



**DOUGLAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024**

**DOUGLAS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS – JAMES R. SULLIVAN EVENTS CENTER
CONFERENCE ROOM**

MINUTES

Dean Elliott - Chairperson, called the Douglas County Fair Board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on November 21, 2024. The meeting was held in the James R. Sullivan Conference Room. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board Members Present:

*John Adams
Pat Candelaria
Scott Candelaria
Dean Elliott
Sarah Fischer
Tom Harris
Wes Jacobs
Debbie Mills
Phil Riesselman
Pat Salazar
Hayden Schmidt
Pam Spradlin
Lori Sorenson
Lora Talbert
Rob Tkach
Gary Turner
Lisa Turner*

Associate Members Present:

*Nick Candelaria
Tori Checkal
James Jamison
Ryan Kennedy
Kyle Moore
Patti Russell
Danny Talbert
Dick Sabulsky
Jean Sabulsky
Ted Sorenson
Monica Wilson*

Other Guests Present:

*Marcus Ballinger
Tori Checkal
Tristan Hastings
Guinevere Nelson*

Staff Members Present:

*Zach Burns
Tim Hallmark
Sharon Hines
Teresa Kutt
Michelle Mannes
Tori Thelen*

Board Members Absent:

*Jennifer Foss
Scott McHenry
Gabriel Ryan*

Associate Members Absent:

*Matt Coyle
Deb Dilley
Josiah Fredericks
John Holst
Chayce Lutz
Chris Spyke
Kate Wormington*

6:30 PM CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**Public Meeting****No Public Comment**

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: Lisa moved to approve. Pat C. seconded. All approved. No discussion.

Consent Agenda. Gary moved to approve. Lori seconded. Wes clarified the animal substitution for State Fair in the Livestock Sale minutes. All approved. There was no discussion.

Treasurer's Report: Wes reported that the revenue for the 2024 DCF&R was \$993,027.27, with a net revenue of \$21,908.60. Some anticipated expenses remain, but not a significant amount.

Reports From Other Groups

CSU Extension: Guinevere reported that JC had her baby and would be out through the end of February 2025. Brittany will be leaving and they will fill that role with a new hire. Currently there are 234 4-H members enrolled (In 2024: 536 total). The CSU office will be closed next week.

Fair Foundation: Patty reported that the Grant Breakfast was November 16; it celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the LEG Up program and was well attended at Cherokee Ranch. The Cowboy Ball will be reimaged in 2025 with a new format and potential new location. On Feb. 7, the foundation will promote the event at Wide Open Saloon. Stop by the Fair Foundation booth at the Starlighting on November 23.

4-H Youth Council Tristan reported that the Holiday Dance is on Dec. 6, and the 4-H Leader Training is on Dec. 12.

REGULAR AGENDA**Staff Report:**

Master Plan: Tim provided an update on the Master Plan and presented conceptual drawings. The new drawings include the addition of a parking garage and a bridge to Perry Street. These new drawings illustrate the multi-uses of the Fairgrounds for the public, including an athletic venue, concert venue, and other non-fair activities. The parking garage would be able to house trailers on the first floor during Fair.

The location of Hero's Hall may shift from one end of the parking lot to the other. This building would be built through an outside fundraising campaign. During fair, the MOU would state that no events can take place in the Hall to allow for more Fair parking.

Not all the details (pens, parking, etc.) are included in the renderings.

The arena displayed in the renderings accommodates 6,000 seats. Staging would be brought in for events – there will not be a permanent stage. The arena floor is rectangle in the drawings but will be able to have rounded corners to accommodate rodeos. The arena

floor size would be able to accommodate fields for some youth sports. The arena would have concession space and bathrooms.

The concept places the Events Center as the hub for Fair with all traffic moving through the space to access all activities.

If approved, the first phase would be building a new Livestock Sale Pavilion and addressing barn needs.

Parking capacity has not been determined.

Tim and Zach will meet with the BOCC to discuss Master Plan renderings.

IAFE Awards: Michelle announced the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo was awarded the following by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions:

- First Place: Promotional Advertising: Outdoor Division – *Sidewalk Decal*
- First Place: Agriculture Award: Technique/procedure/policy developed by Fair Management to correct an issue or challenge related to an agricultural issue impacting your community or fair which can be addressed during the fair – *Dairy Cattle Show & Managing Avian Flu*
- First Place: Non-Fair Event Designed to Educate – *Koi Fish Show*
- Second Place: Unique exhibit/promotion/special event/community engagement/competition showcased during the year, outside of Fair time – *Royalty Clinic at CAF*
- Second Place: In-Kind/Trade Sponsor – *HW Ring and Gate Sponsorship*
- Third Place: Sponsor Continuity – *Kiana Creek Crow's Nest Sign*
- Third Place: Community Impact – *Developmental Pathways and Disability Awareness Day*

Concert Survey: Zach thanked everyone who completed the concert survey. The top genre choice was Red Dirt Country, followed by 90s Country. The survey results will be provided to the BOCC.

Sponsorship Workshop: Zach invited Fair Board members to participate in a 90-day fundraising/sponsorship course starting in February. Interested Fair Board members should contact Zach.

Old Business:

Committee Work Plans: Five have been received. Please submit them by next week.

Follow-up from October Meeting re: Reserve Buckles: Dean provided an update on the request to provide buckles to Reserve Champion winners. The Awards committee reviewed the costs of reserve buckles with the youth council, and the council agreed that one buckle for Grand Champion was adequate. The budget for the 2025 awards is fixed, and no additional funds are available. The Awards Committee will present other options to the council soon.

New Business

Committee Chair Reports

Show Management: Hayden reported that the committee has met with superintendents and volunteers to review roles and rules. The committee has received suggested updates for the rules. Next month, the committee will review the committee structure.

Awards: Pat C. reported that the primary goal of 2025 is to accept award sponsor payments online. Additionally, the committee will recognize 2024 sponsors online by the beginning of 2025 and focus on Years of Service Awards.

Livestock Sale: Phil reported that the committee will review rules, create materials to answer buyer's questions, improve marketing and sponsorship packages.

Entertainment: Sarah stated that in 2025, the committee will work on improving the timing of entertainment and expanding the Kid's Corral.

Admin: Lora reported that shirts will be online by February and badges by April. The holiday party invite will go out next week. The committee is working on creating a history repository and discussing a history display at the Fair. Additionally, the committee is reviewing onboarding materials and orientation for new Fair Board members.

Rodeo: John stated that contracts are in progress, a new registration system for Hometown Rodeo has been identified, and they are looking for ways to increase the purse.

Marketing: Debbie reported that the committee is developing a new look for the 2025 materials, improving the souvenir program, and creating a destination-driven event. Additionally, the committee's goal is to increase sponsorship dollars/in-kind by \$100,000 in 2025.

Guest Services: Gary reported that the committee will work on engaging new community partners to help recruit volunteers, increase year-round engagement with existing volunteers, and recruit more committee members.

The **Competition Rules Committee** is recruiting new members; contact Hayden for more information.

The **Holiday Party** will be held on Thursday, December 19. Fair Board members are welcome to bring alcoholic beverages, but please be responsible. Motion to start the Dec. 19 Fair Board meeting at 6 PM. Phil motioned to approve, seconded by Scott. All approved. No opposed

Some Fair Board members are at the end of their terms. In December, the Fair Board will recommend those members to the BOCC for reappointment in January.

Zach's Presentation: Opportunities to Improve Fair

The following ideas were presented to Fair Board based on feedback, research, and data from the 2024 Fair:

Extend Operating Hours on the Final Sunday

Currently, the DCF&R closes at 4 PM on the final Sunday. The carnival and other vendors recommend that the fair closes at 6 PM. This would allow rodeo attendees to have time to enjoy the fair and vendors after the rodeo ends at 3:00 PM.

Impact: Minimal impact is expected. Open Class and General Projects maintain a 5 PM project pick-up schedule. Staff would set up pipe and drape in the marketplace to allow vendors to keep selling while Open Class begins the project pick-up process. Barns would close at 3:30 p.m. Staffing would need to be in place at the North end of the midway to keep attendees from the barns.

Comments:

Nick: Animals are critical to the fair experience to teach Ag. Should barn times be adjusted?

Hayden: Not in favor. Extended hours are inconvenient to 4-H families. Kids begin school the week after fair. Added complications for the pick-up of projects in the Events Center. Logistics and resources would increase in Events Center.

Pat S.: Open Class has been flexible to a variety of changes every year. Additional signage and designate parking for project participants would need to be considered.

Show management will discuss barn closure time 3:30 PM vs. 4:00 PM.

Nick: Can we start rodeo at 11 AM instead? Zach replied that Sunday is the latest arriving crowd based on ticket scans due to church and other activities.

Zach stated that longer hours would provide a better attendee experience and minimal revenue impact. Allows attendees to enjoy other aspects of fair including carnival, food, & marketplace.

Dean: An additional challenge is the line of 4-H trailers picking up animals while the Fair is still operating. Tim suggests erecting a hard barrier to keep attendees from barn areas.

Motion to approve made by Rob T. Seconded by Pat C. Hayden opposes. Motion passes.

Evaluate Use of Main Doors of Events Center

Currently, on the second weekend the Events Center doors are used as an entrance to fair. In 2024, based on ticket scans, the EC entrance accommodated only 5% of patrons; however, the cost of operating that entrance accounted for 28% of Event Staffing resources (Denver Metro), 34% of greeters and 17% of ticket takers. The event staffing costs equate to \$1.60 per patron or \$2,659.20.

Impact: Improving the fair entry experience by streamlining the process and minimizing the number of entrances will ease gate management and reduce the number of volunteer shifts by 30.

Improved signage would direct traffic to the west side entrance and bathrooms to the rear of the hall. Project pick-up would remain the same.

Lori: create an engaging entrance and not locked doors should be a priority.

Camera scans and ticket scans verified data.

Gary motioned to approve. Seconded by John. Hayden opposes. Motion passes.

Rodeo Ticket Pricing

Currently, rodeo tickets are priced in two tiers: \$28 and \$35. The recommendation of moving to one pricing tier would improve marketing communication and help combat ticket scalpers selling tickets for triple the price.

John: Rodeo contracts are expected to be higher.

The single tier would increase ticket prices by 20% for 40% of rodeo patrons.

Sunday rodeo would remain priced at \$25.

John motioned to approve. Seconded by Scott. All approved.

Gate Admission Changes

In 2024, there was an \$11 grounds admission charge on the second Friday and Saturday only. Free admission days were Friday – Thursday and Sunday.

Over the last few years, the first weekend has grown due to increased entertainment and activities. This added value creates a richer experience for the fair attendee.

The top negative comment in customer surveys was the perceived value of the gate admission on the second weekend.

The Fair Board is asked to consider charging a \$5 grounds admission every day of the fair except the second Sunday (Family Day).

Impact:

- New cost of admission for 60% of patrons
- Lower cost of admission for 30% of patrons
- Improved data on admissions that positively impact the scheduling of staff, volunteers, and vendors.
- Collection of email addresses and demographics to improve marketing efforts.

Phil asked how the \$5 amount fee was determined. Zach replied that ticket service fees go up at the \$7 range.

Pat C.: Expressed concern of the impact on 4-H Families and spectators of animal shows. Zach explained that Monday and Tuesday of Fair, attendees would not be charged since most of fair is closed; on Wednesday, ticket fees would begin at 4 PM when the fair opens.

Pam: Would open class receive wristbands? Yes

James: The board should consider keeping the first Friday free as well and expressed concerns about pushing people away with new fees.

Gary expressed concern on needing more volunteers to sell and take tickets. Zach has worked with Lisa to build out scenarios and streamlined the volunteer schedule to ensure we would not add more volunteer shifts.

Scott stated that it's a common practice to charge each day of a fair and to remember we don't charge for parking. National Western Stock Show and State Fair charge each day as well as for parking.

Lori observed that rodeo ticket holders receive grounds admission as part of their ticket price. Perceived value is important and should be improved yearly. Another idea would be to create a \$20 weekly pass.

Phil asked for a clarification on days that would have an admission fee. Zach clarified:

- Grounds Admission Fee: First Friday – Sunday, Wednesday after 4 PM, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
- No Grounds Admission Fee: Monday, Tuesday, and Second Sunday.

James suggested finding a sponsor to cover opening Friday gate admission

Jean suggests the board reconsider the age requirements for a ticket. State Fair is free under 4; currently DCF&R anyone over 2 requires a ticket.

Zach re-emphasized the growing cost of Fair, the importance of collecting data to measure impact for sponsors, and that while the 2024 was in the black; adjustments will need to be made to maintain momentum.

Motion to approve by Phil, seconded by Rob. Hayden opposes. Motion passes.

Tim stated that all recommendations must go to the BOCC for final approval.

Director Comments

John reported that rodeo volunteer Gary Northrup was in a serious accident and is in the ICU. The Fair Foundation will provide a \$200 gift card to the family.

John reported that the Mountain State Circuit awarded the DCF&R the *Large Rodeo of the Year* and *Best Ground of the Year*. The DCF&R competed against Cheyenne Frontier Days, Greeley Stampede, Cody Stampede, and the National Western Stock Show to win these awards.

John also wanted to mention the roles that he, Debbie M. and Deb Dilley fill at a national level on behalf of DCF&R:

- Deb Dilley is on the board of Miss Rodeo American and a member of their Hall of Fame
- Debbie Mills serves as a chaperone for royalty and organizes the NFR hospitality tent
- John serves on the ProRodeo Hall of Fame Board of Directors and Golden Buckle Gala committee. He is also presenting at two sessions during the PRCA convention.

Adjournment at 8:10 pm.

Next Meeting: December 19, 2024 at 6 PM

Rules for Citizen Engagement at Fair Board Meeting

To have orderly, efficient, civil, and productive board meetings, the following rules apply to all citizens who have a desire to address the Board:

1. Citizen comments will be heard during the public comment section at the board meeting.
2. All citizen comments must be addressed to the Board. Directing comments to staff or other members of the public is not permitted during Board meetings.
3. The public comment section is limited to ten minutes collectively.
4. Citizens are asked not to repeat comments made by others; merely indicate their concurrence.
5. Citizens will be asked to use a microphone so that Board members and the audience can hear their comments.
6. Clapping, cheering, booing, and the like are not permitted at Board meetings.
7. Failure to abide by the aforementioned rules of engagement is considered disruptive to the public process and will result in a warning to the violation citizen(s) by the Board Chair. If after that warning the citizen(s) continues to violate these rules, they will be asked to leave the meeting. If the citizen does not leave the meeting when asked, the appropriate steps will be taken by the Board Chair to have them removed from the meeting.

Mission Statement: The Douglas County Fair and Rodeo is the premier annual community event in Douglas County bringing together the best of Rural Heritage, Agriculture, Western Sports, Youth and Adult Exhibits and quality Entertainment.