

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 11, 2025

1. **Call to order:**

Chair Blane Poulson called the meeting to order at 8:29am.

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

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

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Michael Luckey (via Teams), Neil Matthes, Danielle Thompson (via Teams)

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 Groose to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

5. **Public Comment:** Groose wanted to go on record to say "Thank You" for allowing the Farm Bureau and 4H to run concessions out of the AC kitchen during the Fair.

6. **Approval of August 14, 2025, committee meeting minutes:**

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

7. **Communications:** Roberts shared a letter concerning the 2025 fair and voicemail concerning the gun show.

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

The cost of the roof repairs came in under budget. Roberts requested that the remaining funds be reallocated to repair the ridge vents in the Horse and Dairy barns as well as some minor repairs needed in the Beef barn. Motion by Backlund, seconded by Hafften, to proceed with the request. Motion carried.

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

Roberts reported that a new fire alarm system will be installed this coming November, as plans have been reviewed. Roberts reminded the committee that this includes the West Building, as it is connected to the Activity Center. The new panel will be located near the Activity Center's front door, next to the lobby ATM. The old and new systems will overlap until installation is complete. Current Electric will perform the work, and permit paperwork to be submitted soon.

10. **Discussion and possible action on resolution to amend 2025 budget for lighting grant participation:**

Roberts presented a resolution to use the remaining balance from the 2024 grant received from the Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation to purchase energy-efficient lights in addition to a second round of RESP grants that became available in 2025. Fair Park submitted and is anticipating approval for an additional \$125,000, with funds anticipated in October/November. The new grant, combined with the leftover 2024 funds plus Jefferson Utilities rebates, and Focus on Energy submittals, will be used to purchase energy-efficient indoor & outdoor light fixtures across Fair Park. This project will streamline lighting by replacing the current mix of multiple styles of bulbs with standardized, efficient LED fixtures. A 2024 energy assessment predicted these changes will drop around \$15,000 annually to bottom line. Resolution was reviewed. Motion by Backlund, seconded by McWilliams, to move the resolution to the County Board for approval. Motion carried.

11. **Discussion and possible action on Fair Advisory Board re-structuring and amendment to the Fair Advisory ordinance:**

Roberts presented a revised/amended ordinance to indicate the re-structure of the Fair Advisory Board into a working board, which will now be known as the Fair Board. The new structure will ensure compliance with

open meetings law. Six current terms are ending, and there are two vacancies; Roberts recommended that only one-third of members rotate off the board at this time. Motion by Poulson, seconded by Hafften, to move the ordinance to the County Board as amended. Motion carried.

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

Roberts presented a new tiered sponsorship plan for both Fair Park & Fair. The Fair & Fair Park serve two different functions, with different audiences and the plan was tailored for each. One will remain Fair, and the other will be named Park Partners. There is urgency to move the new Sponsorship Policy to the County Board in October allowing for a sponsorship campaign to commence yet this October. A motion was made by Backlund and seconded by McWilliams to move to the County Board for approval. Motion carried.

13. Discussion and possible action to purchase a stage:

The Fair Park received information from an attractions firm that is selling a hydraulic stage. The cost includes trusses, 2 side wings, 3 sets of steps & a roof. Because of its hydraulic capabilities, our Fair Park staff would be able to set it up in less than two hours. A discussion included a review of current rental fees, how a purchase would offset those long-term costs, and how the price compares to other stages available for purchase. The 2025 budget will need to be amended to include this cost. Motion by Skalitzky, seconded by Backlund to move to the Finance Committee. Motion carried.

14. Discussion of Fair Park updates:

Roberts reported that Fair Park is currently at full staff. She presented her intent to create a MOD (Manager on Duty) program for 2026, with hopes of implementation beginning in April 2026. Winter storage is in full swing and currently at 80%+ capacity. Load-in will begin on October 30, and staff will begin shutting down camping and turning off water that same week. Roberts provided a recap of recent Fair Park events. Looking ahead to 2026, there will be a more sales-driven approach to event bookings. Facility planning will include increased routine maintenance, development of a Master Plan, and implementation of a multifaceted Safety Plan. For the 2026 Fair, dates and the theme *"Let the Good Times Grow"* have been selected. Updates were also provided on the Hall of Fame, auction structure, and entertainment options with more information to come in subsequent meetings.

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

Roberts is working with Tracy Hameau, Jefferson County Emergency Management Director, to create several emergency plans for Fair Park. Right now, Roberts shared she is studying other Fair Park's facilities and their plans to ensure we are considering all elements as this is a dynamic facility. Roberts also shared the intention of looking at sources of funding to support the updating of PA equipment in order to better broadcast in the event of emergency.

16. Discussion and possible action on property acquisition opportunities:

No updates at this time. Land north of Spangler road will likely see industrial development.

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

Roberts discussed the possibility of establishing a future "Friends of the Fair Park" 501c3. Presently the Jefferson Community Foundation can provide those services to allow for an active vehicle for fundraising campaigns and more. Roberts also shared the obituaries of a few long time Fair & Fair Park supporters, Jerry Pellman and Thomas Beane. Roberts wanted to go on record to thank Tom Gallitz & Pete Willer for their efforts and always jumping in to help with big projects at the Fair Park, including the recent road grading needed west of Gate 10.

18. Adjournment:

Motion made by Backlund, seconded by Hafften to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:00am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager