

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 11, 2025

1. **Call to order:**

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

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

Members Present: Blane Poulson, Curt Backlund, Georgia McWilliam, Libby Hafften, Mark Groose, Gary Skalitzy, Brandon White

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Ryan Roecker, Neil Matthes, Michael Luckey, John Fox

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 were none.

6. **Approval of November 13, 2025, committee meeting minutes:**

A motion made by Skalitzy, seconded by McWilliam to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

7. **Communications:**

Luckey shared that Jelly's Market is hosting a state assembly workshop on Rule Making.

8. **Discussion of Fair Operations and updates:**

- Roberts provided an updated Fair Board organization list, including area assignments and contact information. Roberts reported that the Fairest of the Fair program is underway, with two applicants currently submitted and is hopeful for additional applicants. The application deadline is December 22, 2025. Judging is scheduled for January 5, 2026, with coronation to take place on January 9.
- The poster contest for the 2026 Jefferson County Fair artwork has been announced, with entries due by February 2, 2026.
- Roberts shared that meetings with Variety Attractions are scheduled in the coming weeks, with the goal of announcing 2026 entertainment by the end of January.
- Plans are being developed to rearrange gate entrances for 2026 in an effort to reduce vehicle traffic within the park.
- The Fair website and social media pages are being updated daily. A recent flash sale offered \$6 fair admission and resulted in 474 tickets sold.
- Over 2,000 sponsorship program letters have been mailed to Jefferson County businesses, and Roberts is following up with past sponsors as well as large employers.
- The Wisconsin Association of Fairs convention will take place during the second week of January. Several from the Fair office staff will be attending.

9. **Discussion and possible action on Animal Auction Day's Activities:**

Roberts shared an outline for the proposed format of the Dairy Youth Showcase at the 2026 Jefferson County Fair. The showcase will take place on the same day as the auction and will be coordinated within the auction timeline. It will feature a live gavel pledge drive, led by the auction service and coordinated by the Auction Superintendent. Additionally, the Jefferson County Dairy Committee has a plan to begin its pledge drive in advance of the fair itself, hopefully to garner additional support. This format has been shared with Carie Pellmann, the Auction Superintendent.

10. Discussion of Fair Park operation and updates:

- An update was provided on Winter Storage for the 2025–2026 season. There are currently 176 indoor units and 36 outdoor units, generating \$93,016.21 in revenue to date. There remains ample availability for outdoor storage.
- An overview of some new upcoming events through 2027 was shared, highlighting some new relationships being created.
- Schopen reported a continued focus on post-event debrief meetings with clients as a way to maintain and strengthen event relationships.
- Roberts offered staff updates by sharing that the team had a holiday dinner last evening and that we are now preparing for the hiring of a new PT admin support position.
- Roberts shared plans for creating a Legacy Gallery in the conference room to showcase things such as Hall of Fame & other Legacy memorabilia.
- Roberts continues with sponsorship efforts. A recent meeting with Aztalan Bio took place discussing naming rights to a possible structure. A rough description of what is on the table was shared with the committee. As more information actualizes, it will be shared with the Committee.

11. Update on lighting upgrade grant:

Roberts provided an update on exterior and interior lighting improvements at the park. The exterior updates have been completed. As for interior lighting, replacement in our buildings is expected to begin in March. Blackout dates are detailed in the RFP to ensure no challenges during Fair preparation time.

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

Roberts has been working with Tracy Hameau, Director of Emergency Management to draft a plan for severe weather and other emergency situations that are event specific. New Evacuation signage is also being created and the team is working to create a one-page information sheet to be given to clients as part of their Client Care Kit.

13. Discussion and possible action on property acquisition opportunities:

No updates at this time.

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

Roberts shared that the January meeting will feature the presentation of the UW-Whitewater Economic Impact survey. A draft of a Master Plan RFP is intended to be shared with the committee in January as well.

15. Adjournment:

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

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager