

Fair Board

MINUTES

Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Fair Park – Activity Center

7:00 p.m.

- 1) Call to Order
 - a) Roberts called the meeting to order at 7:00pm
- 2) Roll Call
 - a) Present (in person): Jerry Wilcenski, Kevin Doherty, Carie Pellmann, Ryan Isaacsen, Dave Zimmerman, and Tracy Brandel
 - b) Present (online): Angie Greving, Lindsay Baneck, Heather Reu, Ashley Sinkula, and Kylene Anderson
 - c) Also Present: Becky Roberts and Sammy Garvey
- 3) Certification of Compliance with Open Meetings Law
 - a) Roberts affirmed that the meeting complies with Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law.
- 4) Review and approve minutes of August 27, 2025 meeting
 - a) Doherty moved to approve the minutes; Isaacsen seconded. Motion carried.
- 5) Public Comment(s)
 - a) No public comment was made.
- 6) Review of October Fair Park October Committee Meeting
 - a) Roberts reported that Fair Park received a grant to install 37 LED outdoor lights, and a second grant of \$125,000 to replace all indoor lights with LEDs.
 - b) A new fire alarm system was recently installed. The previous alarms—limited to only the Activity Center—were outdated. The new system covers the Activity Center, lobby, kitchen, office areas, and West Building (as attached).
 - c) Isaacsen inquired about movement of the adjacent Spangler land. Roberts shared that this continues to be an agenda item at Fair Park committee meetings but remains inactive. The land to the north of the Fair Park may eventually be developed for business use, though no final decision has been shared at this time.
- 7) Share and discussion of new Fair Board membership
 - a) Term review
 - i) Six members had terms that expired in August. Four members chose to step down, while two renewed their terms.
 - ii) With up to 20 total board seats including the two existing vacancies, there are now up to six open positions.
 - b) Recruitment efforts and progress
 - i) Roberts sent an invitation to submit for participation to all former interested parties from 2023 & 2024.
 - ii) The Fair did a social media post and put it on the website.
 - iii) Since applications opened in mid-October, seven applications have been received.
 - c) Review of the new candidates
 - i) Sinkula commented positively on Danielle Latsch, noting her strong Fairest of the Fair background and potential to grow the program.
 - ii) Brandel noted that Melissa Martin is from Marshall; Pellmann added background on Martin's connection to Jefferson and her recent move.
 - iii) After discussion, Doherty moved to recommend Danielle Latsch, Emma Statz, Justin Thom, Cassidy Hege, Kerry Furlong, and Matt Hanson for appointment. All present members approved.
 - iv) Roberts will present these recommendations to the Fair Park Committee on November 13. Following their decision, Roberts will notify all applicants and this will then proceed to the County Board.
 - v) A subsequent meeting will be scheduled to assign members to committees including Entertainment, Ag Education, Concessions/Vendors, Ticketing & Gates, Fairest of the Fair, Sponsorship, Volunteers, Animal Auction & Youth Celebration, Parking/Trailers/Camping, Marketing, and Community Contests.
- 8) Discussion and action on county residency with Fair Youth Organizations

- a) Roberts reported that during a recent District 4 meeting (with 15–20 fairs represented), she and Garvey learned that several fairs are establishing policies to ensure Junior exhibitors are from their home county region. This follows DATCP's questioning on exhibitors selling the same animal at multiple fairs.
 - b) Garvey's review of 2025 exhibitors found that most clubs were composed entirely of members from Jefferson or adjacent counties. However, one club consisted solely of exhibitors from a non-adjacent county, which got our attention.
 - c) Garvey proposed a policy requiring approved youth organizations to have at least 50% of members residing in Jefferson County or an adjacent county, with exemptions for dual-household members and school-affiliated organizations (i.e. FFA clubs). She and Roberts requested board feedback before moving this any farther.
 - d) Wilcenski noted that 4-H maintains a 100% inclusion policy, allowing members to join in any Wisconsin county, though participants may not receive premiums or show in multiple fairs.
 - e) Wilcenski expressed concern about potential exclusion under Title IX, noting that even if not intended, such policies could be viewed as discriminatory.
 - f) Roberts emphasized that we are a Jefferson County-funded and operated Fair. Additionally, auction buyers generally expect to support local youth.
 - g) Board discussion followed. Members generally agreed the Fair should prioritize youth from Jefferson County or bordering areas. Discussion also included exploring an auction policy restricting exhibitors to participating only in Jefferson County's sale.
 - h) No further action was taken at this time as Fair staff will continue to explore how other counties address this as well. Staff will come back to Fair Board with a recommendation for approval if warranted.
- 9) Organizational Reports
- a) Auction
 - i) Pellmann reported that Sorg's, Pernat's, Otto's, and Bark River Processors are confirmed for 2026. All animals will ship Monday morning after the Fair.
 - ii) Staude's Auctioneers will again conduct the 2026 auction.
 - iii) Pellmann is compiling the 2025 buyers list and meeting with partners to determine dairy program involvement and how the Youth Dairy Showcase will operate in 2026.
 - iv) It was suggested to have the mobile processor from 2025 to also handle market rabbits in 2026; Pellmann will explore this.
 - v) Pellmann is seeking youth input to help shape the auction's future; interested youth should contact her.
 - b) Entertainment
 - i) Roberts met with Variety Attractions to begin booking acts for 2026. Once the county budget is finalized in November, contracts will begin to be signed.
 - ii) Discussions continue with rodeo promoters regarding the future of rodeo entertainment. The board discussed the popularity of rodeos, the idea of hosting a Pro-Rodeo, and cost comparisons from 2025.
 - iii) The Fair will continue to host tractor and truck pulls. The horse pull will likely be moving from the outdoor arena to the grandstand on Saturday.
 - c) Ticketing & Gates
 - i) Roberts reminded the board of a \$1 general admission increase for 2026 included in the County Budget – up for approval on Nov. 12. Five-packs and exhibitor wristbands will also increase proportionally.
 - ii) The Black Friday/Cyber Monday promotion will return at the end of November—this will be the final chance to purchase \$6 tickets.
 - d) Fairest of the Fair
 - i) Garvey shared key dates:
 - (1) Nominations close: December 1
 - (2) Applications close: December 22
 - (3) Judging: January 5
 - (4) Coronation: January 9
 - ii) A group of former Fairests met to plan a new Teas & Tiaras program for the 2026 Fair.
 - iii) Isaacsen asked why coronation was moved to pre-Fair. Roberts explained it allows the Fairest more preparation time for state competition and prevents overwhelming schedules. The board noted that holding coronation during the Fair previously seemed to have larger crowds and more candidates. This will go under more consideration.
 - e) Sponsorship

- i) Roberts shared the updated Fair sponsorship packet, which will be available on the website with an online commitment form.
 - ii) She also introduced the “Park Partners” program—a multi-year Fair Park sponsorship option offering naming rights for buildings, roads and areas.
 - iii) Roberts is contacting past and current sponsors (2021–2025) to renew or re-engage partnerships.
- f) Ag Education
 - i) Garvey reported that the 2026 Premium Book was approved in early October and published shortly after on the Fair website and social media.
 - ii) FairEntry (exhibitor registration software) will open on November 10.
 - iii) Garvey will begin contacting judges throughout November.
- g) Other
 - i) Greving asked how to connect volunteers to subcommittees such as Entertainment, Sponsorship, and Community Contests. Roberts shared that once the board is finalized in December, community members can reach out to those category leads from the Fair Board to get involved.
 - ii) Doherty raised the topic of the Fair’s mission statement and goals. Roberts agreed this should be developed collaboratively and will add this element as a future agenda item.
- 10) No old business was reported at this time.
- 11) No new business was reported at this time.
- 12) Next Meeting
 - a) Roberts will send out a poll to find a future December meeting time which will serve as the Board Orientation opportunity to new and current board members.
- 13) Adjourn
 - a) Pellmann moved to adjourn; Isaacsen seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sammy Garvey

Jefferson County Fair Coordinator