

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 12, 2025

1. **Call to order:**

Chair Blane Poulson called the meeting to order at 8:31am.

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

Members Present: Curt Backlund, Blane Poulson, Libby Hafften (via Teams), Mark Groose, Gary Skalitzky, Georgia McWilliam, Brandon White

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Michael Luckey, Hanna Brattlie

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

Michael Luckey 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:** No public comment. McWilliam & Backlund both shared positive feedback they received about Becky & the Fair Park staff.

6. **Approval of May 8, 2025, committee meeting minutes:**

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

7. **Communications:** A complaint was received from an out of state person regarding the horse pull event held during the Fair.

8. **Discussion /Update of Jefferson County Fair 2025 planning notes:**

Hannah Brattlie, the 2025 Fairest of the Fair, provided an update on what she's been up to in preparation for this year's Fair. With the Fair just a month away, staff have been busy updating light bulbs, painting benches, and completing general maintenance tasks around the grounds. Several dead trees have been removed as part of this effort. The Draft Horse Department has received more exhibitor entries than can be accommodated, which has required staff to reconfigure space and shift some departments around. A new class, Open Dairy, will debut this year with 24 exhibitors. The Fair has gone heavy on digital marketing, which has resulted in strong traction, particularly surrounding the Entertainment Tent. Roberts shared website traffic statistics and noted that the Entertainment Tent will feature bleacher seating for the first time, along with 13 types of beer and malt beverages. Bobcat and Standard Process are both planning to hold their company picnics during the Fair. Online ticket sales have already reached \$14,400. Roberts also developed a new online Fair help application, which has received over 60 submissions so far. The Youth Grant Program has 23 entries this year, and the State Fair Cheesy Beer Bread competition has several submissions, with Brian Nesthus from the jail serving as one of the judges.

9. **Discussion and possible action Goat Barn roof replacement project**

The roof replacement project has passed County Board approval, and Roberts provided examples of the accepted bids. A pre-construction meeting will be held in mid-June. The full roof of the Goat Barn and one-third of the Sheep Barn will be replaced following the Fair and prior to the Sheep & Wool Festival.

10. **Discussion and possible action on deferred maintenance/Capital Planning Review results:**

Roberts discussed the document John Fox presented at the last committee meeting, which summarizes over 600 line items of deferred maintenance from the past 10+ years. Roberts shared this information with the Finance Committee at their recent meeting, highlighting Fair Park's needs. Rogers and Luckey added that the committee has been asked to prioritize safety elements and explore updating the fire alarm system in the Activity Center. Proceeds from the sale of the damaged trailers will help cover related costs. The County is considering funding solutions to support the needs at Fair Park.

11. Discussion and possible action on Master Plan consultation services:

Roberts emphasized the need for a Master Plan for Fair Park, noting that it is difficult to prioritize capital needs without a clear vision for the future. She has met with to qualify three master planning consulting firms, with cost estimates ranging from \$30,000 to \$150,000. Poulson made a motion, seconded by Backlund, to add funding for the Master Plan to the 2026 capital budget. Luckey noted that an advisory board will be needed to help demonstrate the intention and need of this element.

12. Discussion and possible action on property and building acquisition opportunities:

The committee has decided to move on from any building acquisition talks at this time. There is nothing further to report regarding a possible property acquisition, other than noting that the land is within the City of Jefferson currently.

13. Discussion of Fair Park operations updates:

Roberts gave updates on the camping component of Fair Park operations, providing a camping map and some of the guidelines we ask our customers to follow. Roberts also shared that Fair Park is currently fully staffed. Additionally, Roberts celebrated that several different groups have recently participated in service projects on the grounds, including High School Soaring to Services, Treatment Court Give Back, 4-H, and Generac. Fair Park is navigating a very busy May and June leading into Fair but systems are working and seeming to be received well by our customers.

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

July meetings will be as needed outside of Gate 4 at 8:30 am each day during the run of Fair. Roberts will reach out to the committee with the request to meet no less than 24 hours in advance (unless there is an extenuating circumstance). Next in-person meeting will be as scheduled on August 14.

15. Adjournment:

Motion made by Backlund, seconded by White to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:58am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager