

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 15th, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.
Ventura County Fairgrounds – Santa Rosa Hall

I. Call to Order

Roll Call

Declaration of Recusal or Conflict of Interest

The meeting convened at 9:10 a.m. and called to order by President Ceja.

Directors present: President, Guillermo Rodriguez Ceja Jr., Vice President, Gloria Martinez, Betsy Chess, Leslie Cornejo, Leah Lacayo, 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: Cesar Lamas, David Moore, Jose Garcia, Scott McCarty, Chris Espinosa, Burt Handy, Barb Holtwick, Matt Doyle, Mildred Schofield, Bob Davidson, Kenmere Davidson, Susan Mulligan, Khaled Omar, John Hankins, Catherine Schoenherr, Tom Koenig, Lynn Dines, John Groot, Pamela Hazard, Jeff Stewart, Erick Went, Elizabeth Knight, Mary Jo Mitchell, Rachel Hoffman, Susan Talmadge, Sandra Egbert, Steve Bosteck, Nick Mucha, Mary Macdonald, Mike Clinton, Bert Herrera, Kim Custer, Patricia Caloia, Friday Treur, Deborah Blum, Broke Smith, Eloise Kong, Lori Frank, Greg Frank, Bill Clearwater, Tony Kack, Amelia Golden, Madeleine Ignon, Kirk Gotwals, Lisa Gotwals, Leaf Monroe, Renee Callahan, Diana Kelley, Julia C. Griggs, Pam Gallardo, Kris Pustina-Haldane, Joshua Medrano, Diane Hubbard, Sara Burns, Leilani McHugh, Tim McHugh, Linda Jones, Kathleen Koenig, Janis McCann, Ann Rogalla, Tracey Cherrie, Chris Thompson, Karen Trainor, Cattie Hulst, Julie Shaw, Doug Gillert, John Herndon, Regina Holman, Amber Bassett Pagaling, Eve Hill, LaTonya Fuhring, Wah Devi, Mark Sherman, Evelyn Spradski, Alice Tseng, Johnathan Renoj, Catherine Vidal, Val Dacks, Carol Ann Kitzak, Elaine Fontana, Tobias Ricci, Irene Ricci, Jane Kelly-Acceña, Rachelle Rood, Jennifer Montoya, Jacqueline Colmenero, Christy Weir, Jeffery Ingram, Michael MacDonald, Topaz Grabmen, Debbie Shelley-Grabmen, Jennifer Quigg, Susan Compton Smith, Cheyenne Davis, Susan Lewis, Angelina Ornelis,

Phyllis Derbey, Carisa Ketner, Jane Hatfield, Bryan Egli, Mayo Chafe, Wendy Crowley, Marianne Parra, Holly Howell, Cloud Hamilton, Sebastian F., Kerri Gordon Yim, and Janice Mosher.

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

There were no public comments.

V. Presentations

A. Global Stack USA - Dan Kang, Founder & CEO, and Nick Kovacevich, President
Founder and CEO, Dan Kang, and President, Nick Kovacevich, conducted a presentation regarding Global Stack's business operations and potential involvement with the fairgrounds. They explained that Global Stack is working with their partners under MOU to evaluate whether their proposal is a suitable fit and could help establish a sustainable, year-round revenue stream. The three components of the proposed structure are a helipad for advanced air mobility, an edge compute, and parking structure. Their hope is to connect a network of 40 fairgrounds to enhance emergency response coordination. Mr. Kovacevich emphasized the importance of community input in determining the best approach. He said that the proposed structure is not a data center.

The Board engaged in a question-and-answer discussion with the presenters.

- Director Cornejo asked if Global Stack has constructed one proposed unit or if it's just a concept. Mr. Kang said it has not been constructed by Global Stack, but by their partners.
- Director Cornejo asked how the project is being funded. Mr. Kang explained that they have well-funded opportunities with their partners (ie. the manufacturers). He mentioned that they are trying to be cognizant of every fairground's facility's needs.
- Director Cornejo proceeded to ask if Global Stack has had any discussion of substance with the Coastal Commission. Mr. Kang confirmed that they have not yet.
- Director Cornejo asked if there have been any conversations or polling in the Ventura community as to their interest in structure development that may hurt property values. Mr. Kang stated that since fairgrounds are state agencies, their directive was to utilize the MOUs to have those open conversations.
- Director Morgan-Carter asked for clarification on the proposal's elements, and if it still included the resilient edge, a.k.a. data center. Mr. Kang clarified that the self-contained unit they would build is called an edge computer and would be included in the proposal.

- Director Morgan-Carter asked Mr. Kovacevich if the Orange County Fairgrounds has approved this project. He confirmed that they do not disclose who else has entered into an MOU with Global Stack.
- Director Mack presented a hypothetical scenario in which San Francisco embraced their proposal, and Global Stack acquired a contract with the Ventura County Sheriff's Department. She asked whether the Sheriff's Department could be accessed through the San Francisco facility through the interconnected system. Mr. Kang explained that the closer the computer, the more resilient it is. If the cell site is closer to you, the clearer the connection will be.
- Director Chess expressed the importance of speaking to the Coastal Commission. She questioned whether Ventura is the most appropriate location given its coastal location. Mr. Kovacevich said that the Board and Global Stack should have the conversation together to decide whether the project makes sense given the proximity to the ocean. He stated that the non-binding MOU phase is where those conversations can take place. They are not trying to rush into an agreement and understand that it would be a long process.
- Vice President Martinez reminded Mr. Kang and Mr. Kovacevich to please try to focus on providing the facts to the Board, rather than reacting to the crowd. She asked for clarity on what the next steps would be and what that timeline would look like if the fairgrounds continued in this process. Mr. Kovacevich stated that the next phase would be to work with fairgrounds management to map out operations, financials, and work towards land lease terms. He believes it would be more expeditious to work with management, but it would be up to the Board of the level of oversight they would like to have. The Board could even appoint an ad hoc committee to work on this. Mr. Kang reported that the project would take about 2-3 years for completion.
- Vice President Martinez asked if it's possible for Global Stack to get the approvals from the City of Ventura and Coastal Commission before they engage in further communications, and where in the timeline that would take place. Mr. Kang stated that the MOU gives them credentials to speak with these entities early on in the process. He confirmed that it would be a collaborative effort.

President Ceja opened public comments.

- Dr. Lisa Klein – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Liz Campos – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Burt Handy – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Mildred Schofield – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Susan Mulligan – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Khaled Omar – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Kathleen Koenig – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Adriene Coulter – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Scott Harris – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Lynn Dines – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Tracey Cherrie – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- John Herndon – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Tomas Rebecchi – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.

- Amber Basset Pagaling – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Alice Tseng – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Tony Kack – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Jonathan R – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- John Hankins – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Michael MacDonald – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Francesca Rompal – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Andrew Kahn – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Leaf Monroe – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Susan Compton Smith – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Eloise Kong – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Joshua Medrano – was in support of the Global Stack proposal.
- Tobias & Irene Ricci – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Justin – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Trent Stevens – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Susan Lewis – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Christine Samusick – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Cheyenne Davis – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Lisa Gotwals – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Marianne Parra – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Debbie Turner – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Holly Howell – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Jane Hatfield – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Cloud Hamilton – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Sebastian – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Kristian Nuñez – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Perris Doucette – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Cynthia R – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Kris Pustina-Haldane – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Stephen Blum – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Jose Garcia – was in support of the Global Stack proposal.

VI. Old Business

A. Discussion and possible action regarding Global Stack.

Director Mack shared that while the fairgrounds needs money, the Board has not considered privatizing for commercial purposes not related to the core mission of providing spaces for public gatherings. The Board should discuss the appropriate different uses for the fairgrounds. She expressed that she would not enter into an agreement without advice from experienced consultants. She was unsure why Global Stack needs to build a parking structure and does not believe a parking structure is a good idea given the fairgrounds' current operations. Director Mack stated the way the project was presented to the Board raised questions about transparency and conflicts of interest. She recommended CEO Ortiz send a 30-day termination notice of the MOU to terminate further discussion with Global Stack.

Director Long had several remarks to share in the record.

I, like other Board members and members of the community, want to see the Fairgrounds and the Fair be here for many generations to come and experience making traditional family memories. These grounds serve as the largest outdoor event center in Ventura County and proudly serves as an evacuation resource center in times of need and a place to showcase cultures and entertainment of all kinds throughout each year. Some of the most important issues for me is the ask for a 100-year lease!

I would not want to shoulder such a burden for so many future Boards of Directors. With technology leap frogging so quickly now, I would not be surprised if this proposed use became obsolete in ten years. Then we would have a building with their company, or others trying to retrofit it, a building that is stuck right in front of this beautifully, located property. I do believe that there are many who think this would be beneficial for the fairgrounds with more income but at what price? We would lose a lot of community support at a time when we need it most. Having a beach front property creates a lot of damage to the infrastructure that requires maintenance which can be very expensive to maintain. However, I do not believe we need to build their project here for the possible income it may produce. We should first evaluate our communication needs to see if they need to be enhanced. Of the three pieces of this proposal, ensuring good emergency communications is the only one that goes along with our purpose of emergency needs for our region at the Fairgrounds. I also believe the last thing we need is a helicopter pad at the corner next to the 101, the beach and downtown. We have plenty of flat space to accommodate VTOL's when needed now. This is the only Fairgrounds that is right on the Beach which is why so many developers are always circling around trying to figure how they can make a profit. It will be an eyesore to the public and we would then be stuck with this 5-story block wall. In a time that we are trying to decrease vehicle traffic I do not believe we need a parking structure. We need to continue efforts that we are making each year to reduce the amount traffic to the Fairgrounds by using buses, bikes and trains. During the Thomas Fire, the entire main parking lot was filled with firefighting apparatus from over 26 states. I would hate for the community to lose 5 acres that could accommodate emergency vehicles. Finally, this was a project that seemed rushed in a push for us to move forward with, and sign, an M.O.U. The Board's questions to Global Stack came back with vague answers and of little use. The pressure we received from some did not seem appropriate. There was a hurried sense of urgency from some with interesting backgrounds and questionable ethics. It has been my experience when you do something in a hurry you often make mistakes. There may be some fairgrounds with much more land to incorporate it on their grounds and for their Boards to decide for themselves. I believe this project would be a mistake to have happen here.

Director Long presented a motion to give our required thirty-day notice to Global Stack LLC that we do not want to move forward with the MOU and then continue with deliberations speaking to the Motion.

Director Morgan-Carter concurred with the remarks made by Director Mack and Director Long. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the secrecy and vagueness of

Global Stack's proposition. The process in which the Board reviews proposals should remain consistent. She was not willing to move forward with this project.

Director Cornejo expressed concerns regarding the project's potential impact, the lack of discussion with the Coastal Commission, and the absence of state representatives at the meeting. She noted the fairgrounds' existing emergency response capabilities and the positive impact it has had on environmental emergencies such as the Thomas Fire. She supported Director Long's motion.

Director Chess did not feel that she could support proceeding with the MOU. She was in support of Director Long's motion.

Director Lacayo stated that she was happy to have members of the public present, as she believed the Board should be operating transparently. She noted the struggles of the fairground's infrastructure and parking and the need for improvements. She was in support of continuing discussions through the MOU and urged her fellow Board members to take it into consideration.

Vice President Martinez thanked the public for attending the meeting. She expressed her disappointment with the lack of information provided by the presenters. She believed discussions should continue to address the nuanced issues the project may present.

President Ceja shared that the current MOU with Global stack is what is needed to get additional information for future developers who have may have an interest in the fairgrounds. He noted that he would like to keep the MOU in place to get more information and allow more discussion.

Director Mack mentioned that the twelve-month MOU discussion period has been active for 6 months, yet Global Stack has not provided substantial information to the Board. She clarified her point from her earlier comment, saying that while she understands there is commercial use on fairgrounds often, there are events and operations such as the Swap Meet and Derby Club, that are spaces for public gatherings.

President Ceja opened public comments.

- Cesar Lamas – was in support of the Global Stack proposal.
- Juan Serrato – was in support of the Global Stack proposal.
- Helen – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.
- Kathleen Koenig – was opposed to the Global Stack proposal.

MOTION: That the Board give the required 30-day notice to Global Stack LLC to not move forward with the MOU.

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

CEO Ortiz stated that the motion carried with a five to three vote in favor to cancel the MOU with Global Stack LLC.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 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