

Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds – Fair Board Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2021 – 11:30 am
98 W. Custer Ave., Helena MT 59602

Attendees:

Board members: Phil Porrini, Greg Pace, Jay Sherley, FayDee Hamilton, Dave Duffy, Mike Murray

Staff: Kevin Tenney, Logan Gustafson, Sandy McIntyre

Jerry Blythe, City Parks Board Liaison

Phil Porrini, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.

Introduction:

- Jerry Blythe was introduced to the Board. He is the Helena City Parks Liaison with the Fairgrounds, and non-voting Fairgrounds Board member.

Approval of Minutes:

There were no corrections or additions to the September 2021 minutes. Greg Pace motioned to approve the September 22, 2021 minutes, seconded by Mike Murray. Motion passed unanimously.

Election for Vice Chair:

- Due to the absence of a number of Board members and that annual officer elections are held in January, it was suggested that the election of the Vice Chair be tabled until the January 2022 meeting. Officer elections are held annually in January. Jay Sherley made a motion to defer the Vice Chair election to the January 2022 Board meeting, Phil Porrini seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report:

Kevin Tenney reviewed financials:

- The Fairgrounds lost \$1 million due to the pandemic.
- Fairgrounds revenue ties into County total revenue. There is a possibility that the Fairgrounds could receive \$900,000 in Covid relief funds to make up for the pandemic-related lost revenue.

Events Report:

- Logan Gustafson gave an update on Events.
 - PowWow - great attendance.
 - Dog Agility – there were a lot of contestants; the public was not encouraged to attend, due to AKC recommendations pertaining to Covid.
 - DUI Task Force Concert, Tracy Byrd – good attendance with 700.
 - MMA – about 500 attendees. Beer sales were good.

Operations Report:

Kevin Tenney reported on operations:

- Front Gate Reader Board
 - The reader board had been fixed since the last Board meeting, but again is not working.
 - The mother board (which is about 10 years old) is out and the part is unavailable.
 - A cloud based system will cost approximately \$3000; replacing the entire board would run \$28,000-\$35,000.
 - The average lifespan of a reader board is about 10 years. The current board was installed about 10 years ago. Problems started two years ago. Because of its age and technology, the likelihood of multiple issues in the future is high.
 - Kevin will review warranty information.
 - There is no money in the current budget to replace the reader board, and Kevin is working with the County's Finance Officer on this.
- Newly planted trees
 - Working with the County Grants Administrator, Growing Friends of Helena donated and planted trees throughout the Fairgrounds. The Fairgrounds is responsible for watering. The trees are braced, and Jay Sherley mentioned the necessity of protecting the trees from deer damage with plastic collars. Kevin will check into this.
- Heating/Cooling System
 - The system is stuck "on" and needs repair. Core Control has looked at the system and a new company will also evaluate what needs to be done and if they can do it. Core Control is no longer on contract, and called on an as-needed basis.
- New Website
 - The Fairgrounds website is currently being re-designed. It will have an on-line reservation system for camping, shelter and stall rentals.
- Horses-Sheriff's Department
 - The horses that the Sheriff's Department are holding as evidence at the Fairgrounds will be here over the winter. They have built pens with access to the stalls for shelter.
 - We are not renting stalls to the public through the winter. We have a contact for overnight stalls we can refer people to, and if absolutely necessary, there are pens available by the Multi-Purpose Building.
- Oktoberfest
 - Will be brought back in 2022, sponsored by a group of individuals.

Naming Rights of Exhibit Hall:

- Kevin Tenney has been looking into naming rights of the Exhibit Hall as a revenue stream.
 - One, three or five year contracts as a possibility.
 - \$50,000-\$100,000 annual revenue possible.
- The floor was opened to discussion and feedback from the Board.
 - Positive support from the Board.
 - Consider interior sign placement, i.e. above restrooms
 - Would this include Entry Hall as well?
 - What is process for bidding and selection? Minimum amount, minimum timeframe?

- What about naming the VIP building?
- FayDee Hamilton made a motion to form a Naming Rights committee. Greg Pace seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was amended to form a committee that will have naming rights recommendations for Board consideration by the February 2022 Board meeting. Jay Sherley moved to amend the motion on the floor. Dave Duffy seconded the amended motion. The amended motion passed.
 - Committee members: Greg Pace, Jay Sherley, Dave Duffy, Kevin Tenney
 - Kevin will set up first committee meeting.

Paving Project Update:

- After reviewing proposals, KLJ was hired to design and engineer the Fairgrounds paving project.
- KLJ would like to do the initial survey before the snow flies, starting with the most heavily damaged areas.
- Each phase of work will include a scope of work and task order to present to the County Commissioners.

Directional Signage:

- Approximately \$1200 is budgeted for Fairgrounds signage. 3 large (1-4'x7, 2-4'x6') signs will be made by Qwik Signs and installed by Fairgrounds maintenance crew. Fairgrounds has the appropriate posts to use.

Future Fairgrounds Projects:

- Phil Porrini compiled a list of future Fairgrounds projects and estimated costs from previous suggestions/discussions and distributed it to Board members for input.
- A number of Board members were absent and it was agreed to table this discussion until the next meeting, where members will be asked to rank the projects in order of importance.

Other Business:

- The Board received card from former Board member Allen Cormany, thanking everyone for their dedication and commitment to the Fairgrounds.
- Dirk Anderson resigned from the Fair Board in October.
- Next Board Meeting –Mike Murray made a motion to hold the next Board meeting on Wednesday, November 17 instead of Wednesday, November 24 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. FayDee Hamilton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

- Mike Murray moved to adjourn the meeting. Greg Pace seconded the motion. It passed unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 12:35pm.