

## Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 13, 2025

1. **Call to order:**

Brandon White called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

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

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

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Danielle Thompson, Ryan Roecker, Neil Matthes

Not Present: Blane Poulson, Michael Luckey

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

Brandon White certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

4. **Review of Agenda:**

The agenda was presented and accepted by consensus.

5. **Public Comment:**

Mark Groose shared some archival information about the building of the Activity Center at Fair Park.

6. **Approval of October 9, 2025, committee meeting minutes:**

A motion made by Groose, seconded by Skalitzky to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

7. **Communications:**

Backlund shared that a local musician had reached out to him interested in performing at the Jefferson County Fair.

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

Roberts provided an update on exterior and interior lighting improvements at the park. Exterior pole lighting upgrades may begin as early as December and are expected to significantly improve overall visibility, as the new fixtures will be brighter. These upgrades do **not** include the decorative lighting along Food Row. Roberts, together with John Fox and Neil Matthes, has developed a timeline to replace lighting fixtures in all 27 buildings by the end of June. Interior updates in the Activity Center will include dimmable lighting and zoned controls. Lighting replacement in the barns is expected to begin in March and be wrapped up by end of June, before Fair.

9. **Discussion and possible action on Animal Auction Event & Dairy Youth Showcase at Fair:**

Roberts reported that there are differing opinions regarding whether the Dairy Pledge should be included during the Animal Auction. Fair Park staff are working with all parties to find a solution that is agreeable to everyone. It was noted that the Dairy Pledge will continue to be celebrated on Auction Day; however, it will look different. The current plan is for the Dairy Pledge to take place between the small and large animal sales. Buyers/bidders will still be able to write one check if purchasing multiple animals. Another dairy meeting will be held later this month to finalize plans. Fair staff will ensure that any changes are clearly communicated to buyers and bidders. One outstanding payment remains from the auction in the amount of **\$852.00**. A letter of demand will be sent.

10. **Discussion and possible action on Fair Board membership selection:**

Roberts reported that seven applications were received for the six open positions. The board discussed current needs and made selections accordingly. The members chosen to fill the positions are Kerry Furlong, Matt Hanson, Cassidy Hege, Danielle Latsch, Emma Statz, and Justin Thom. A motion was made by Skalitzky, seconded by Hafften, to approve the selected applicants. Motion carried.

11. **Discussion of Fair Park operation and updates:**

Winter Storage and the water shut-off process are both mostly complete. There is still a small amount of indoor storage space available, along with extensive outdoor uncovered space. One small valve issue remains and will need to be addressed. The city has removed the water meters. FP staff is taking on an initiative to correct the water meter sizes when they are re-installed in the spring. The ridge vents in the Dairy and Horse Barns have been

updated and are now fully operational. A new fire alarm system has been installed in the Activity Center and West Building. The state inspector will complete the final inspection next week, and a training session will follow. The call tree for the fire alarm system has also been updated. Painting inside Bathroom #2 has been completed, and painting in the milking parlor is about to begin. A lengthy list of winter projects has been created, including ceiling tile replacement and painting in the Conference Room, as well as repairs and updates to the sign at Racine and Jackson Streets. An update was provided on future events and new business. Current marketing efforts include a flash sale for Holiday Parties scheduled from November through January. A Black Friday sale will feature 2026 fair tickets at a reduced price of \$6, compared to the gate price of \$13. Roberts shared sponsorship handouts that will be mailed to every business throughout Jefferson County. Roberts is working on the RFP for a Master Plan effort to commence in 2026. A Preferred Vendor list has been created. Premium books for 2026 Jefferson County Fair are available, Fair entries are open and DNA collection envelopes & ear tags are available. The Fairest of the Fair program is under way with one current applicant. The current Fairest of the Fair, Hannah Brattlie is a strong contender for State of Wisconsin Fairest of the Fair. WAF Annual convention is January 9 – 14, 2026 in Wisconsin Dells.

**12. Discussion of severe weather policy and emergency shelter plans:**

A severe weather policy plan is currently in development. Fair Park staff completed training last week on the use of new weather radios, as well as "Stop the Bleed" instruction provided by Sheriff Maze and Tracy Neuhauser.

**13. Discussion and possible action on property acquisition opportunities:**

No updates. Place holder for future meetings.

**14. Discussion and possible action no tentative future meeting schedule and agenda items:**

By the December meeting the results of the UW Economic Impact survey should be available for review.

**15. Adjournment:**

Motion made by Backlund, seconded by Groose to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:31am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Abby Schopen  
Fair Park Events Manager