Fair Board
MINUTES

Monday, August 17, 2026
6:00 p.m.

1) **Call to Order**
   Gefvert called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.
2) **Roll Call**
   Present: Zimmerman, Furlong, Ganzow, Isaacsen, Baneck, Brattlie, Greving, Statz, Reu, Pellmann, Hanson, Latsch, Brandel, Hege, Anderson
   Online: Thom
   Also Present: Ed Bielinski, Becky Roberts, Sammy Garvey
3) **Certification of Compliance with Open Meetings Law**
   The meeting was certified to be in compliance with Open Meetings Law.
4) **Approval of Minutes — May 11, 2026**
   Motion by Greving, second by Pellmann, to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2026 meeting. Motion carried.
5) **Public Comment(s)**
   a) Ed Bielinski shared concerns regarding youth who age out of other county fairs but attend Jefferson County Fair solely for the auction. He noted that other counties use grade-based eligibility and proposed restricting auction participation for exhibitors who have not shown at the Jefferson County Fair for the past two years. Discussion followed on policies at other fairs and potential impacts on exhibitors.
   b) Gefvert reported from feedback received at Fair, mentioning positive feedback on goat tack tent space and new barn lighting. He noted widespread desire for additional barn fans, improvements to barn speaker systems, and installation of barn cameras. He recommended show-day signage created by youth clubs and inquired about themed drinks, though Pepsi sponsorship complicates this.
   c) Brattlie raised concerns about the current rule preventing exhibitors from showing if they cannot be present on show day. She recommended a more flexible, circumstantial approach. Brandel suggested developing an alternate lead form, to be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the show for board approval. Extending show schedules to reduce conflicts was discussed.
6) **General Fair De-Brief**
   Garvey provided an overview of Fair metrics including Sensory Friendly Day, entry statistics, and Food Pantry Day donations which totaled 380 pounds.
7) **Organizational Reports**
   a) **Ag Education -** Baneck reported that Mark Groose donated a tractor for the week which was very popular. The Farm Bureau is creating a homemade version of agri-golf, to be used for the 2027 Fair.
   b) **Animal Auction —** Pellmann recapped the auction, siting 298 new buyers registered the day of the auction, lunch serving 458 individuals, and $10,000 was received in sponsorship. The gross auction total reached $523,827 including grants, poultry, and dairy; $467,304.94 will go to exhibitors after deducting the floored price and the 2.5% commission. For comparison, 2025 totals were under $480,000 gross. Feedback included improving teardown assignments, repositioning the bid writer table, and maintaining Hall of Fame recognition before the sale.
   c) **Concessions/Vendors –** Thom reviewed vendor spacing at fair, noting some vendor concerns including complaints from vendors on their placement. Roberts reported the EXPO Building was very successful, benefitting from Wisconsin Harley-Davidson and daily EXPO games. She also noted that some food vendors closed early, which negatively affected the Fair's appearance in the evening.
   d) **Entertainment —** Ganzow reported that entertainment this fair went well, and the plan is to continue with tribute bands as headliners. Roberts noted that carnival and beer sales were down this year, and the crowd for the different music acts was mixed. Youth/Family entertainment including the line dance, Elvis tribute, and various acts on the WSLD Community Stage was well received. The rodeo and motorsports were both well attended, though the conflicted scheduling was a pinch point for some fairgoers. There was discussion on how to better utilize the grandstand daily, including the pros and cons of music in that area.

e) **Ticketing & Gates —** Hanson noted that additional signage is needed at Gate 1 due to GPS routing, and radios malfunctioning causing some problems with gate staff. Handicap parking was useful, but more was needed at Gate 4. Board members commended gate staff for being friendly and knowledgeable, and Hanson is hoping that this year's data will help to refine and invite back the capable volunteers that were at the 2026 fair.

f) **Fairest of the Fair —** Latsch, and other board members, commented on Megan Doherty's professional, friendly, and above and beyond work at the 2026 Fair. The new event, Teas & Tiaras, saw 20 pre-registered participants, with 5 additional youth attending the day of the event, and was fun for all involved. Fairest applications are now open until December 21st, and the public is encouraged to create nominations for candidates through December 1st.

g) **Sponsorship —** Furlong reported that sponsorship totals increased significantly from 2025 to 2026, with funds nearly doubling for 2026. Roberts reported that Fair staff were prioritizing the sponsor benefits tracking and recognition for 2026, in the hopes to streamline those efforts for 2027.

h) **Marketing —** Roberts reported that social media engagement reached 4 million users from June through Fair. It was found that Spanish-language advertising was highly effective, and English-only website content at times presented barriers. Yard signs were again a positive addition, and the board commented that incorporating the theme would be welcome. Reu suggested increasing theme integration across the Fair, including club-created themed projects.

i) **Parking/Trailers —** Hege reported that bringing back first-come, first-served trailer parking worked well. There was discussion regarding the use of a "sick trailer" and moving trailers that aren't used to the South end of the West line. It was also noted that the use of handicap parking at Gate 10 was well received, and vehicle traffic in the park was a smaller issue this year.

8) **Other —** discussion was held regarding the following topics:
   - There was a problem with motorized scooters and carts in the park without permission, despite police intervention. More specific rules will be put in place as a result
   - Porta-potties, golf carts, and tent layouts performed well; Hege suggested adding a tent at trolley stops.
   - Attendance increased 2% from 2025 to 2026. Sunday attendance decreased, likely due to losing LaMovida.
   - Roberts noted that securing national acts is challenging due to high financial risk and infrastructure limitations. She encouraged exploring family-friendly Friday and Saturday entertainment.
   - Discussion followed on DJ enhancements, adjusting stunt circus placement, and revenue opportunities.
9) **Updates from Fair Park Committee —** Roberts shared that a youth club impacted by the residency policy approached Fair staff, and possible amendments are being considered. She reported on other topics covered including the discussion of property acquisition, master plan project kickoff, lighting project status report, and recap of Fair Operations.
10) **Review of Fair Board Member Terms:** Seven members are up for renewal: Brandel, Doherty, Ganzow, Gefvert, Isaacsen, Pellmann, and Zimmerman. These members were asked to contact Roberts directly to reapply or defer to new applicants. Availability of applications for Fair Board will be promoted through social and on the Fair website, with submittals to come to Fair Board for consideration at the October meeting.
11) **New Business**
   - Weeknight scheduling of Fair Board meetings is under review. Hege suggested an additional meeting in June.
   - An inquiry was made regarding the possibility of holding an "All for One" inclusive show during the Fair. Roberts and Garvey will be following up.
12) **Next Meeting**
   Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.
13) **Adjourn**
   Motion by Pellmann, second by Isaacsen, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sammy Garvey
Fair Coordinator