

# 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, November 18<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,

**Directors Absent:** Shante Morgan-Carter

**Staff present:** Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Jason Amelio, Deputy Manager, Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor, Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Coordinator, Megan Hook, PR and Marketing, Will Schwartz, Sales Manager, and Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant

**Guests Present:** Steve Kinney- Innovation Technologies Consortium

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)

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

## **V. Presentations**

A. Fathomwerx Proving Ground Hosted by the Innovation Technology Consortium- Todd Van Epps, Project Manager

- Steve Kinney spoke in place of Todd Van Epps. Mr. Kinney introduced Innovation Technology Consortium, a new nonprofit company focused on the testing of autonomous boats and drones. ITC is in need of a test range to host their partnering companies' drone testing. Mr. Kinney and ITC would like to negotiate a long-term contract with the Fairgrounds to host the partnering companies as a test site.

**VI. Approval of Minutes**

- A. October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes and October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Strategic Planning Check-In minutes.

**MOTION:** To approve the October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Board Meeting minutes and October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Strategic Planning Check-In minutes.

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

**VII. Financial Report**

- A. Financials ending September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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

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

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		
Vice President Ceja (Second)	X		
President Long	X		

**VIII. New Business**

- A. 2026 Fair

- CEO Ortiz is working on the Carnival RFP, which is currently with CDFA legal. There have been 5 additional bids awarded and 6 that are pending. She is exploring the best way to proceed with sponsorships.

Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Coordinator

- She just sent out the letter of intent to prior vendors to see who would like to return. She is working on implementing a software service for automation to make vendor sign-ups and payments easier. Ms. Johnson has been working with the health department to try and create a clear set of rules and regulations to provide to vendors to make inspections and openings clearer and more concise. Ms. Johnson also mentioned she has been lead generating throughout the county in an attempt to bring on more local vendors.

Megan Hook, PR and Marketing

- She brought the book of submissions she had submitted for the WFA Awards to show how the fair was represented. She is currently compiling the results of the survey that had been sent out to fair patrons in the previous months. Ms. Hook is also working with CEO Ortiz on the 2026 Fair timeline and project tasks. CEO Ortiz said Ms. Hook had put a lot of time and effort into the WFA Award submissions and thanked her.

Emilee Inez, Exhibits Supervisor

- She is currently working on entry guides and budget. She is analyzing the divisions and classes and figuring out which ones are being more often utilized in an effort to create more opportunities to exhibits. Ms. Inez would like to create an interactive and informative display in the Agricultural Building to highlight the County's agricultural contributions. She announced that the Junior Fair Board has concluded their interviews, and 21 members have been selected. Ms. Inez will be working on new programs and activities for the JFB members to participate in. She was also happy to announce that she has been elected to another term as the WFA Young Professionals Southern California Representative.

- B. Election of Officers for 2026-2027 Board of Directors  
(CEO presides over elections of Board Officers)
1. President
  2. Vice President

CEO Ortiz opened the floor for nominations for Board President.

Director Mack nominated Vice President Ceja as President. Director Lacayo seconded the vote. There were no other members nominated.

**MOTION:** To approve Bill Ceja as President.

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

CEO Ortiz opened the floor for nominations for Vice President.

Director Lacayo nominated Director Martinez and Director Chess seconded the vote.

Vice President Ceja nominated Director Mack and President Long seconded the vote.

After the motion to approve Director Martinez as Vice President, Director Mack withdrew her nomination and congratulated Director Martinez.

**MOTION:** To approve Gloria Martinez as Vice President.

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		
Vice President Ceja		X	
President Long		X	

The motion passed with a majority vote.

- C. Annual Appointments by the Board
  - 1. Secretary/Treasurer-Manager

CEO Ortiz explained this motion is a yearly routine that would be to reappoint her as the Secretary/Treasurer-Manager.

**MOTION:** To approve reinstating CEO Ortiz as the Secretary/Treasurer-Manager.

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

**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, Purchasing up to \$150,000.00 and Grandstand Contracts up to \$300,000.00 without further authorization from the Board of Directors.

**MOTION:** To approve authorizing the (Secretary/Treasurer-Manager) Chief Executive Officer, Heidi Ortiz, to execute Rental Agreements up to \$150,000.00, Standard 2 Agreements up to \$150,000.00, Purchasing up to \$150,000.00 and Grandstand Contracts up to \$300,000.00 without further authorization from the Board of Directors.

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

**E. Deputy Manager Annual Delegation of Authority**

The Deputy Manager, Jason Amelio, is authorized to execute Rental Agreements up to \$50,000.00, Standard 2 Agreements up to \$50,000.00 and Purchasing up to \$50,000.00 without further authorization from the Board of Directors.

CEO Ortiz explained that in order for the day-to-day operations to continue in the event of her absence she has asked that Mr. Amelio be approved to authorize and execute agreements and purchasing.

**MOTION:** To approve authorizing the Deputy Manager, Jason Amelio, to execute Rental Agreements up to \$50,000.00, Standard 2 Agreements up to \$50,000.00 and Purchasing up to \$50,000.00 without further authorization from the Board of Directors.

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

**IX. Old Business**

**A. Surfer’s Point Progress**

- Mr. Amelio stated that due to cancellations and the previous holiday, the past three meetings with the City of Ventura have not taken place. He reached out for an update on the lot closure but has not received a response. During the recent rain, the bio swale that was installed did not appear to keep up with the amount of water received, causing a bit of flooding. A second bio swale did not drain well either and had dirt that collapsed into the hole. Mr. Amelio said the carnival lot and Santa Cruz building were impacted the most with water. It has also been discovered that pumps on the fairgrounds are going out and drainage is a concern. CCA has been made aware of all these issues.
- President Long said he heard back from Matthew Maechler from Public Works regarding setting up a working group meeting for December.
- Mr. Amelio said the Surfer’s Point looks great, it is the integration with the fairgrounds that is an issue.
- President Long noted it will not be very navigable for large trucks.
- Vice President Ceja has concerns about the utility valve boxes and traffic.
- Director Cornejo is glad that CCA is involved and would like a list of what the City of Ventura would be responsible for prior to the project being signed off on.
- CEO Ortiz stated she had a meeting with CCA last week and they will be sending them a list of issues to review who will then reach out to the City of Ventura.
- Mr. Amelio met with the Fire Marshall who stated the fairgrounds need to receive as built plans.
- Director Lacayo is glad that much of the Board has oversight into the project so the fairgrounds will not get stuck with repair costs.

- CEO Ortiz mentioned she has been working with a grant writer on setting up a meeting with Kara Kemmler, Southern Coastal Conservancy Manager, to receive grants to upgrade the infrastructure in order to better integrate with the new lot construction.

**X. Committee Meetings - None**

**XI. Board Correspondence**

- A. Letters from the community regarding the annual beach parking pass
- B. Letters from the community regarding Merry Gothmas

Director Cornejo apologized and excused herself from the meeting to attend another meeting.

**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

CEO Ortiz clarified there were no Concession Agreements on the consent list this month so there were only items A, 1-2.

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

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

**XIII. CEO Report**

- CEO Ortiz met with the auditor to begin the 2024-2025 audit. She will also be reaching out to Devin Dagley, a civil engineer with previous experience inspecting the grounds, for a bleacher inspection and help on the electrical panel project. She extended a congratulations to Vice President Ceja and Director Martinez on their new roles and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

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

- President Long was asked by the City Communities Development Department to join the Ventura Local Plan Coastal Advisory Group through 2027. He also stated he will be working with Vice President Ceja to send out CEO evaluation forms in January. He is happy to have the new appointees and great staff at the fairgrounds. Mr. Long stated the Foundation has approved the MOU. He and Mr. Terry signed off on it at the Foundation meeting on Monday. They are discussing the possibility of the Foundation taking on the food and beverage contract that will be ending with Oak View Group at the end of September 2026. He is happy to have the new officers take charge and said it has been an honor to work with everyone and be a part of this organization.

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

##### Director Martinez

- She thanked President Long for his mentorship and guidance during her onboarding. She also thanked Director Lacayo and Director Chess for their vote of confidence to appoint her as Vice President. She thanked the Board for their warm welcome. She stated her favorite part of the Board meetings are the staff presentations. She thanked CEO Ortiz for attending the State of the Region Conference. She also stated, regarding the letters received about the Merry Gothmas event, she would like the Board to remain sensitive to all groups.

##### Director Lacayo

- She thanked President Long for his leadership during difficult times and congratulated Vice President Ceja and Director Martinez on their appointments. She said the staff are amazing and she loves learning from their presentations. She wished everyone Happy Holidays and she looks forward to seeing everyone next year.

##### Director Mack

- She thanked President Long for his service and leadership and congratulated Vice President Ceja and Director Martinez on their appointments. The Board enthusiasm and dedication is rewarding for her. She said Ms. Hook's booklet was incredible and thanked the staff for everything they do.

##### Director Chess

- She thanked President Long for a well-done term. She believes the election process is awkward, but it is a pleasure to work with everyone on the Board. She echoed Director Mack's sentiments about Ms. Hook's booklet and the staff's hard work. She feels it is a pleasure and honor to work with everyone.

##### Vice President Ceja

- He thanked President Long for all his help and understanding. He is looking forward to his presidency and collaboration with Director Martinez. He wished the Board and the staff a nice holiday.

**XV. Future Agenda Items**

- A. 2026 Fair
- B. Surfer's Point Update
- C. Derby Club Update

**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 11:02 am.

Submitted by: unavailable to sign  
Stephanie Mathewson, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Heidi Ortiz  
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by: Dan Long  
Dan Long, Board President