

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Joint Board of Commissioners, Fair Board and Farm City Pro Rodeo Board
Meeting of October 21, 2013
6:00 p.m., Dennis D. Doherty Conference Room
Stafford Hansell Government Center
Hermiston, Oregon

** ** ** **

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Bill Elfering, Vice Chairman; George Murdock, Commissioner Larry Givens, Chairman (arrive 6:25 a.m.)

FAIR BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mel Keely; Dan Dorrان, Lucas Wagner (Vice Chairman), Gay Newman, Steve Anderson, Tammy Dennee

FARM CITY PRO RODEO BOARD: Darrel Sallee; Jim Michael, Jon Gill, Dennis Barnett, Mike Kay

EOTEC AUTHORITY BOARD: Chet Prior, Chairman; Dennis Doherty; Vijay Patel; Kim Puzey

STAFF PRESENT: Peggy Anderson, Umatilla County Fair/Fairgrounds Manager; Laura Headley, Umatilla County Board of Commissioners Executive Secretary

GUESTS PRESENT: Michael Harvey, "SCD" (with Frew Group); Gary Winsand, Frew Development Group Project Manager; John Frew, Frew Development Group Principal; Jerrie Keely, Fair Volunteer; Bruce Anderson, Fair Volunteer

** ** **

CALL TO ORDER

The general meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Umatilla County Board of Commissioners Vice Chairman Bill Elfering, who stated that the meeting was a public forum and after the boards were called to order that there would be a round of self-introductions. The Board of Commissioners Vice Chairman Bill Elfering then called the Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Umatilla County Fair Board of Directors Vice Chairman Lucas Wagner called the Fair Board meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Self introductions were completed around the room with the Fair Board members adding their fair duties to the introduction.

BUSINESS ON AGENDA

Reports:

1. **2013 fair data:**

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a. **Mel Keely, Grounds**: Mel Keely reported that currently the grounds looked good. Earlier there were some problems with the sewage system in the RV Park, which happened from time to time, but those were resolved quickly. New carpet was being installed in the fair office and the irrigation lines were blown out for the season.

b. **Dan Dorran, Beer Sales/Concessions**: Dan Dorran reported that he would also be providing a report on behalf of Fair Board Chairman Don Miller for the security responsibilities. Dan Dorran announced that the fair experienced the cleanest fair in memory in terms of security. Additionally, the fair goers, exhibitors and most of those on the grounds the night of the storm followed the instructions of the fair board members, security and fair volunteers in seeking shelter. The shelter plans worked very well.

Dan Dorran reported that food revenues were up, not just from the industry driven increases, but also in terms of overall sales. The board had learned that more vendors were not the way to go, but that quality vendors who created return customers was. The beer sales had increased 78% over previous years on a steady climb throughout the years.

The latino night program, produced with the cooperation of the Hispanic Advisory Committee was a large part of the concession success.

c. **Gay Newman, Livestock**: Gay Newman reported that the county livestock sale broke yet another record with \$434,000 in sales without an increase in animals run through the sale. He expressed his appreciation to the City of Hermiston for its assistance with the BBQ contest and other aspects of the fair.

d. **Tammy Dennee, Ambassadors**: Tammy Dennee reported that the inaugural ambassador program had seated 15 girls and the board felt that was too many. For the 2013 year, there were 6 ambassadors seated and the program finished with 5 because one girl chose to bow out to concentrate on her livestock responsibilities during the fair. The exposure was good, but the fair board decided to return to the court format for the 2014 fair after informally polling the public. Tammy Dennee, also was in charge of the entertainment and noted an increase in the attendance for the entertainment in spite of the storm.

e. **Steve Anderson, Parking**: Steve Anderson reported that the Elks assisted, as usual, with the parking management. During the storm, the school's policy was followed where students and youth were on parking lot duty when the storm began to move in. The adults took over the parking lots until the storm cleared. Parking revenues were somewhat down and he believed that was due to the availability of street parking.

f. **Lucas Wagner, Vendors**: Lucas Wagner reported that the majority of the vendors returned from previous years. However, the outside vendors, those not housed in Cooper Hall, reported a 30% decrease in sales and the indoor vendors reported a slightly higher decrease. They attributed the decrease to the lack of air conditioning in the building, which resulted in less traffic through it.

g. **Peggy Anderson**: Peggy Anderson first expressed appreciation to Mike Kay for allowing the fair to use the West Park school parking lot after hours for parking and to the city for its general assistance and help with the sewage problem in the RV Park area.

- 1) **Kids Camp:** Peggy Anderson reported that the second year of Kids' Camp was extremely successful. The camp, run for the younger children associated with exhibitors, was established the previous year and run in conjunction with the Intermountain ESD by Tammy Wagner.
- 2) Peggy Anderson also commented that the heat index was a major factor in the exhibitor halls.

Commissioner Givens arrived, delayed due to construction in Washington.

2. **2013 Farm City Pro Rodeo Report:**

- a. Dennis Barnett reported that the storm was an effective training tool. After the storm subsided and the rodeo re-opened, about 50 to 60% of the crowd was lost. Saturday night was a large night for the beer garden and the rodeo board was looking forward to adding to its attendance in the new facility.
- b. Darrel Sallee reported that the trick roper, Tomas, for their latino attraction was a great draw and that the board hoped to have him return. Dennis Barnett added that the rodeo board hoped to coordinate with the fair board for their latino nights.

3. **2013 Fairgrounds Report:** Peggy Anderson described the off season use of the fairgrounds, such as the RV storage in the buildings and barns. In 2012, there were 75 units in storage total. As of close of business on October 16th there were already 35 units in storage compared to the same date in 2012 when there were 18 units already in storage. The two heating units in Thompson Hall, the 4-H exhibit and events rental building, were not operable. Thompson Hall was ordinarily rented out for events most of the year except for the lead up to and after the fair around July 15th through August 31st and then again in past years during the Festival of Lights. On October 1st, Festival of Lights Committee member Karen Talaski informed Fair Manager Peggy Anderson that the committee decided not to put on a Festival for 2013 as they did not have the required manpower to do so. In terms of fairgrounds facilities rentals, there were several 2014 contracts already in place, such as Good Sams Club, Oregon RCA, mounted shooters and the high school rodeo. This was all accomplished using 3 full time staff members.

4. **Oregon Fairs Association:** Peggy Anderson introduced as the eastern Oregon Oregon Fairs Association representative. The 2014 funding to county fairs had not yet been determined from the state, but most counties were expecting that the share would be approximately \$48,000. It was suggested that the Board of Commissioners consider cooperating on a sponsorship of a table at the OFA conference in January. The dates for the OFA conference were January 16th through 18th, 2014.

5. **Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center (EOTEC) Authority Board Report:** Chet Prior reported that the board had hired its project contractors on a rolling quarterly contract. The first quarter began on October 21st and the contractor's first task was to find matching funding with the ending task being completion of the construction. He introduced John Frew of the Frew Development Group, the project contractor.

John Frew and the authority board introduced themselves again, providing their representative group as shown below:

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Nate Rivera, support for the board to the start of the contractor's work, then promotions
Dennis Doherty, representing Umatilla County
Kim Puzey, representing Umatilla County
Chet Prior, representing Hermiston
Ed Brookshier, representing Hermiston
Dan Dorran, representing the fair
Dave Bothum (absent), representing Farm City Pro Rodeo
Vijay Patel, representing the hoteliers.

John Frew reported that the first task facing the contractor was to identify the critical needs for the facilities, which would also be a challenge in which the contract had expertise. The Frew Group specialized in phased build outs of various types of facilities.

John Frew introduced Mike Harvey and Gary Winsand. Gary Winsand was in the process of moving to Hermiston to act as the Frew Group's on site manager

The Frew Group's goal for the first four months was to complete the vetting of the project, determine worst case scenarios in terms of project completions, which would include a built in window of two months. The plan was to start the horizontal process first. The horizontal process was the infrastructure planning and establishment. Then the vertical process would be undertaken, which included the installation of the buildings.

The goal for 2014 was to complete the horizontal development and to begin the vertical development in 2015 with completion in 2016.

Gary Winsand commented that he was looking forward to working on the project through its completion and stated that he would likely remain through the 2016 fair to ensure that all was working as expected.

Nate Rivera commented that in January 2014 a committee would be pulled together to consider the first four months of work and outreach into the community to man the committee would begin soon.

Dan Dorran commented that it was his understanding that the concept of the process was that it would occur in waves. He also noted that the TPA funds were not to be used for the construction project.

Kim Puzey added that a good metaphor for the phasing of the project was that the phases would be in the nature of wet concrete with a continuous pour.

Commissioner Givens commented that it seemed that the first four months were intended to open the door to encourage sponsors for the facility. John Frew elaborated stating that the project would need two kinds of sponsors; those who were local and understood the role of the fair and rodeo and those who were targeting the impression or image driven consumer.

John Frew emphasized that throughout the project, there would be continuous reevaluation of want versus need in terms of the facilities build out. Darrel Sallee commented that it seemed that the intent of that concept was to take a good plan and marry it with reality.

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Steve Anderson asked what was available for the project in terms of funding. Chet Prior responded that there was currently available \$15 million in all, including in kind contributions, committed sponsor funds and a grant from HUD, which had an expiration date on it.

Peggy Anderson asked about the status of building sponsorships and how they would be handled. Nate Rivera responded that had been considered by the Superlative Group in its studies. The most likely to be building sponsors would be the mid to lower lever contributors.

Kim Puzey explained that the reason for the soft-sell on the funding was that some contributors could not commit immediately because of the distant completion date, especially where funds were specific to particular items or actions.

Mel Keely asked if any thought was given to the public reaction to the process. Nate Rivera responded that the public relations would be in the nature of a proactive approach with a gradual build up.

Dan Dorran commented that it would be wise to remember that the blueprints would change over time.

Other Discussion:

Vijay Patel commented, regarding EOTEC, that a lot of communities build wonderful facilities, but underbudget for the operations of them, using marketing funds to bolster their operations budgets. The purpose of the TPA would keep marketing revenues to their purpose of generating more marketing funds.

Bruce Anderson commented that there was also the concept of the rest of Hermiston as a destination. Vijay Patel responded that it was hoped that the events would draw more funds and additional funds to town while events were occurring at EOTEC. Nate Rivera commented that the concept was considered in the Superlative Group's report.

Open Discussion: Public Input: None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Headley
Executive Secretary
Umatilla County
Board of Commissioners