

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 9, 2025

1. **Call to order:**

Chair Blane Poulson called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

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

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

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Michael Luckey, Danielle Thompson (via Teams) Sammy Garvey, Ryan Roecker

Not Present: Georgia McWilliam

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:**

There was none.

6. **Approval of September 11, 2025, committee meeting minutes:**

A motion made by Skatlitzky, seconded by Backlund to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

7. **Communications:**

Roberts shared a letter from the Wisconsin Association of Fairs thanking the Fair staff for their participation and efforts. Roberts shared a radar report of the current H5N1 outbreak. Roberts shared that she received a "Service to Agriculture" award. Ryan Roecker, the new Communications and Marketing Coordinator for Jefferson County was introduced.

8. **Update and possible action on completion of the Goat & Sheep Barn Roofing improvements:**

Work has been completed. The new Goat Barn sign will be reinstalled next week.

9. **Update on the Fire Alarm system installation:**

Roberts reported that a new fire alarm system is scheduled for installation in November. Currently, only the Activity Center lobby and offices are equipped with an alarm system. The new installation will extend coverage to both the Activity Center and the West Building.

The main control panel will be located near the front entrance of the Activity Center, next to the lobby ATM. The existing system will remain active until the new system is fully operational. Current Electric will complete the installation, with permit paperwork to be submitted soon. Project completion is anticipated by the end of November.

10. **Update on lighting upgrade grant:**

Roberts reported that the WI RESP grant budget amendment was approved by the Finance Committee and will now go before the County Board. The grant, valued at \$125,000. Additionally, we will likely also qualify for additional energy rebates through Jefferson Utilities.

The project will cover the replacement of all 460 light fixtures and bulbs throughout the Fair Park with energy-efficient LED fixtures. Exterior lights may start yet before year-end with interior lighting replacements to happen by spring.

Luckey noted that the *Watertown Daily Times* published an article highlighting the grant and its positive impact.

11. **Update and discussion on the adjustment to the Fair Board and next steps:**

Roberts presented a packet containing information outlining the proposed new structure, along with an application and the operation categories. Discussion followed regarding compliance with Open Meetings Law,

should additional committees be created in this process. The proposed structure will be presented to the County Board for approval next week.

12. Discussion and possible action on a policy for the new Fair & Fair Park Partners Sponsorship program:

Roberts presented a new tiered sponsorship plan designed separately for the Fair and the Fair Park, noting that each serves distinct functions and audiences. The Fair sponsorship program will remain under its current name, while the Fair Park program will be branded as "Park Partners."

A packet outlining the categories and tiers for both programs was distributed. Roberts will compile a list of recent sponsors, as well as a comprehensive list of Jefferson County businesses, to begin outreach efforts.

13. Discussion and possible action to purchase a stage:

Roberts reported that the Fair Park received information regarding the sale of a hydraulic stage. The matter was brought before the Jefferson County Finance Committee for consideration, per guidance from last month's meeting. Following review and discussion, the committee voted 3–2 against the purchase.

14. Discussion and possible action on the 2026 Fair Premium Book:

Sammy Garvey, Fair Coordinator, presented a draft copy of the 2026 Jefferson County Fair Premium Book. New for 2026 will be an Open Mechanical Science category, a resin & 3D sculpture category, and a stuffed animal & toys division for knitting and crocheting entries. A Quick Reference Guide will also be added for easier navigation. The Senior Division will be presented differently this year, as it has been incorporated into the Open Class. Garvey noted that Open Dairy and Junior Draft were successfully reintroduced in 2025 and will continue for 2026. Explanations of the judging systems and DATCP requirements will be included in the back of the book. A motion by Skalitzy, seconded by Backlund, to approve the 2026 Fair Premium Book as presented. Motion carried.

15. Discussion and possible action on Animal Auction Event at Fair:

Roberts updated the group about ongoing discussions concerning the Dairy Pledge and Meat Animal Sale during Fair. Any changes or updates will be reported at the November meeting. There was also a discussion on how to better streamline the payment of auction checks post Fair.

16. Discussion of Fair Park and updates:

Winter storage is now closed for indoor and covered spaces; however, several outdoor uncovered spots remain available. Load-in will begin on October 30, and staff will start shutting down camping operations and turning off water that same week. The last day of camping will be October 26.

Roberts provided a recap of recent Fair Park events. September was a strong month, drawing approximately 24,000 attendees across multiple events, including the G-Days, Madison Classics Car Show, and the Wisconsin Sheep & Wool Festival. October also features several large events and is expected to be another busy month. A Preferred Vendor Program is currently in development to strengthen partnerships and streamline event planning. On the Fair planning side, there is one Fairest of the Fair applicant to date and a handful of community stage inquiries. The Fair theme has been selected, and planning efforts are actively underway.

17. Discussion of severe weather policy and emergency shelter plans:

This is in process and will remain on the agenda until completed.

18. Discussion and possible action on property acquisition opportunities:

The area north of Spangler Road is expected to see development in the near future. The space has been identified as a potential site for a new manufacturing entity.

19. Discussion and possible action no tentative future meeting schedule and agenda items

20. Adjournment:

Motion made by Backlund, seconded by White to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:38am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager