

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, March 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 9:03 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, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, Megan Hook, Marketing & PR

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)

1. Kat Merrick, Executive Director Totally Local VC

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

V. Presentations –

Kat Merrick presented on Totally Local VC's involvement in the Ventura County Fair and the purpose of the organization. Through their coordination of the local craft beer area, Totally Local VC was able to raise money to award more than \$6,000 in scholarships to local youth pursuing agriculture. Ms. Merrick thanked the Fair Board with a certificate of appreciation.

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. February 25th, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve February 25th, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes.

| 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 | | |

VII. Financial Report

A. Financials Final December 2024 to January 31, 2025

CEO Ortiz noted that there were unforeseen additional expenses that were incurred due to the audit. Additionally, there were expenses for training and travel, which were attributed to the strategic planning goal of an increased investment into human capital.

B. Discussion and possible action regarding 2025 budget

CEO Ortiz spoke to the fact that she and Ms. Martin have looked through the budget with a fine-tooth comb. They focused on community consideration, increase in training and human capital investment, and infostructure improvements. Ms. Martin added that the Board can see a decrease in revenue from the Concessions Department due to the Surfers Point Retreat Phase II construction, which has reduced the amount of camping available. There was a question asked by Director Mack as to why there were no budget inclusions for horse shows. Ms. Inez gave clarification that the decision to eliminate the Draft and Carriage show, while difficult, was done in the interest of allocating funds to best utilization in the community.

C. Discussion and possible action regarding 2024 budget Statement of Operations

CEO Ortiz mentioned that as evident in the STOP report, the organization came out ahead last year despite the additional expenses of the audit and PERS. Director Cornejo thanked Ms. Martin for all her hard work. CEO Ortiz echoed the comments of Ms. Martin, including that CSFA sings her praises.

MOTION: To approve the Financials, 2025 Budget, and STOP.

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

VIII. New Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding ownership exemption

Ms. Inez explained that due to the influx of requests to the Board regarding the livestock ownership exemption requirement necessitated the formalization of this policy. The goal was to create clarity of rules in what is such a heartbreaking time for a young exhibitor.

MOTION: To approve the Livestock Ownership Exemption Policy.

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

IX. Old Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding naming Rights Policy

CEO Ortiz said that they are currently looking at the policy and hoping to have it together soon. Director Cornejo said that she is appreciative and using all the questions and comments the committee has received.

B. 2025 Fair

CEO Ortiz shared that the staff is in full Fair mode. They are perfecting the VIP arena layout. She is finalizing the admissions team.

Ms. Hook gave a brief marketing report. She thanked everyone who attended the Foundation fundraiser event. The plan for pre-sale ticketing was made with great consideration to the community. Renderings of all the buildings have been completed, as seen in the packet provided to the Board.

X. Committee Meetings

Director Chess said that there will be a History Committee meeting on Friday 3/28 at 10 am via zoom.

XI. Board Correspondence - None

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

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda with items A, 1-2.

| 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 | X | | |
| President Long | X | | |

XII. CEO Report

CEO Ortiz welcomed Will Schwartz to the team, he is the new Sales Assistant. She said that everyone on the staff is getting up to date on training, both Civil Service and 125 day employees. The Homeland Security Grant was submitted last Friday, it written with assistance from a grant strategist. Carnival applications were due on March 15th, so she has begun the selection process. She is excited to attend the Strawberry Festival Poster unveiling next week.

Director Chess mentioned her happiness with the use of a grant writer. CEO Ortiz mentioned that the writer came at the recommendation at the most recent CDFA Collaborative event that she attended in Sacramento.

XIV. President's Report

President Long began with his love of the building renderings and spoke to their potential. He said that the staff is amazing and is proud to be a part of the organization.

XIV. Director's Comments

Director Morgan Carter

She thanked the Board for their patience and understanding as she is in the final stages of completing her PhD. She is pleased to see everything moving along well and at the hard work of the staff.

Director Mack

She found the Foundation Event to be great. She mentioned that she was recently in an office whose corridors were lined with Fair posters, and how much she loved to see that, She thanked the policy committee for all other their work on the naming rights, and to the staff for their work on the budget.

Director Lacayo

She thanked the staff for all their hard work, and said that it looks like a happy place to be.

Vice President Ceja

He congratulated the staff on all the hard work and progress. He said he had a great time at the Foundation event.

Director Cornejo

She reiterated her thanks for all the work the staff did on the budget, and to Director Lacayo for her collaboration. She added that she loved seeing the theme on the marquis as she drove in to the meeting.

Director Chess

She said that she attended and enjoyed the Foundation event. She said congratulations all around, and that she is proud to be a part of the organization.

XVI. Future Agenda Items

Fair 2025, Building Policies, and the Closed Session minutes from previous meeting.

XVII. Closed Session

Pursuant to Gov. Code Section 11126(e)(2), the Board is authorized to meet in Closed Session for the purpose of conferring with and receiving advice from legal counsel regarding pending litigation.

No reportable action was taken.

XV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 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