

MINUTES
UMATILLA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BCC/Umatilla County Fair Board/Farm City Pro Rodeo Board
Meeting, October 19, 2015, 5:00 p.m.
SHGC – Conference Room #113

Attendance:

Board of Commissioners: George Murdock, Chair, and Larry Givens, Vice-Chair.

Umatilla County Fair Board: Lucas Wagner, Don Miller, Gay Newman, Steve Anderson, Mel Keely, and Bob Wolfe.

Farm City Pro Rodeo Board: David Bothum, Dennis Barnett, Dave Dickmeier, Jon Gill, and Mike Kay.

County Staff: Melinda Slatt, Executive Secretary to the Commissioners; and Angie McNalley, Fair Office.

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. by Chair Murdock for the Board of Commissioners. For the Fair Board, called to order by Lucas Wagner. Chair Murdock reminded the group it was a public meeting, minutes were being taken and audio recorded.

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

Lucas Wagner started with Fair Report- 2015 Data. There are currently 2 FTE positions at the Fair Office. County Human Resources is currently accepting applications for Fair Manager (temporary position). (See additional report information, copy attached.) Mr. Wagner noted the OFA (Oregon Fair Association) conference will be January 14-16, 2016 in Salem. He also noted the Fair anticipates receiving about \$53,000 from State Lottery funding. He commended the County Fair's wonderful office staff, Angie McNalley, and a part-time office assistant for handling the office after Peggy Anderson's departure as Fair Manager in September.

Commissioner Givens noted 6 applicants for the short-term duration Fair Manager are scheduled for interviews. Melinda Slatt will email copies of the applications to the interview panel for review and the schedule will be provided when set.

2015 Farm City Pro Rodeo Data. Contestant numbers were up in all events -- the most in each event ever. Last year, Farm City won the Remuda Award. Good stock and contestants. Dennis Barnett elaborated – the Remuda Award is given for the best stock in the PRCA across the nation. Farm City has been fortunate enough to receive the Award the last 2 years. It is good to be recognized for “doing things right”. Spectator numbers were very good, except on Friday night due to high wind. Thus, Friday numbers softened overall attendance. He noted free rodeo entertainment – motorcycles/jumps and tricks – added a good element to the events. The rodeo went pretty smoothly and current facilities continue to handle things well. Sponsors are supportive. Generally, the rodeo is in better shape each year. Things are well maintained and that is appreciated.

Regarding ticket sales, they lost PGG as a retail outlet, but the Fair picked up a share of that for outlet/ticket sales.

Commissioner Givens asked about tents. Mr. Barnett noted they lost 2 tents. Wind was a problem, but actual activities went well. Steve Anderson added that tractors held some tents down. Some straps gave way, but they were able to make something work. Mr. Barnett noted they rent tents from a business. Mr. Newman asked about rodeo contestants and the timing last year. Mr. Barnett responded, the quality is there – they attract maybe 13 out of top 15 performers. It's a riding event rather than a drawing event. The top 5 riders got bucked off due to the great stock!

They do not have infrastructure issues like the Fairgrounds. The Gold Buckle event went well after the rodeo. Sponsors are positive heading to transition to new site, when that happens. The goal is to keep sponsors informed.

2015 Fairgrounds Data. Mr. Wagner presented. (See report, copy attached.) The Fair is looking to streamline operations and save office staff time. They went to season billing vs. monthly billing (mostly Tri-Cities). They are not committing for rentals past 10/31/16 for the transition to the EOTEC site. Infrastructure is holding out. Chair Murdock asked what is the estimated “band-aid” amount to hold the grounds together? Mel Keely and Don Miller said there is no band-aiding. They have to turn off power to a couple of buildings for the entertainment acts to operate.

Bob Wolfe said options are generators, but he does not know how feasible that would be. He has a meeting scheduled with Kirk Hopmeier who would be willing to go through the grounds to give an assessment. Mr. Hopmeier has a lot of experience and he may have some ideas for making things work. The concessions stands are a big deal. Mr. Miller said sewage will be an issue – this may go back to the concession area and exhibitor areas as well.

Discussion turned to close ties with the City of Hermiston, need to stress the Fair is county-wide and problems with adequate revenues. The Fair would have to cut out about 30 campers and concession stands which would reduce those revenues. The rodeo rents porta-potties for their part of the grounds so they do not have sewage issues like the fairgrounds.

Mr. Miller added that some things can be fixed and some cannot. Services need to be assessed. Power requirements cannot be met without doubling the number of generators.

Oregon Fairs Association Update: This report is sent annually to the State Fair Association. It is completed and sent by the October 15 deadline. The information included in this report was mostly been covered in Mr. Wagner’s prior oral report. (see OFA 2015 County Fair Report, copy attached.)

Commissioner Givens noted a budget line item has been established for the Fair Board to attend the OFA in January.

EOTEC. Commissioner Givens noted most in attendance here were at the recent meeting at Stetson’s discussing EOTEC. He asked Rodeo Board members if they are on-board with moving. David Bothum responded they are on-board with moving as long as there is a commitment and what was promised happens. They will only put on a first class event in the current location. Mr. Barnett said there are two options: visit with school district to see if they will extend rodeo portion at the current location (as the grounds are not involved with infrastructure) or they would not have an event. They plan and the intention is to go to the EOTEC site. He also talked about financial considerations. EOTEC is going through fund raising, but they need numbers from EOTEC so the Rodeo Board will know what the commitment is and what is still needed.

Commissioner Givens noted his reason for asking is he had heard the Rodeo is trying to cut a deal with Hermiston High School – these are rumors he has heard.

Mike Kay responded from the School District standpoint, December 31, 2016 is the move out date. Mr. Barnett agreed – the Rodeo is moving to the EOTEC site as planned.

The group agreed that accurate information is imperative on EOTEC’s part to be communicated to the general public. They need to provide actual and current numbers and information.

Commissioner Givens (who sits on the EOTEC Board) said the cost was estimated at about \$11.8 million. At this point, the cost is about \$14 million, short by \$3 million. Mr. Barnett felt that will be done – depending on what the county and City of Hermiston does; stakeholders need to be firm with what is needed. He agreed lack of communication has not helped EOTEC. Within two weeks, City of Hermiston and Frew Development should have dollar figures more firmed up in order to generate revenue in November and December (fundraising push).

Hermiston City Council will meet Monday, 10/26 (per Mr. Barnett) and per Commissioner Givens there is an EOTEC work session also on Monday, which may be a conflict. Discussion continued about issues of dollar amounts not be clearly defined, need for firm numbers in order to go out fundraising, School District's standpoint about the property being purchased for a specific project. In addition, discussion included the EOTEC project, timeframes changing, numbers not being definite, the EOTEC Board needs to communicate accurate information. It was confirmed the EOTEC work session is on 10/26 at 6 p.m. Mr. Barnett, Commissioner Givens, Steve Anderson and Bob Wolfe will be there.

Commissioner Givens noted he felt better with the Rodeo Board's comments today. Mr. Barnett encouraged any questions to be directed to him and the Rodeo Board – they will answer truthfully and if they do not know, they will refer to someone who can.

Commissioner Givens asked how much of the Rodeo property can be moved now? Rather, when move occurs, how much of their property can be moved? David Bothum advised it depends on who else is using the items (i.e. high school rodeo?). It goes back to timing and use of the property (pens, panels, etc.). There is a list of property items the Rodeo board put together -- some things might be scrapped. Money will go back into the facility or back into the event.

Mike Kay said all property has been identified in sales agreement.

EOTEC has told the Rodeo Board the facility is supposed to be turn-key – ready to move on with events right away.

Don Miller felt the Fair will be successful. Mr. Barnett added this is a whole county project – from all corners. It is not just a Hermiston project. Commissioner Givens noted in addition to being county-wide, EOTEC will also a regional center. Discussion reiterated the need to know exact numbers for revenue generation.

The meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Notes taken by Melinda Slatt, Executive Secretary to the Board of Commissioners.