

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BCC and Umatilla County Fair Board meeting
October 7, 2014, 5:00 p.m.
SHGC – Conference Rm #113

Attendance:

Commissioners: Bill Elfering, Chair; George Murdock, Vice-Chair; and Larry Givens.
Umatilla County Fair Board: Don Miller; Gay Newman; Steve Anderson; Lucas Wagner; and Peggy Anderson, Fair Manager
Farm City Pro Rodeo Board: David Dickmeier; Darrel Sallee; John Gill; Mike Kay; Dennis Barnett; Seth Shaw; and David Bothum
County Staff: Robert Pahl, Finance Director; Melinda Slatt, Executive Secretary (taking notes)

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by Chair Bill Elfering for the BCC. For the Fair Board, called to order by Don Miller. Commissioner Elfering reminded the group it was a public meeting, minutes taken and audio recorded.

All those in attendance introduced themselves (as noted above).

Commissioner Elfering felt the County Fair was a good event this year. He asked Don Miller to start with the County Fair Report as first item on the Agenda.

Fair 2014:

Mr. Miller noted, attendance has been normally around 84,000, but this year it was down to 74,800 – a reduction from last year. He felt that was mostly due to weather. Fair was well attended and effective. Suggested change is for signage (i.e. weapons). Signs need to comply with current legal requirements about weapons. One individual challenged the sign and concealed weapon wording. Police security was very helpful. Next year, sign will just say no weapons. It was a lesson learned. The person said “it was just a test” – no problems; and the person left. The School District is not involved since it is not their function.

Concessions: Overall, this went well. Don Miller asked other Fair Board members for input regarding their specific areas. Lucas Wagner: Indoor vendors’ sales were down since the heat was a problem -- and the facility is the issue. Mr. Wagner noted large footprints for vendors. This will be considered at EOTEC when the Fair is moved. Steve Anderson added he felt the grounds person did a great job with the fairgrounds; he has been a good addition as new employee. Mr. Miller said kudos to Mike for his hard work. Mr. Miller noted income will be reduced based on lower attendance numbers. Now there is a negative number. There will be a budget review. Peggy Anderson felt the change will be in this fiscal year. In March, concert seats and parking passes will be going into the current fiscal year count/ numbers.

Entertainment: Commissioner Elfering asked Ms. Anderson to report. She noted attendance was good – sold out (3 years ago went to reserved seats suggested by Lucas Wagner) -- all sold out, box seats, etc. That money comes in March – June. Commissioner Elfering asked about correlation to fair attendance by performer – Ms. Anderson said Oak Ridge Boys was the best. Friday and Saturday are the strongest

nights. Commissioner Givens asked Ms. Anderson when the tickets would be on sale. Mr. Miller noted contracts will be done in February. Ms. Anderson talked about some types of performers – Country Western is very strong, so it will be harder to get those people. Lists are being reviewed. Tammy Dennee's position (on the Fair board) will need to be filled ASAP. That will be important. Mr. Miller noted an unrelated but important piece is the OFA Agenda. It is expected that a Commissioner be represented on that committee (Board).

Farm City Pro Rodeo Board. Dennis Barnett reported. This year, the rodeo grounds were kept up very well – nicer than in the past. There were more contestants than any year before. Attendance report: Mr. Barnett noted tickets were sold out Friday; 80% sold on Saturday; and Wednesday and Thursday 40-50% capacity – these numbers/percentages are pretty normal. Other revenues of sponsorships and income-wise, they were up finance-wise. Commissioner Givens asked if they think weather can be an explanation for lower numbers. Mr. Barnett feels it is more economy or entertainment – it is not unusual for the first two nights to be lower numbers. They will look at options for future move of facility. Last performance will be next year. Questions: None were posed.

Fairgrounds data: Mr. Miller started, currently 15 units in storage, ending up with about 70 units. Storage is important. Thompson Hall: 4H clubs continue to fill up. 7 weekends are not full – but busy in November and December. Grounds rentals: Ms. Anderson went over list of reserved and verbal commitments for reservations. Grounds maintenance. There have always been issues with the aging facility. Employees are doing a great job of keeping things going. Electrical continues to be difficult. Staff was changed mid-year. They are in the process of doing Fair Board assignments; that is coming soon. Board workshop will be December 13. There will be some shuffling of duties with resignation of Tammy Dennee; until assignments are made, not sure how that will look. Mr. Miller talked about cross-training with Farm City Pro Rodeo Board.

The intent now is to continue with a Fair Court, but it will be a non-riding court. Announcements are going out soon. This year Fair Court was non-riding as well.

Ms. Anderson noted that Thompson Hall reservations are coming in continually. She talked about last weekend there was a HUGE sale – flea market, eclectic sale. At least 2,000 people came from all over the region (even Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, etc.). She feels this is a great idea for something the Fair could do.

Ms. Anderson also noted on top of the “to do” list is the need for water/sewer line to be dug up and replaced before next year. Plan is to irrigate with hoses. No other questions.

Livestock sale: Gay Newman said they were down about \$10,000. Nevertheless, it was a good sale of about \$425,000.

Commissioner Elfering talked about the Festival of Lights. No decision has been made, but inventory will be taken. There are other groups involved with the Festival. He reported at a recent BCC Administrative meeting, this was discussed. Discussion included: inventory, who will receive what, items need to be moved at some point, best way to proceed, etc. The group noted the main items to be used would be extension cords. Mr. Miller did not feel that EOTEC, the Fair or others would want to use old lights.

BUSINESS

Oregon Fairs Association Update. Ms. Anderson will move into the Region 4 director position as the alternate with Tammy Dennee's resignation and move. The meeting is planned for January 8-11, 2015. She provided a hand-out showing the 2014 Umatilla County Fair Report. She noted good recognition at last year's OFA.

Mr. Miller talked about the history of this meeting. The Fair Board now has a Memorandum of Understanding. He thanked the BCC to continue the relationship with the County Fair. He appreciates where they are going and what they are doing. This is a positive involvement of BCC with the Fair. He noted 10 years back, there was not good communication. Commissioner Givens talked about upcoming changes with Fair and the EOTEC. Commissioner Elfering echoed Don Miller's comments about good communication. All want communication to remain open.

EOTEC. Commissioner Givens met this morning with the Frew Development group. At this time, they are waiting on water infrastructure. The gravel base will go in for roads after water is set. Weather has to be considered. Concern was the road specs – gravel, asphalt – the road off of Airport Rd. City of Hermiston would like to see things moving quickly on specs and conditions for an EOTEC site manager. Completion of EOTEC, phase 1, date is May of 2016. Regarding the money situation, Commissioner Givens recently talked to legislative representatives for a fund statewide that would take proposals for funding projects like EOTEC. Legislators are supportive and excited about the project. Consensus today was someone needs to be hired ASAP for site manager. Coordination is moving forward. Ms. Anderson noted a big packet of information from a group that wants to reserve for events in 2016 - 18. It needs to be acted on right away for them to capture the reservation.

Roads include Airport Road and Ott Road – past the facility. Discussions and coordination need to be undertaken right away. Dennis Barnett noted need for Farm City Rodeo and Fair to meet the EOTEC rep as soon as hired.

Mr. Miller asked about RV parking, asphalt, grass, etc. Commissioner Givens noted that phase 1 includes RV parking. Mr. Newman asked about negotiations—will they be with the EOTEC Board and the new site coordinator? The EOTEC board will manage the facility. EOTEC will be the owner of the facility. Lots of communication will be important.

Commissioner Elfering noted time is of essence. Mr. Miller talked about change and impacts of that change. He feels it is positive moving forward. Mr. Barnett talked about good relationship over last 10 years with Fair Board. This will now be moving into a third party facility. Mr. Miller noted negotiations could be approached by sharing information between the Fair Board and the Farm City Board. Discussion included sweat equity and financial equity (noted by Commissioner Givens). There will be a certain amount of control and should be covered in the MOU.

Mr. Barnett talked about meetings and representation during discussions – anxious to get it moving.

There was no further business. Commissioner Elfering adjourned for the BCC. Don Miller adjourned for the Fair Board. Dennis Barnett adjourned for the Farm City Board. 6:10 p.m.

Melinda Slatt, Executive Secretary, Umatilla County Board of Commissioners