

Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds – Fair Board Meeting Minutes
February 23, 2022 – 11:30 am
98 W. Custer Ave., Helena MT 59602

Attendees:

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

Staff: Kevin Tenney, Sandy McIntyre

Jerry Blythe, Helena City Parks Liaison

Public: Jeff Buscher, United Way, Director of Community Impact
Bill Entwistle, Helena Solidarity Network
Jim Smith

Lewis & Clark County Commissioner: 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 January 26, 2022 minutes. Mike Murray motioned to approve the January 26, 2022 minutes, seconded by Dave Duffy. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Bill Entwistle, a concerned citizen representing the Helena Solidarity Network returned to discuss the possibility of the Fairgrounds housing the homeless at its campsites. He presented a Proposal for Providing Choices for the Unsheltered in Helena (specifically those with vehicles) to the Board.
 - The proposal requests:
 - Use of the Fairgrounds campsites as emergency shelter for homeless with vehicles from November through April.
 - Occupation of sites for longer than the current campsite 7 day limit.
 - Full use of the campground electricity, toilets and showers.
 - Board members voiced a number of concerns about the proposal:
 - The campground is used year-round by the public.
 - Safety concerns including the public, staff, other campers, event attendees and 4-H events.
 - Maintenance and staffing issues.
 - Public health and sanitation issues.
 - The social and economic impact that housing homeless at the Fairgrounds could have on public use of the Fairgrounds and the facilities.
 - Payment for use – Fairgrounds facilities must be paid for before use including campsites, picnic shelters, buildings and arenas.

- Phil Porrini said that the Fair Board is an advisory board to the County Commission and has no authority to make a decision on the proposal.
- Phil Porrini also said that the Fair Board has a responsibility to ensure the Fairgrounds remains financially solvent.
- Mike Murray noted that a number of Board members were not present.
- Phil Porrini noted that there were 3 open Board positions.
- Mike Murray made a motion to table further discussion of the proposal until more Board members were present. Mark Menke seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- A copy of the proposal is attached to this month's minutes.

Financial Report:

Kevin Tenney reviewed financials:

- Concert tickets are not yet on sale for Springfest or the Stampede. Springfest concert tickets will go on sale March 4.
- Revenue is down \$25,000 due to event cancellations.
- CARES reimbursement should be received at the end of the fiscal year.
- We are moving ahead with capital expenditures.
- Commissioner Tom Rolfe said that the new department for grants and purchases has been processing CARES and ARPA funds, and is attempting get the construction-related requests/disbursements processed first.

Events Report:

- There was no event report as Logan Gustafson was absent.

Springfest Update:

Kevin Tenney discussed the 2022 Springfest.

- 2022 will be the first full Springfest since 2018. Dates are May 18-21.
- Concert, rodeo and carnival will be announced Friday, February 25th.
- Will be selling rodeo tickets and combination tickets (both rodeos and concert).

Stampede and Fair:

Kevin Tenney gave an update on the 2022 Last Chance Stampede and Fair.

- The Wednesday Night Show concert will include 3 artists this year. The cost for 3 artists will be \$22,000 less than the cost for the one 2021 concert. Tickets will be \$60 each.
- There will be after-rodeo concerts Friday and Saturday night in the Exhibit Hall.
- Concert artists will be announced in mid-March.

Operations Report:

Kevin Tenney reported on operations:

- Our maintenance crew is now fully staffed with a new hire.
- Main entrance video board is still not fixed and we are working with IT to get it fixed.

- Main arena video screen structures – The total cost for permanent, safe video screen structures is \$34,300. Donations from vendors and contractors involved in the project total \$12,900, so the actual cost to the Fairgrounds is \$21,400. Northside Welding will build and install the structures this year. They will invoice the Fairgrounds in FY23 and FY24.
- Naming Rights – The Board naming rights subcommittee met to discuss sponsorship opportunities and sponsorship benefits, and developed proposal requirements for interested parties as well as rating and evaluation criteria. The building will be assessed for sign placement and photos of locations for sign placement will be taken.
- Paving Project – There is no update on the paving project at this time.
- Duck Pond – Maintenance has been cleaning up debris in the duck pond area. Maintenance will meet with Board member Mike Murray to review additional maintenance work at the duck pond.
- New website – The Fairgrounds new website will be live this Friday, February 25. We are working with the County Accounting Department to finalize the on-line reservation system for campsites, picnic shelters, stalls and riding in the Multi-Purpose building.

Fee Schedule Adoption:

Kevin Tenney previously handed out the proposed FY23 Fee Schedule to Board members for review. He discussed the proposed increases:

- A 2% increase in Fairgrounds facility and usage fees has been proposed for FY23, beginning July 1, 2022. Fees have not increased for a number of years, with 2% being a modest increase.
- Phil Porrini asked about concessions fees. There is no raise in concessions and alcohol fees.
- Dave Duffy moved to approve the fee increases for FY 2023. Greg Pace seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

- Mike Murray moved to adjourn the meeting. Dave Duffy seconded the motion. It passed unanimously and meeting was adjourned at 12:46pm.