

THURSTON COUNTY FAIR BOARD
November 1, 2023 @ 7:00 pm
MEETING MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Meeting was called to order by President Paul Longwell at 7:00 pm.

Fair Board members present: Paul Longwell, Kya Ramirez, Heidi Thomsen, Michael Carney, Oscar Hernandez, Lance McElroy, Kathie McWaid, Linsey Lyons, and Don Wadsen.

Excused: Mike Rendon, Larry Stamp, Justin Wikoff, Mikhail Cherniske, Theresa Reid

Unexcused: Larry Mahan

Guests: Josh Cummings

2. APPROVE MINUTES OF: October 4, 2023

Motion by Kathie McWaid and seconded by Kya Ramirez to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

3. CORRESPONDENCE: None.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a. Agriculture – Next Wednesday is the November meeting. At the October 18th meeting, it was recommended that we combine the Ag/Facilities/Safety committees into one committee since most are on all of these committees. President Longwell agreed. Kathie is the chair. Committee members also discussed facilities needs such as fencing, etc. Committee will fine tune the list of needs at the next meeting.

b. Promotions – No report

c. Facilities/Safety – Committee is now combined with the Agriculture committee.

d. Scrapbook/History – Committee did finish the scrapbook that went to the convention. Committee will report on how we did at the convention at the next board meeting.

e. Commercial – No report

f. Still Life – No report

g. Entertainment – No report

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Other old business – President Longwell reminded members to take the required training (open public meetings act training and safe driving training).

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Fixing municipal code for booth rental fees recommendation – Heidi Thomsen presented a proposal to revise Thurston County Municipal Code 2.50.060 to reflect current rates charged for renting booth space. Michael Carney motion made to eliminate Exhibit A (see attached for the revision). Oscar Hernandez seconded. Motion carried.

b. Fair admission fee increase proposals – Heidi Thomsen presented three proposed options for increasing daily admission, season passes, exhibitor passes, reduced days, and parking fees for discussion.

Option 1 included an increase of \$1.00 for all passes/admissions, including parking. Estimated revenue increase = \$19,508.

Option 2 included an increase of \$2.00 for all passes/admissions, including parking. Estimated revenue increase = \$39,016.

Option 3 included increases to bring our fees to within +/- \$1.00 of the western Washington average for each pass type for the 15 fairs that were surveyed. Estimated revenue increase = \$37,119.

Revenue was estimated using each proposed fee increase and the number of passes sold (data from Theresa Reid) at this year's fair.

President Longwell discussed other fair admissions. We want more and more people coming here and staying. Discussion on discounted rates to get people into the fair ensued. Further discussion occurred on having businesses sell tickets. Michael Carney suggested sending this idea to promotions committee to come back with a recommendation. Motion to table the fee increase and discuss it more at the January 2024 meeting made by Kathie McWaid. Kya Ramirez seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Discussion about new fair coordinator position – Heidi Thomsen and Josh Cummings briefed the Board on the Board of County Commissioners' tentative decision to fund a fulltime fair coordinator position in 2024. The position will be required to bring in new revenue that equates to 75% of the position's salary. The 2024-2025 biennium budget will be adopted on December 15th.

c. December meeting tradition – President Longwell will send out an email with a date/location. The December holiday party will probably be at the fairgrounds.

7. FAIR FOUNDATION REPORT – Foundation board met. They have applied for a grant for a new food court stage and storage shed. The foundation has also applied for Squaxin Tribe and Nisqually Tribe funding to fix the schoolhouse windows. The foundation has also applied for a Department of Agriculture grant for stoves and fridges for Heritage Hall and the Thurston Expo Center and a stand-up freezer in Heritage Hall.

Josh Cummings reported that the county is working with Congresswoman Strickland to try to get federal money to build a new building to replace the Willuweit building.

8. EVENT COORDINATOR REPORT: Theresa Reid – not present.

Adjourned at 7:57pm

Next Fair Board Meeting: January 3, 2024