

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 23rd, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
Ventura County Fairgrounds – Derby Club

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 Ceja.

Directors present: President, Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja Jr., Vice President, Gloria Martinez, Betsy Chess, Leslie Cornejo, Dan Long, Miriam Mack, and Shanté Morgan-Carter.

Staff present: Heidi Ortiz, CEO, Jason Amelio, Deputy Manager, Emilee Inez, Exhibit Supervisor, Madalyn Johnson, Concessions Manager, Megan Hook, PR & Marketing, and Karen Pineda, Executive Assistant.

Guests Present: None

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

President Ceja 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

A. Bert Handy, a resident of Ventura County, recommended that the Fairgrounds evaluate the cost of repairing the solar panels on grounds and assess the benefits of restoring them to service.

V. Presentations - None

VI. Meeting Minutes (discussion and/or approval)

A. May 27th, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve the May 27th, 2026 Board Meeting minutes.

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

Director Cornejo and Director Morgan-Carter abstained from the vote because they were not in attendance at the May 27th Board Meeting.

VII. Financial Reports (discussion and/or approval)

A. Financials ending April 30th, 2026.

MOTION: To approve the Financials ending April 30th, 2026.

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

VIII. New Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the policy manual.

The Board discussed whether the policy manual should include a list of buildings on the fairgrounds. While some members felt an inventory was unnecessary, others supported including a list as an attachment or an addendum. Director Mack suggested potentially including a site map to go along with the list. CEO Ortiz suggested the list be referenced under Section 701.03 (Rental Agreements) to identify which facilities are rentable. Staff were asked to draft language for the Board's consideration.

The Board also discussed clarifying references to the Ventura County Fairgrounds Foundation in the policy manual. The staff was directed to revise the document to include the Foundation's full legal name where it is referenced, to improve clarity and

consistency. It was recommended to review and combine the Amtrak Parking sections, 702.01 and 702.03.

Vice President Martinez emphasized the importance of having the document reviewed by our legal team.

MOTION: To approve the policy manual edits as is with the following revisions: (1) add a list of fairgrounds facilities as an addendum or attachment, as determined appropriate by staff ; (2) edit the parking section, including consideration of merging the Amtrak reference; and (3) include the full legal name of the Ventura County Fairgrounds Foundation where referenced for clarity.

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

IX. Old Business

A. Surfer's Point Update

There is still progress to be made with the Surfer's Point Managed Retreat Project. CEO Ortiz reported that she will be contacting the City Manager to determine what is delaying the project's progress. The art installation portion of the project is expected to be completed before the end of September.

B. 2026 Fair Update

CEO Ortiz shared that the staff is actively preparing for the fair and coordinating timelines for a successful event set up.

Madalyn Johnson – Concessions, Commercial and Community Manager

Ms. Johnson noted that planning is going well. Staff is continuing to accommodate late requests for participation. Nearly all available vendor space is expected to be utilized. She reported revenue from vendor deposits, including approximately \$100,000 from food vendors, just under \$340,000 from commercial booths, and about \$57,000 from camping reservations. Ms. Johnson is also collaborating with Ms. Hook and OVG on BeerFest, which will feature local breweries and wineries. Additionally, the garden area will be enhanced with large tables and umbrellas to create a welcoming gathering space.

Megan Hook – Marketing and Sponsorships

Ms. Hook shared that rodeo tickets are sold out for the evening show on August 8th. She anticipates Saturday afternoon, and the Friday evening performances will also sell out online. However, there will be a limited number of tickets available to purchase onsite during the fair at ticket kiosks.

The McDonald's partnership will include Happy Meal vouchers on Youth Day as well as character appearances at the fair. She also reported that now through June 30th, people can purchase a fair ticket and get a free admission ticket to Oktoberfest.

Fair deliverables such as credentials, signage, and programs are in the process of being designed and printed. Radio contracts are being finalized, as well as print advertisements. TV and streaming spots are also in production. She is working on the programming for the onsite main gate activation area, which will be dedicated to sponsors and community members. She's worked with Ms. Johnson in collaboration with our alcohol distributor, Allied Beverages, to work on spacing and layouts. Planning for the Taste of Fair event is also underway. Ms. Hook shared her experience attending the Board of Supervisors meeting where Vice President Martinez, along with members of the Junior Fair Board and fair staff, shared information regarding this year's fair. She thanked Director Morgan-Carter for presenting Fair information at a local Juneteenth event. She expressed her gratitude to the directors for serving as ambassadors and sharing information about the fair with the community.

Emilee Inez - Exhibits Supervisor

Ms. Inez reported that the Exhibits Department expanded the number of entries exhibitors may submit, resulting in an increase in participation. She noted that there are currently about 1,850 entries and anticipates a significant number of additional submissions before the entry deadline. Ms. Inez enjoyed discovering the abundance of information that is offered through local resources, such as the Museum of Ventura County's online research library, for the research she has conducted for informational posters to display in the Agriculture Building. She added that members of the Junior Fair Board enjoyed their experience presenting at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

Jason Amelio – Arena and VIP Manager

Mr. Amelio reported that construction of the main arena build will begin after July 11th. He stated that security staffing is in a good place and that preparations are in good shape. He also shared that he recently met with the Junior Fair Board and described the experience as rewarding.

X. Board Correspondence – None

XI. 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 Agreements

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda with items A, 1-4.

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

XII. CEO Report

- CEO Ortiz is working with Tina Wynegar to review a new grant from the Parks and Recreation division to determine if the 31st District Agricultural Association qualifies as an actual district. Ms. Wynegar asked if directors are interested in submitting a letter of public comment on behalf of the 31st DAA. CEO Ortiz confirmed she will share the grant details with the board.
- CEO Ortiz was excited to share that Jim Naylor is working to install a new sign at the Gate 1 entrance.
- She thanked the policy manual ad-hoc committee for their hard work on finalizing the document.

XIII. President's Report

- President Ceja is assisting with the carnival lot repairs.
- He shared that 500 trees will be given out to the public at the fair in partnership with Chloe Trees and the Britton Fund.

XIV. Director's Comments

Director Morgan-Carter

- Director Morgan-Carter expressed her appreciation for all the work being done for the fairgrounds.
- She thanked the policy manual committee for their work.

Director Lacayo

- Director Lacayo thanked the policy manual committee for their hard work on the edits.
- She acknowledged the amazing work the staff is doing to execute the fair.

- She suggested exploring grant opportunities through the Ventura County Community Foundation, noting that the Foundation provides grant research services at no cost.

Director Long

- Director Long recognized the staff for all their hard work.
- He stated that he believes people will be excited to see Helms & Sons operating the carnival this year. He looks forward to the opening day.

Director Chess

- Director Chess expressed her excitement for the fair.
- Shared her thanks to the staff and said their enthusiasm is contagious.
- She commended the two Junior Fair Board members who presented at the Board of Supervisors meeting, noting that they did an outstanding job.

Director Mack

- Director Mack thanked the staff and policy manual committee and fellow board members.
- She appreciated all the creativity and work of the fair staff.

Director Cornejo

- Director Cornejo began her remarks with an apology to her fellow board members for missing the special board meeting held earlier this month.
- She also thanked the policy manual committee for the work on the policy and procedures.
- She shared that a person named Ron Vincent, did a study on the solar panels installed at the fairgrounds about 4 years ago. She offered to work with staff to follow up with him on his findings.
- She expressed her gratitude to the staff for all their work and said it will be a fabulous fair.

Vice President Martinez

- Vice President Martinez gave kudos to Director Cornejo, Director Long, and Director Morgan-Carter for their work on the policy manual.
- She thanked the staff and Director Chess for attending the Board of Supervisors meeting.
- She shared how impressed she was with the Grandstand entertainment lineup and is looking forward to attending the performances.
- She noted that many grants are available to government entities and suggested partnering with the County of Ventura on the Parks and Recreation grant opportunity. She offered to help identify the appropriate partners and departments to support those efforts.

XV. Future Agenda Items – None

XVI. Closed Session

The Board is authorized to meet in Closed Session for the following reason:

- A. 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.
- B. Real Estate Negotiations – Govt. code 11126(c)(7)

President Ceja convened into closed session at 10:27 a.m.

XVII. Report Out of Closed Session – None

President Ceja reconvened at 10:57 a.m. There was no reportable action taken during closed session.

XVIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Submitted by: Karen Pineda
Karen Pineda, Executive Assistant

Approved by: Heidi Ortiz
Heidi Ortiz, CEO

Approved by: Guillermo R. Ceja Jr.
Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja Jr., Board President

