

Jefferson County - Fair Park Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 14, 2024

1. **Call to order:**

Chair Blane Poulson called the meeting to order at 8:34pm

2. **Roll call (establish a quorum):**

Members Present: Curt Backlund, Mark Groose, Blane Poulson, Brandon White, Gary Skalitzky, Libby Hafften

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Ben Wehmeier, Abby Schopen, Michael Luckey, Ed Bielinski (via zoom)

Not Present: Georgia McWilliam

3. **Certification of compliance with Open Meetings Law:**

Wehmeier certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

4. **Review of Agenda:**

A motion made by Backlund, seconded by White to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

5. **Public Comment:** There were none.

6. **Approval of October 10, 2024, committee meeting minutes:**

A motion to approve the corrected minutes was made by Backlund and seconded by White. The motion carried.

7. **Communications:**

Curt Backlund reported that he has received an inquiry about the new Fair Coordinator, Sammy Garvey.

8. **Discussion and action on FINAL 2025 Jefferson County Fair Premium Book:**

Roberts announced the Fair Premium Book is complete and is going through final formatting revisions. The book was sent out via the new Fair Exhibitor software, FairEntry, to Superintendents this week for testing. The Premium Book will be available to the public November 18, 2025. Backlund moved, seconded by Groose, to ratify the FINAL 2025 Fair Premium Book.

9. **Discussion on 2025 Jefferson County Fair planning notes:**

Roberts provided a comprehensive update on the preparations for the 2025 Jefferson County Fair, with a focus on expanding community engagement. The Fair team will be reaching out to Jefferson County schools to target Teachers and Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO groups). The outreach aims to integrate school groups into Fair activities to encourage participation related to the Fair. Some of the projects planned to engage these groups include Color Adventures, Poster Contest, Fundraisers, Gate Workers and Community Stage participants to name a few.

Discussions have also included increasing Approved Youth Organizations and bringing back Club Banners to recognize these organizations. A plan was introduced to offer the Open & Senior portions of the Premium Book to local senior centers and community groups to encourage senior involvement in Fair activities. The Fair team is developing a low sensory fair experience for a portion of the fair schedule. This will allow individuals who prefer/need a toned-down environment to enjoy the Fair. Other updates included the schedule of the animal weigh-ins, the continued proposed entertainment offerings schedule and additions to the Kidz Zone.

Roberts has had to get creative with tent companies as well as the beverage distributors, but things are progressing nicely.

The Hall of Fame event is being re-vamped, and the Fairest of the Fair program relaunched. A “Black Friday & Cyber Monday” sale was announced for half-price ticket sales.

10. **Discussion and possible action Naming Rights/Sponsorship policy:**

Roberts shared that she is working with county leadership to navigate the requests for use of buildings by non-profit organizations during Fair. They are also exploring a naming rights policy that can set a precedent for how partnerships can evolve over time. No specific action is needed at this time.

11. Discussion and review of Fair Park facilities capital needs planning:

Roberts presented an 88-page document illustrating the roof evaluation results, detailing repairs needed for the roofs of Fair Park buildings. Roberts is working with Ryan Hayes, County Facilities Manager, for building deferred maintenance planning. She is also working to build a 5–10-year capitol reserve/replacement plan for future needs planning.

12. Discussion of County Tourism initiatives:

Roberts shared her participation with several agencies from across the county who have an interest in Jefferson County Tourism, as the JCATC is struggling in its function at this time. There is more information to collect, but County and Fair Park leadership are engaged in this effort due to the tourism positioning of Fair Park and its essential role.

13. Discussion and possible action on tentative future meeting schedule and agenda items:

Roberts shared that there is a lot happening, including unveiling new identities and websites for both Fair and Fair Park, and the deployment of three new software solutions between now and the end of the year (event, fair management, camping). A snapshot of the two new websites & logos was provided.

14. Adjournment:

Motion made by Backlund seconded by White to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:50am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager