



**DOUGLAS COUNTY FAIR BOARD**

**THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025**

**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 May 22, 2025. 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  
Tom Harris  
Wes Jacobs  
Scott McHenry  
Debbie Mills  
Phil Riesselman  
Pat Salazar  
Hayden Schmidt  
Pam Spradlin  
Lori Sorenson  
Lora Talbert  
Rob Tkach  
Gary Turner  
Lisa Turner*

***Associate Members Present:***

*Tori Checkal  
James Jamison  
Linda Jefferies  
Ryan Kennedy  
Kyle Moore  
Patti Russell  
Dick Sabulsky  
Jean Sabulsky  
Frank Silici  
Ted Sorenson  
Chris Spyke*

***Other Guests Present:***

*Tristan Hastings  
Guinevere Nelson*

***Staff Members Present:***

*Laurie Anderson  
Zach Burns  
Clay Gysin  
Sharon Hines  
Michelle Mannes  
Emily Schoelzel  
Aaron Stepanich*

***Board Members Absent:***

*Sarah Fischer  
Jennifer Foss*

***Associate Members Absent:***

*Clay Adams  
Nick Candelaria  
Matt Coyle  
Deb Dilley  
Josiah Fredericks  
Lauren Heaton  
John Holst  
Chayce Lutz  
Garrett Northrop  
Ty Quintana  
Gabriel Ryan  
Danny Talbert  
Cynthia Tkach  
Monica Wilson  
Kate Wormington  
Matt Wormington*

**6:30 PM CALL TO ORDER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE****Public Meeting**

**Public Comment:** None.

**Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:** Rob Tkach moved to approve the last meeting minutes. Scott Candelaria seconded. No discussion. All approved.

**Consent Agenda:** Lisa Turner asked for a correction that the online volunteer training will occur on July 16, not July 18. Given the amendment, Lori Sorenson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Rob Tkach seconded. There was no further discussion. All approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Wes Jacobs reported that current revenue is at \$146,509, with expected revenue of over \$1 million. Expenses are currently at \$79,293, with anticipated expenses at \$763,987. A lot more is expected to come in over the next few months.

**Reports From Other Groups**

**4-H Foundation:** Patti Russell reported that five four-year scholarships had been distributed for this school year. No tradeshow scholarships have been awarded. Ten project grants have also been awarded.

**CSU/4-H:** Guinevere Nelson reported that their office is hiring two summer interns to support 4-H staff and programming. All summer programming is going well.

**Youth Council:** Tristan Hastings reported that the 4-H Youth Council is gearing up for June Show, summer activities, and Fair preparation.

**FFA:** None.

**DCSO:** Nothing new for this meeting.

**Regular Agenda****Committee Reports**

**Marketing:** Debbie Mills reported that the Committee is working on Billboards and road signs. Coffee sleeves have been distributed to several different coffee shops. Teresa is working hard on email marketing campaigns to volunteers, open class exhibitors, ticket buyers, etc.

**Rodeo:** John Adams reported that extra purse money has been added to the budget for a total amount per event of \$23,875. This takes our purse higher than the Dodge City, Kansas rodeo on the same weekend as ours. The total purse for the year is \$191,000. Ticket sales for the rodeos are ahead of last year's. The PRCA has purchased 80 tickets for employees to use during our rodeo.

**Show Management:** Hayden Schmidt reported that securing judge contracts is going well. 4-H Animal Tag-Ins are also going well, with rabbit and poultry still left to tag in. Rob and Lori are working hard to update the exhibitor packet. Lori is building a program to help onboard, maintain, and incentivize Superintendents.

**Entertainment:** Scott McHenry reported that most of the entertainment has been set since their last meeting, with few tasks remaining before the Fair.

**Awards:** Pat Candelaria thanked the sponsors who had paid their bills and asked anyone who had not yet to send a check to do so.

**Guest Services:** Gary Turner reported that all merchandise sales will occur in the Events Center this year. Each gate will have a Team lead at every shift to help Lisa with troubleshooting if needed. Volunteers are being added to the schedule for first aid shifts.

**Livestock Sale:** Wes Jacobs reported that the date/anniversary on the Save the Date postcards sent out was incorrect. This was incorrect last year as well. The Committee will make sure to proofread everything better moving forward.

**Admin:** Lora Talbert reported that all plans are set for Workday. The Committee wants to distribute all Fair Board shirts at the June Fair Board meeting. The Admin Committee is working on a history project for the Souvenir Program and display in Kirk Hall during the Fair.

**Staff Report:** Zach introduced Emily Schoelzel, this year's Fair and Rodeo intern. Emily is excited to be part of the Fair.

### Old Business

**Discussion on Animal Receiving Date:** Hayden Schmidt addressed the Board that he has received several comments and concerns about the newly scheduled Animal Check-In on Monday, July 28. Given the comments received, Hayden moved to return Animal Check-In to its original date of Tuesday, July 29, and relook at the schedule for 2026. Scott Candelaria seconded. No discussion. All approved.

**Draft Horse Show:** Scott McHenry reported that planning for the Draft Horse Show is going well. A few large sponsors have agreed to sponsor the event, leaving a small amount left to sponsor. The schedule will include performance classes at 2 p.m. and a pull starting at 5 p.m. He thanked everyone involved for working on the schedule and budget to make this event happen. Clay, Tori, and Michelle will schedule a site visit with the group to ensure space requirements are met.

**Mock Sale Planning:** Pat Candelaria reported that everything is all set for the Mock Sale. The committee would welcome any help from the Fair Board, who would like to assist and be a buyer that night.

### New Business

**Fair Foundation Opening:** Dean Elliott reported that the Fair Foundation has an opening for a Director at Large position. Scott McHenry volunteered for the position. Wes moved to approve Scott McHenry for the Director at Large position for the Fair Foundation. Phil Riesselman seconded. No discussion. All approved.

**PRCA Awards:** John Adams presented two awards to the Douglas County Fairgrounds Maintenance Staff for Best Ground and Best Large Rodeo of the Year. He thanked them for their hard work, ensuring a safe and exceptional facility for the rodeos. Clay Gysin and Aaron Stepanich accepted the awards.

**Facility Update Presentation:** Zach Burns discussed upcoming projects at the Fairgrounds. New shade sails will be installed over the benches in Heritage Plaza. Kirk Hall will be painted to resemble its original white colors with green trim. Lights will be strung in the midway trees, and light towers will be added to brighten the playground area at night. A VIP Party Deck will be built in the coming months and will be completed for the 2025 Fair & Rodeo. The deck will be an opportunity to explore VIP experience and serve as a private viewing area for the PRCA Rodeos. There will be a cash bar and light refreshments served. Debbie Mills reminded the board that Tom Harris has been helping to secure a sponsorship of the Party Deck from the Rotary Club for three years.

**Douglas County Day:** Zach Burns reported that the Board of County Commissioners has created a Staff Day to recognize the Douglas County Employees on Wednesday, July 30, from 4 p.m. to close. The invitation will be sent to 1,400 employees and their families. Dean Elliott reminded the Fair Board that this is an excellent opportunity to be present and interact with the Douglas County employees and thank them for attending the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo.

**Sponsorship Update:** Debbie Mills reported that of the 90 sponsors who sponsored the Fair in 2024, 86% are returning. We have gained six new sponsors, three of them national PRCA sponsors. Pendleton and Hutchinson Western have both upped their sponsorship amounts for the year. Currently, sponsorships for the year are around \$433,000.

**June Fair Board Date Change:** Due to the Juneteenth County Holiday, Wes Jacobs moved to change the June Fair Board meeting date to June 26<sup>th</sup>. Phil Riesselman seconded. No discussion. All approved.

**Other Business:** Dean Elliott shared that Commissioner Teal filmed his next Commissioner video update at the Fairgrounds to promote the Fair and stay tuned for when it is released. He also shared that the Broncos filmed their schedule release video at the Fairgrounds thanks to Debbie Mills. The theme was Mutton Bustin and featured our facilities and a few of our previous Mutton Busters.

**Director Comment:** None.

**Adjournment at 7:15 pm**

**Next Meeting: June 26, 2025**

#### **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.

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**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.