

**Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds – Fair Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 26, 2022 – 11:30 am**  
**98 W. Custer Ave., Helena MT 59602**

**Attendees:**

Board members: Phil Porrini, Greg Pace, Jay Sherley, Jo Young, Mike Murray, Mark Menke, and Dave Duffy

Staff: Kevin Tenney, Logan Gustafson

Public: Mike Gurnett, Judy Rolfe, and Bill Entwistle

Commissionaire: Tom Rolfe

Phil Porrini, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:30 am.

**Approval of Minutes:**

There were no corrections or additions to the November 17, 2021 minutes. Mike Murray motioned to approve the November 17, 2021 minutes, seconded by Jo Young. Motion passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:**

- Mike Gurnett, representing the Rodeo Committee discussed the rising costs of rodeo contractor prices, seeing a 5% increase over the previous year.
  - Mike also surveyed nearby rodeo ticket prices, seeing a ticket price for the Kalispell rodeo was at \$30 last year and was moving to a \$34 ticket for this year, and in Livingston the cost was \$27 a ticket.
  - Mike suggested with the rising cost of contractors, and other Rodeo's ticket prices being what they are, raising the Last Chance Stampede Rodeo price up \$2 to \$23 presale, and \$25 day of.
  - Mike Gurnett, also suggested that the extra revenue may be able to help with work that needs to be done to the arena including paying for 3000 yards of sand to improve the surface, and I-beam installation to improve the video boards mounting.
- Bill Entwistle, a concerned citizen discussed the possibility of the Fairgrounds housing the homeless at its campsites.
  - Bill discussed that Helena, has a homeless problem with a rise in homeless population of 150%, and that he was going to survey the homeless population to see if their needs could be served by the campgrounds.
  - Jo Young, said she would be interested to see the results of the Survey.
  - Mike Murray said that the Fair Board is just an advisory board to the commission and does not have the authority on approving or disapproving a homelessness housing plan.
  - Phil Porrini was concerned with the potential safety concern of housing the homeless at the Fairground's facilities, and what impact that it could have on the public use of the Fairgrounds, and the facilities.
  - Mike Murray invited Bill Entwistle to the next Fair Board meeting in February.

- Mike Murray stated that he wanted to recognize all the work Judy Rolfe had done for the board, and if there was any way of keeping Judy on the board, following the County Attorneys suggestion that Judy resign from the Fair Board, do to Tom Rolfe being a county commissioner and having a seat on the board.
  - Kevin Tenney and Phil Porrini said that they had talked with the County Attorney and that the County Attorney said they were worried about the optics of potential conflicting interests.
  - Kevin Tenney and Phil Porrini presented Judy Rolfe with a framed Last Chance Stampede Poster for her time served on the Fair Board.

#### **Fair Board Elections:**

- **Mike Murray motioned to elect Phil Porrini as Fair Board Chair, Mark Menke Seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Phil Porrini was elected to Fair Board Chair.**
- **Mike Murray motioned to elect Greg Pace as Fair Board Vice Chair, Phil Porrini Seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Greg Pace was elected to Fair Board Vice Chair.**

#### **Fee Schedule Adjustment:**

- Kevin Tenney reported that there is a draft fee schedule in the fair board packet, and he will go into more detail on the subject in the February meeting.

#### **Fairgrounds Paving Update:**

- Kevin Tenney went over the Fairgrounds new pavement plans:
  - The engineering firm was only able to do a drone survey due to snow, and will be back to do a Geo-Survey when the snow has melted.

#### **Hospitality Room Updates:**

- Kevin Tenney discussed that the sewer work for the VIP room had been approved under ARPA funds.
  - Kevin also said there was high possibility of the interior of the VIP room being able to be renovated under ARPA funding as well.

#### **Naming Rights Update:**

- Kevin Tenney discussed the naming rights update:
  - Kevin said the subcommittee consisting of Fair Board members Jay Sherley, Greg Pace, and Dave Duffy met and discussed the potential for Naming Rights of the Exhibit and Entry Hall.
  - Kevin said that he called around to other Fairgrounds that had sold naming rights to their buildings, and they said with the facilities at the Lewis and Clark Fairgrounds the naming rights could fetch anywhere from \$50k-\$400k.
  - Kevin said he will bring in more information on further marketing packets for potential sponsors in next month's meetings.

**Financial Report:**

Kevin Tenney reviewed financials:

- Lost Revenue from the cancellation of a large Boat and RV show may impact revenue.
- Will make sure to watch expenses closely with the loss of that revenue.

**Events Report:**

- Logan Gustafson gave an update on Events.
  - Wrestling Tournament – Over 2,000 spectators and participants
  - Rented out the Exhibit Hall to a wedding
  - March is looking to be a big month with the Mansfield Metcalf Dinner, Made in Montana, and HBIA home and Garden show all in a row.

**Operations Report:**

Kevin Tenney reported on operations:

- Maintenance is still shorthanded, another batch of interviews will be conducted for the open position in February.
- A trial date for the owner of the horses is set for April, so the Horses will be on the premises for a longer period of time.
- The County Grant Administrator has applied for a \$750 Arbor Day grant to plant 12-14 new trees in the park, a local Helena Foundation has offered to match the grant.
- Springfest is back on, Kevin has a commitment from the Carnival for 3 years. Will have a concert Saturday concert, and is meeting with C5 Rodeo to see about having 2 days of a rough stock rodeo (Friday and Saturday) in the MPB during the Springfest activities.
- Kevin is looking at bringing in a 3 on 3 basketball tournament twice a year to the Exhibit Hall, could co-sponsor the event with the YMCA.
- The new website is running well and is just waiting on information from the treasurer's office to launch it.
- Mike Murray asked if anything was being done to clean up the duck pond, Kevin said it is now on a weed management plan, and a brush trimmer is being purchased to better handle the plants.

**Adjournment:**

- Mike Murray moved to adjourn the meeting. Greg Pace seconded the motion. It passed unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 12:34pm.