

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, September 23rd, 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 9:01 a.m. and called to order by President Long.

Directors present: President Dan Long, Leslie Cornejo, Betsy Chess, Gloria Martinez, Shante Morgan-Carter

Directors absent: Vice President Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja, Miriam Mack, Leah Lacayo

Staff present: Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, Megan Hook, PR and Marketing, Jason Amelio, Deputy Manager, and Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant.

Guests Present: Tom Kisken, Burt Handy, Alex Mangone

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

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.

V. Presentations - None

VI. Approval of Minutes

A. August 26th, 2025, Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the August 26th, 2025 Board Meeting minutes.

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

VII. Financial Report

A. Financials ending July 31st, 2025.

CEO Ortiz reviewed the financials which showed a decrease due to accrued expenses from July and grounds maintenance. There is an increase anticipated for the August financials.

MOTION: To approve the financials ending July 31st, 2025.

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

B. Financial Audit Reports 2018-2023.

- President Long announced the financial audit for 2018-2023 has completed. Thousands of documents were reviewed, and minimal errors were found.
- CEO Ortiz thanked and commended Ms. Martin, Accounting Manager, for her focus, investigative work, and all her hard work. She is excited for this audit to come to a close.
- CDFA is normally used for audits, but they have been focusing solely on compliance audits which the Ventura Fairgrounds completed in early 2020.
- CEO Ortiz noted that being up to date on the financial audits is also beneficial when applying for grants.

- She recommends doing the financial audit for 2024 and 2025 together to get a reduced price, which was recommended by the CPA. This will also be able to be put in the 2026 budget. The Board gave their consent for this option.

MOTION: To approve the Financial Audit Reports 2018-2023.

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

VIII. New Business

- A. Discussion and possible action regarding authorized bank signer.
CEO Ortiz announced the appointment of Jason Amelio to Deputy Manager. She requests he be added as an authorized bank signer.

MOTION: To approve Jason Amelio as an authorized bank signer.

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

- B. Discussion and Possible action regarding approving a resolution authorizing the 31st District Agricultural Association to apply for State Coastal Conservancy Climate Bond funding for the Ventura County Fairgrounds Resilience Project.
- CEO Ortiz requested approval from the Board to authorize the 31st DAA to apply for the State Coastal Conservancy Climate Bond Grant.
 - President Long believes the chances of getting the grant are high and he is hopeful.
 - Director Cornejo commented that the relationships made through working with the Surfer's Point Project will be an advantage.
 - President Long highlighted that the Ventura County Fairgrounds along with the City of Ventura was awarded the Robert Wiegel Coastal Project Award from the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association for the Surfer's Point

Managed Retreat Project. The award will be presented to both groups in October. This will also be helpful when applying for grants.

MOTION: To authorize the 31st District Agricultural Association authorizing submission of a grant application to the State Coastal Conservancy and acceptance of funds for the Ventura County Fairgrounds Resilience Project.

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

IX. Old Business

A. Surfer's Point Progress

- Alex Mangone, liaison for the City of Ventura, expressed kudos to everyone for their support for the project. He often receives questions regarding the completion date and what the rates will be for parking. He asks that the rates be kept as low as possible. Mr. Mangone is arranging for a beach cleanup with City Management to address large debris that is on the beach. He let it be known he was available if anyone needed anything or would like any messages passed along to the Ventura City Council.
- CEO Ortiz passed along that the completion date is being projected for mid-November.

B. Naming Rights Policy

- President Long stated the draft MOU has been completed and will be sent to CDFA legal for review and approval. It will then go to the Fair Board for a vote and then be sent to the Foundation. There continues to be interest by companies that would like to be Naming Right sponsors.

X. Committee Meetings - None

XI. Board Correspondence

A. 2025 State Rules Advisory Committee Meeting

- CEO Ortiz mentioned she will be attending the State Rules Advisory Committee Meeting with Ms. Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, next week.

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.

A. Agreements

1. Standard Agreements
2. Rental Agreements- Interim
3. 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 (Second)	X		
Director Chess	X		
Director Martinez	X		
Director Morgan-Carter (Motion)	X		
President Long	X		

XIII. CEO Report

- CEO Ortiz stated she will be starting the budget process after Oktoberfest.
- She plans to attend the CDFA Collaboratives, which are being held on a monthly basis, and Managers Conference in November.

XIV. President's Report

President Long is glad the audit has been completed.

XV. Director's Comments

Director Morgan-Carter

- She apologized for missing last month's meeting. She thanked staff and CEO Ortiz for a wonderful fair.

Director Martinez

- She thanked the Board and CEO Ortiz for all of the information and assistance while she has been onboarding.
- She believes she has joined the Board at a good time and wants to support CEO Ortiz in all her successes.

Director Chess

- She commented that the one on one meetings between the directors and CEO Ortiz help to get their questions answered prior to the board meeting.

Director Cornejo

- She is glad the audit is behind them.
- She voiced congratulations to Mr. Amelio on his appointment to Deputy Manager.
- She said Vice President Ceja is in their thoughts.

XV. Future Agenda Items - None

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.

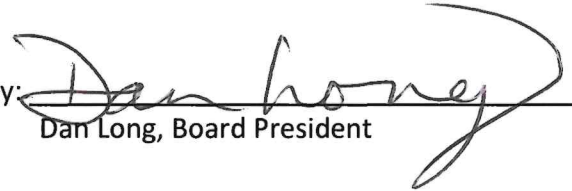
There was no closed session.

XVII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 am.

Submitted by: 
Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant

Approved by: 
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by: 
Dan Long, Board President