

# 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, October 28<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, Betsy Chess, Leah Lacayo, Miriam Mack, Gloria Martinez, Shante Morgan-Carter

**Staff present:** Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, Megan Hook, PR and Marketing, Will Schwartz, Sales Manager, and Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant

**Guests Present:** Tom Kisken, Burt Handy, Paul Jenkin, Ron Reinholdson, Bill Hickman, Brian Brennan, Sonia Ceja, Thomas Earnest and John Wingate

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

## **II. Pledge of Allegiance**

President Long led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **III. Welcome and Introduction of Guests**

Invitation for the public to introduce themselves (not mandatory)

## **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.

- Brian Brennan thanked Director Cornejo for being present at the American Shore and Beach Preservation Conference to accept the Robert Weigl Coastal Project Award granted to the Ventura County Fairgrounds in partnership with the City of Ventura on the Surfer's Point Project. He congratulated the board on this achievement.

## **V. Presentations - None**

## VI. Approval of Minutes

### A. September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025 Board Meeting minutes.

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

## VII. Financial Report

### A. Financials ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

CEO Ortiz reviewed the financials and stated the total assets equal the total liabilities. She was pleased to note the figures were positive.

**MOTION:** To approve the financials ending August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

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

## VIII. New Business

### A. Discussion and Possible action regarding Foundation MOU

- CEO Ortiz stated she has not heard back from CDFA regarding the MOU document presented, but she had informed them it would be going to vote at this meeting. If any corrections need to be made, a vote can be held for an amendment at a future meeting.
- Director Mack is pleased to see the document and said it looks very thorough. She

asked where the document originated.

- CEO Ortiz said she modeled the document after other Fair MOUs and made changes based on relevance to our fair.
- Director Cornejo said it has been a long process, but she is very confident in the document.
- Director Morgan-Carter expressed her contentment about seeing how thorough the MOU is.
- Director Chess is glad the Board has had a chance to tailor the document to be their own and commended all the hard work that was put into it.
- Director Cornejo echoed Director Chess's statement and was happy the Foundation had a chance to review it as well.

**MOTION:** To approve MOU between the Ventura County Fairgrounds and the Ventura County Fairgrounds Foundation.

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

## IX. Old Business

### A. Surfer's Point Progress

President Long opened it up for public comments.

Brian Brennan - suggested President Long send a letter to Public Works to start a working group meeting once construction is completed to maintain a relationship.

Bert Handy - echoed Mr. Brennan's idea and suggested the group be used to come up with an area to lock up bicycles.

Paul Jenkin- suggested the lot being paved should help keep filters cleaner. He stated he noticed some design flaws with the drainage. Mr. Jenkin believes communication with the city is an ongoing issue and agrees that re-establishing a working group is beneficial.

- CEO Ortiz noted that Mr. Schwartz was at the weekly meeting with the city to discuss the project's progress and could report back afterward. She said the project is still on schedule to be completed by mid-November.
- Mr. Schwartz said today's meeting had been canceled, but the asphalt is being poured and the project timeline is still on track.
- Director Mack believes the designers should hold responsibility for any flaws.
- Director Cornejo stated that as the project comes to a close, there should be warranties and guarantees in place.
- CEO Ortiz mentioned CCA are familiarizing themselves with the project but are still waiting to receive Phase II from the City of Ventura and have received Phase I plans.
- Director Chess reiterated the idea of having the guarantees to protect the property.

## **X. Committee Meetings**

### **A. Executive Committee Meeting- October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025**

#### **1. Discussion and Possible action regarding Annual Beach Parking Pass**

Director Long opened the floor for public comments.

Ron Reinholdson- asked the Board to consider a weekday reduced rate parking pass.

Bill Hickman- thanked the Board for reinstating the annual beach parking pass and asked for parking rates to be kept as low as possible. He suggested a fee of \$3 daily and \$125 for annual passes similar to the State Parks pass.

Bert Handy- noted that the State Park has a pass that does not include the summer months for a lower rate.

Brian Brennan- thanked the board for adopting the new annual rate. He said the parking attendant is a great ambassador who can give a lot of information to the public and asked for an automated system to not take her place.

- Director Chess noted extensive research has been done surrounding pricing and the parking rates at Surfer's Point and are currently on the lower end of the surrounding parking lots.
- CEO Ortiz commented that State Parks receive government funding to allow them to maintain lower parking rates.
- Director Cornejo asked for a recap on the process that allowed them to change parking rates.
- CEO Ortiz said that in 2022 the price was \$125 and the CEO at the time increased it to \$200. The Coastal Commission reached out and informed the Fairgrounds that this increase was not allowed and the price had to be reverted back to the price of \$75 for annual passes and \$2 for the daily rate. There have since been discussions with CDFA legal and the Coastal Commission and they deemed as long as the rates are within reason, it is up to the Fairground's discretion to set the pricing.

- Director Lacayo said that daily parking at the State beach is \$10 so she believes the new fees are within reason.
- CEO Ortiz advised that daily parking at Emma Wood, State beach, and the Pier Parking structure all charge \$10 per day so the Surfer's Point rate is lower at \$5.
- Director Mack asked if there was a consideration for the household discount.
- President Long stated his opinion was to revisit additional discounts to the annual pass next year due to an eminent need for repairs to the grounds to prevent flooding.
- Director Chess mentioned going through with the suggestion brought up by Mr. Brennan to continue the relationship with the city.
- Director Mack asked when the rate increase would take effect.
- CEO Ortiz answered that the sale of the annual pass with the new rate can take place once construction has been completed.
- Vice President Ceja said that after reviewing the cost analysis of maintaining Surfer's Point, he believes a rate of \$150 would be a reasonable start.
- Director Martinez respects that the Board intends to keep rates as affordable as possible and agrees on the rate of \$150.
- Director Morgan-Carter is concerned about the public impact and agrees the fees should remain on the lower end of the spectrum.
- Director Chess asked if the city would intervene if it were discovered that water lines have been damaged and need repairs.
- CEO Ortiz said it has not yet been determined.
- President Long stated he is comfortable with the annual rate being \$150.
- Director Mack commented that she was very impressed by all of the letters sent to the board regarding this subject and appreciated everyone's care for the area.
- Director Cornejo is intrigued by the idea of discussing a weekday pass in the future.

**MOTION:** To approve changing the Annual Beach Parking pass to \$150.

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

## 2. Discussion regarding Surfer's Pint Project

- President Long recommends canceling the contract for the Surfer's Pint Project due to the timing and construction.



- Director Lacayo noted that due to deferred maintenance, the contract, while beneficial in the past, no longer makes sense to follow through with.

**MOTION:** To cancel the current Surfer's Pint contract with CBF Productions.

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

#### XI. Board Correspondence

- Letters from the community regarding the annual beach parking pass

**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, 1-3, are approved by the vote that approves the Consent Agenda, unless an item is pulled for separate consideration.

- Agreements
  - Standard Agreements
  - Rental Agreements- Interim
  - Concession Agreements

**MOTION:** To approve the consent agenda with items A, 1-3.

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

### **XIII. CEO Report**

Megan Hook, PR and Marketing

Ms. Hook said she is wrapping up Oktoberfest and that lots of photos and videos were taken. She also stated that surveys have been sent out in different sections to fairgoers and the public to ensure a large demographic. Fair planning has begun where she has created a task and responsibility spreadsheet and timeline. Ms. Hook is also working on submissions for the WFA awards to a variety of categories.

Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Coordinator

Ms. Johnson stated Oktoberfest was very successful and a lot was learned. There are plans to bring more authentic German vendors and more entertainment to the event next year. She had attempted to bring German clubs and community groups to Oktoberfest, but due to scheduling issues it was not possible. Ms. Johnson is hoping that she can host them at next year's event. She also mentioned she has started on Fair preparations with some deposits expected before Thanksgiving. Ms. Johnson noted the train was ADA compliant and added a lot. The commercial and vendor partners work hard to be inclusive. She has a large focus on local vendors and noted shorter events are easier on vendors.

Will Schwartz, Sales Manager

Mr. Schwartz detailed the events and filming that have and will be taking place at the Fairgrounds.

- CEO Ortiz announced Mr. Schwartz is currently transitioning into the Sales Manager position.
- CEO Ortiz thanked the board for their time at the Strategic Planning Check in meeting that took place the day prior.

### **XIV. President's Report**

- President Long said he was happy to have Becky Bailey-Findley in attendance for the Strategic Planning Check in Meeting. He believes it was very productive and believes the Fairgrounds will do well this year.

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

Director Martinez

- She enjoyed the Strategic Planning Check In meeting and appreciated Ms. Bailey-Findley's organization, which allowed her to stay on the same page as board members who have been around longer.

Director Morgan-Carter

- She had a great time at Oktoberfest and spoke to members of the public about their experiences. She is glad the Strategic Planning meetings have become a regular occurrence.

Director Lacayo

- She echoed what Director Morgan-Carter and Director Martinez had said. She stated the Strategic Planning Check In meeting was terrific as was Ms. Bailey-Findley.

Director Mack

- She agreed with Director Lacayo and was glad they could acknowledge the great progress that has been made and implement an agenda for the future. She thanked the staff for all their hard work.

Director Chess

- She agreed with the sentiments echoed with the previous Directors and noted that she saw the Fairgrounds has 44 of 48 weekends reserved for events and suggested trying to plan weekday events too to help pay for deferred maintenance.

Director Cornejo

- She loved having staff present at the Strategic Planning Check In meeting to work as a team. She thanked Ms. Bailey-Findley for her assistance during the meeting and thanked the staff and board for a successful meeting. She also mentioned the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association (ASBPA) Robert Weigl Coastal Project Award is hanging at Ventura City Hall if anyone wants to go see it.

Vice President Ceja

- He said it is good to be back. He attended the Trades Day event, which he is interested in growing for the future, as well as Oktoberfest and enjoyed himself at both. He was happy to have everyone on the same page at the Strategic Planning Check In meeting.

#### **XV. Future Agenda Items**

##### **A. 2026 Fair**

The consensus of the Board was to move the November Board meeting up a week to the 18<sup>th</sup> due to Thanksgiving.

#### **XVI. 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.

There was no closed session.

#### **XVII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27am.



Submitted by:   
Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant

Approved by:   
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by:   
Dan Long, Board President