. 2025 Fair Progress

CEO Ortiz shared that meetings regarding the Arena have already begun, working to fine tune and improve fairgoer experience. She is also actively looking for an admissions team to hire for the year. The decision has been made to continue as an independent midway for the 2025 fair. The independent midway allows us to put our the best foot forward, provide the best product for our fairgoers, and maintain the great relationships we have with ride operators. CEO Ortiz also mentioned the work the Concessions Department is doing, like meeting and working with vendors and nonprofit organizations. She explained that the Exhibits Department is continuing to update the Entry Guides.

B. Equestrian Events

The Ventura County Fairgrounds Foundation will be hosting a Roping Fundraising event on March 23rd, in the Morgan Arena. CEO Ortiz will share additional information as it becomes available.

C. July Events Scheduling

CEO Ortiz stated that Mr. Jacobs had recommended to not hold any events in the entire month of July. President Long said that his recommendation would be to block out the 2 weeks prior to the fair. CEO Ortiz said she will partner with Mr. Amelio to look at the schedule of events and internally create a policy for the matter.

D. Secretary/Treasurer-Manager Annual Delegation of Authority

The (Secretary/Treasurer-Manager) Chief Executive Officer, Heidi Ortiz, is authorized to execute Rental Agreements up to \$150,000.00, Standard 2 Agreements up to \$150,000.00 and Grandstand Contracts up to \$300,000.00 without further authorization from the Board of Directors.

President Long noted the increase in delegation for Grandstand Contracts which is \$300,000.00. CEO Ortiz explained that there has been a jump in the cost of acts, which has been the trend in the industry. Offers are very time sensitive as well and the increased delegation will give CEO Ortiz the ability to approve an act and not lose them. CEO Ortiz assured the Board that she would stay within the overall budgeted amount. She offered that she was fine lowering the amount if the Board feels more comfortable with that. Director Chess recommended that the delegation be awarded, and that CEO Ortiz is to report the deals to President Long once they have been agreed upon.

MOTION: To approve the Delegation of Authority.

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

IX. Old Business

A. Surfer's Point Managed Retreat Update

Mr. Amelio stated that he attends a weekly meeting on the progress of the project. He shared about the partnership they have with the construction team, an example being that they held off construction for a day when there was uncertainty if the fairgrounds were to become a fire basecamp once again. President Long mentioned that part of the project's delay in getting started was due to fire basecamp setting up. There was discussion amongst the Directors about parking revenue and the annual passes sold by the fairgrounds.

X. Board Correspondence

E. CA H5N1 Avian Influenza – Ban on California Poultry and Dairy Exhibitions at Fairs and Shows

F. Letter from State Vet: California Poultry and Dairy Cattle Exhibition Ban

CEO Ortiz shared that the decision was made to assess the status of the ban on May 1st to determine if the Fair will be holding a Poultry Show or not. If the ban has been lifted by then, the fair will proceed with the show as normal, and if not, the show will be permanently canceled for the 2025 Fair. Director Cornejo asked if this would affect the Exotic Bird Show that is scheduled for March. Mr. Amelio clarified that the ban is exclusively for domestic birds. CEO Ortiz said that the staff is in communication with F&E to stay up to date on the status.

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

Director Mack asked about the transportation contract due to its high dollar amount. CEO Ortiz clarified that it is a multi-year contract which is to be paid over a three-year period. It is for the free shuttles the fair provides, and she explained that it is a new company this year. The free shuttle busses have shown their worth to the Fair and with the ridership increasing every year it is a worthy investment.

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 (Second)	X		
Director Mack (Motion)	X		
Vice President Ceja	X		
President Long	X		

XII. CEO Report

CEO Ortiz thanked everyone for welcoming her back. Five members of the staff attended the Western Fairs Association Convention last week in Reno, Nevada. The team networked and learned new ideas. The Fair won multiple awards as well, most notably the Promotion to Combat Inflation category, which was won by the \$25 Season Pass promotion. CEO Ortiz offered a special thanks to Ms. Hook for that promotion and her work on the submission of all the awards. A full list of awards won will be sent to the Board once it becomes available. Thanking Ms. Martin again for her dedication to the audit, CEO Ortiz said that they should only need a few more reports until its completion. She reminded the Board that their Form 700 was due April 1st. CEO Ortiz informed the Board that Ms. Inez and Ms. Johnson had become civil servants in October, bringing it to nine civil servants on staff now. Finally, she informed the Board that their terms are automatically extended four years and they will serve until replaced or resign.

XIII. President's Report

President Long shared how helpful he found the Strategic Planning session with Ms. Bailey-Finley. He is working with CEO Ortiz on the committee assignments for the year and will continue the Executive and Finance as standing committees. Additional recommendations for committee decisions were assisted by Mr. Jacobs and Ms. Bailey-Findley. At these recommendations, any additional committees will be done on an Ad-Hock basis and have only 2 co-chairs. President Long said that the Board members are mostly up to date on the CDFA required trainings. Finally, he shared that he is looking forward to the bright future ahead.

XIV. Director's Comments

Director Mack

- She said thank you again for the financial training. She asked for clarification on the 3-year contract with Strawberry Festival, to which Mr. Amelio clarified that it is still in the works. She gave her compliments to the staff and welcomed CEO Ortiz back and into her CEO role.

Director Cornejo

- She welcomed Ms. Ortiz as the CEO and shared her confidence in her in the role due to her immense institutional knowledge. She congratulated Ms. Inez and Ms. Johnson on their State positions. She thanked Ms. Martin on her work with the audit and shared

her contentment with the work being done by a private company. Finally, she thanked Mr. Jacobs for his assistance while CEO Ortiz was on leave.

Vice President Ceja

- He thanked the staff for giving the Board the opportunity to build from within for Ms. Ortiz's CEO appointment and congratulated Ms. Johnson and Ms. Inez. He is looking forward to the Surfer's Point project and to the new year ahead. He made the recommendation to the Board to utilize their fair emails for security.

Director Lacayo

- She began by congratulating CEO Ortiz, Ms. Johnson, and Ms. Inez for their new roles. She thanked Mr. Jacobs for assisting, stating that he was the right person at the right time. She is excited on the imminent completion of the audits. She congratulated Ms. Martin on welcoming her first grandchild. She applauded the great job that CEO Ortiz is doing, stating that a previous CEO had the vision to mentor the younger staff and that she can see that CEO Ortiz has stepped into the role flawlessly. She attributed the success to the fact that we operate as a team.

Director Chess

- She remarked how helpful the individual meetings are for her. She called Mr. Jacobs phenomenal and shared how flawless the transition to CEO Ortiz has been. She greatly enjoyed attending the dog show and is looking forward to another great fair.

XV. Future Agenda Items - None

XVI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Submitted by: Emilee Inez
Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor

Approved by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by: Dan Long
Dan Long, Board President CEO