

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 14, 2025

1. **Call to order:**

Chair Blane Poulson called the meeting to order at 8:33am.

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

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

Members Absent: Mark Groose

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Michael Luckey, Neil Matthes, Deb Kind

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

5. **Public Comment:** No public comment.

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

A motion made by White, seconded by Hafften to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

7. **Communications:** There were two letters read and shared regarding feedback and ideas for Fair 2026.

8. **Discussion /De-brief on Jefferson County Fair 2025:**

Roberts provided an update on revenue and expenses related to the 2025 Jefferson County Fair. Final revenue numbers are still pending; however, it was noted that there were unexpected invoices this year that had not been billed in 2024. Discussion followed regarding the need to secure additional sponsors to help offset lost sponsorship dollars from recent years. Roberts also reported that gate sales and redemption of pre-sale tickets were higher than in previous years. She presented website and Facebook statistics, highlighting specific metrics. Ongoing debrief meetings are being held with staff, superintendents, and the Advisory Board. Positive feedback from the Fair included: the new porta potties, community stage, Kidz Zone, additional parking at Gate 10, the LEGO area, handicap services and handicap gate, the addition of ribbons to exhibits, and the roaming characters "Dorothy & Friends." Negative feedback included: the need for improved handicap signage (particularly regarding wheelchair access for the rodeo), as well as concerns about the cost of carnival tickets and wristbands. A discussion was held on potential ideas to reduce carnival costs for consumers.

9. **Discussion and update on Goat & Sheep Barn roofing improvements:**

The roof replacement project was delayed due to incorrect materials being delivered and the discovery of additional unexpected repairs. The crew is proceeding with replacement and repairs concurrently.

10. **Discussion of Fair Park operations updates:**

Roberts announced the dates for the 2025–2026 Winter Storage season. Emails have been sent to previous customers, and reservations will open to the general public in the coming weeks. She also presented a recap of the recent rodeo.

11. **Discussion and possible action on Fair & Fair Park budge goals for 2026:**

Reports were presented in a month-by-month format to provide clearer explanations. Small adjustments have been made to the fee schedule, and Fair Park staff conducted rate comparisons with other venues. Discussion was also held regarding the possibility of increasing County Fair admission by \$1. Roberts presented a capital needs budget report prioritizing realistic needs for 2026.

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

Roberts emphasized the importance of developing a Safety Plan for Fair Park events, citing the tornado threat during the Fair as an example. Currently, there is no system in place to notify the entire park, including the barns, during an emergency. Roberts is working with Tracy Hameau to draft an official plan, which will include variations tailored to different scenarios such as the Car Show and camping. Hameau is also supporting the search for potential grants to possibly fund safety measures for future consideration.

13. Discussion and possible action on Fire Alarm Bid selection:

Bid selection has been completed, with Current Electric awarded the project. Roberts provided an update on the process and timeline for the Activity Center fire alarm upgrade, expected to happen in 2025.

14. Discussion and possible action on Master Plan consultation services.

This is in process and is a part of the 2026 Capital Budget. No further updates to report.

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

No further updates were provided regarding the potential property acquisition. It was noted that the land lies within the City of Jefferson, so that dynamic is an important element to consider. Also, it was shared by several committee members that it is clear to them that the County Finance Committee has indicated they are not interested in pursuing the purchase of land at this time.

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

Roberts proposed restructuring the Fair Advisory Board, shifting its role from primarily advisory to more committee-driven, with members focusing on specialized areas such as sponsorship and entertainment. With board terms expiring in August, this was noted as an opportune time to implement changes. There was general consensus to proceed with this re-set.

17. Adjournment:

Motion made by White, seconded by Backlund to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:31am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager