

# 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, CEO

**Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 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, Leslie Cornejo, Leah Lacayo, and Shanté Morgan Carter

**Directors absent:** Betsy Chess, Miriam Mack

**Staff present:** Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, Megan Hook, PR and Marketing, and Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant.

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)

1. Joe Evans- New Security Director
2. Alex Magone, Ventura City Council Member

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

## **V. Presentations**

### **A. Youth Poster Contest Unveiling and Awards**

Ms. Inez announced the winners; 1<sup>st</sup> Place went to 4<sup>th</sup> grader Kalen Kwak, 2<sup>nd</sup> place to 10<sup>th</sup> grader Rhex Batten, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place to 9<sup>th</sup> grader Britney Ruiz. CEO Ortiz presented 1<sup>st</sup> place to Ms. Kwak.

## **VI. Approval of Minutes**

### **A. May 27th, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes**

CEO Ortiz issued a correction that the Minutes being approved were for May instead of April, which had been listed on the agenda in error.

**MOTION:** To approve May 27th, 2025, Board Meeting minutes.

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

## VII. Financial Report

### A. Preliminary financials ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

CEO Ortiz went over the Total Net Resources for this time period started at \$7,547,703 and ended at \$7,358,933. There was a decrease of \$188,770. Unexpected projects on the ground are continuing and fund are being reallocated accordingly. \$420,000 has been wired for the renovation of the Morgan bathrooms and thus, money transfer to the LAIF fund has been placed on a temporary hold until after the 2025 Fair. President Long mentioned he has driven through the grounds and can see all of the deferred maintenance that is currently underway. Director Lacayo expressed disappointment that so much maintenance had been deferred up until this point.

**MOTION:** To approve the financials ending April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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

## VIII. New Business

### A. Livestock Ownership Exemption Request

#### a. Diego Cervantes- Carpinteria FFA, Swine

CEO Ortiz stated the exhibitor submitted all proper paperwork and obtained his new swine in the required timeframe.

**MOTION:** To approve Livestock Ownership Exemption for Diego Cervantes

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

CEO Ortiz stated there are only 35 days until this year's Fair. VIP concert tickets and Season Passes went on sale June 13<sup>th</sup>, and they have generated almost \$250,000 in revenue. More promotions will be going live soon, and Pre-Sale prices will last through the end of this month. CEO Ortiz called for department reports starting with Megan Hook from Media.

Ms. Hook discussed this month being the end of admission Pre-Sale, VIP concert tickets will sell through fair dates. Advertising will also be on Spotify and Bands in Town this year. Ongoing promotions for entries, Jr. Livestock Auction, and cross promotions with the Foundation are live. Read and Ride will be open until July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Schedule of events, announcing the final grandstand act, and print advertising to come. Regular pricing will begin July 1<sup>st</sup> and Season Passes and rodeo will go on sale July 8<sup>th</sup>. Half of the rodeo tickets will be sold online and half in person. Taste of the Fair will be returning July 29<sup>th</sup>, more information to come. She also discussed this year's plan for multimedia content. Director Morgan-Carter was curious about the standard agreements and the accountability of the content creators and what benefit they provide since different creators are quoted at different rates. Ms. Hook let her know that every Fair day will be covered with multiple media. B-roll content will be used in future promotions. The budget for content creation has decreased from last year as they continue to figure out what does and does not work, and creators are paid differently depending on their roles and time. Director Morgan-Carter wanted clarification on whether the content creators are hired for more events than just the Fair and Ms. Hook let her know some will also cover giveaways, but the bulk of the work is the Fair. Director Cornejo commended Ms. Hook's innovation and agreed we will need to find what works as time goes on.

CEO Ortiz welcomed Emilee Inez with Exhibits to the podium next. Ms. Inez announced the Jr. Large Livestock has finished and numbers are up from last year with several return exhibitors with larger animals being signed up. The tag in location was changed to the Large Livestock Barn this year with safety in mind and it worked very well. Still and Small Livestock registration is still ongoing, 1,283 entries accounted for thus far, with many sign-ups anticipated for day-of events. She is also working on updating the Scavenger Hunt in Uncle Leo's Barn increasing inclusivity and aimed towards children with a ribbon prize upon completion. There will also be informational displays added to Uncle Leo's Barn to learn about animals while waiting in line. Save the dates for the Auction Sponsorship Program have gone out and Ms. Inez is hoping to increase the buyer experience this year.

CEO Ortiz introduced Madalyn Johnson with concessions. Ms. Johnson announced she has signed up 62 new vendors that cover every city of our county. The vendors will offer more variety and inclusivity as well as high trend food options. There will be a Beer and Wine festival on August 10 in the beer gardens and a STEM focused young entrepreneurs booth with Mr. Gross, a community teacher, added as well.

CEO Ortiz invited Rick Barrios, the new Security Lead to come up and introduce himself. He gave an introduction and mentioned during his time on the police force. Mr. Barrios worked on the Fairgrounds during the Thomas Fire. President Long welcomed Mr.

Barrios and is glad to have someone local to have the Lead Security position. Director Cornejo said it was good he is already familiar with the grounds. Vice President Ceja welcomed Mr. Barrios as well. Director Lacayo mentioned she is looking forward to a coordinated effort. Mr. Barrios stated he plans to implement debriefing in the future to better communication. Director Morgan-Carter voiced her appreciation for better communication and President Long echoed the sentiment.

**B. Discussion and possible action regarding Building Naming Rights Policy**

President Long discussed the work him and Director Cornejo have been doing getting the policy together and sent to the State. An adopted policy has been received back from the CDFA attorney. President Long is hoping for clarifications and approval from CDFA before anything is completed. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is still needed. President Long opened this up for discussion with the Board. Director Morgan-Carter wanted wording clarification and addendum on the title, before "31<sup>st</sup> District Agricultural Association", and Article 2 Section 4, before "Board President", to add "Ventura County Fairgrounds" to avoid any confusion. CEO Ortiz said the document has been approved by CDFA Legal, but changes like that should not pose an issue. Director Cornejo agreed the change should be made to the title and brought up the idea of the MOU being separated from the contract. Director Lacayo suggested the contract state "Refer to the MOU" for clarifications needed on the policy. CEO Ortiz stated the MOU would be an agreement between the Fairgrounds and the Foundation and she would be more comfortable approving the MOU as a separate agreement. Director Cornejo also stressed the importance of the autonomy of the Fairgrounds and the Foundation and the necessary separation that should be in place.

**MOTION:** To approve Building Naming Rights Policy- subject to clarification of the CEO's questions for the legal department and addendum to titles and Article 2 Section 4. Adding "Ventura County Fairgrounds" before "31<sup>st</sup> District Agricultural Association" and "Board President".

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

**X. Committee Meetings**

None

**XI. Board Correspondences**

- A. Letters from Sarah and Bill Turner regarding participation in the Large Livestock Program.

Mr. Turner was not old enough to have an animal at the Fair this year, which they brought to our attention. His pig has been given to his brother to submit as a Foundation Animal. No action is needed.

- B. Letter from Delia Elynor Whitaker regarding Best of Show Awards

CEO Ortiz explained this was discussed in length last meeting, no action needed.

**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, 1-4, 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. Judges Consent

**MOTION:** To approve Consent Agenda

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

**XIII. CEO Report**

CEO Ortiz discussed the budgets and the projects currently being funded, project deferments and change orders with Floriculture and Morgan bathrooms. The Floriculture bathroom relocation will be differed sometime in the future. She mentioned the mold remediation has currently been quoted at \$761,525. The CDFA Fairs and Expositions have conducted a facility survey of the roof, sewer, and asphalt and is also working with the California Natural Resource Agency for possible funding. She also discussed setting up City Council meetings and presentations that will be headed by Ms. Inez. CEO Ortiz has been asked to host the Southern California Area Fair tour this year. Information on dates to follow. The Taste of the Fair information will be going out shortly. A member of the public stated she loves the CEO Report document and that it is very helpful and informative. CEO Ortiz and thanked the departments for their contributions to the report.

**XIV. President's Report**

He said he has driven around the grounds and loves all the work he can see going on. He thanked Jim Naylor for his help with the Managed Retreat folks. President Long believes we



are moving on at a great pace and welcomed Ms. Mathewson to the team as CEO Ortiz's assistant.

#### **XV. Director's Comments**

Director Cornejo

She expressed her gratitude for the staff and let it be known she is here to help and advise any staff member that may need it.

Vice President Ceja

He is proud of the work on the beach line and the work being done on the set up for the fair.

Director Lacayo

She expressed her gratitude for the staff and is excited about this year's fair. She echoed Mr. Long and welcomed Ms. Mathewson.

Director Morgan-Carter

She informed the Board that she attended and spoke at a 34<sup>th</sup> annual Juneteenth event in Oxnard as a representative of the Ventura County Fair Board. She asked Ms. Hook if one of the photos could be used on social media. She stated that she is excited about the new Security Directors and their plan for coordinated security and communication. She is also happy about the marketing plans.

#### **XVI. Future Agenda Items**


- A. 2025 Fair
- B. Service Dog Policy
- C.

#### **XVII. Closed Session**

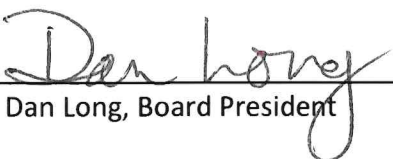
The Directors declined to meet in Closed Session.

#### **XVIII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

Submitted by:   
Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant

Approved by:   
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by:   
Dan Long, Board President