

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 12, 2026

1. **Call to order:**

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

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

Members Present: Curt Backlund, Libby Hafften, Mark Goose, Gary Skalitzky, Brandon White, Blane Poulson,

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Abby Schopen, Danielle Thompson (via Teams), Lindsay Knoebel Baneck (via Teams)

Neil Matthes, Michael Luckey

Not Present: Georgia McWilliam

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

Michael Luckey certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

4. **Review of Agenda:**

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

5. **Public Comment:** There were none.

6. **Approval of January 7, 2026, committee meeting minutes:**

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

7. **Communications:**

Roberts received a request of sponsorship for a program that is trying to establish itself in Jefferson County. The program is not relevant to the Fair/Fair Park scope of work. Roberts replied with a letter to decline participation. JCFP frequently receives requests for donations from other organizations. Roberts shared that we try to participate where we can, most often with donated tickets to the Fair.

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

Roberts shared that the Fair Board, under its new structure, met last Monday. Updates from the different areas include the following:

Ag-Ed: Posters with QR codes for the livestock buildings that lead to more education information. There is also a discussion on having some sort of Tractor Safety demonstration or display at Fair.

Animal Auction: The processors are lined up, and Hospitality services have been coordinated. There was an update on the Dairy Project Showcase that will happen during the auction, with pledges happening prior.

Concessions & Vendors: Vendor Applications went live and most of the annual vendors are coming back. There will be new vendors, including Fried Chicken & Grilled Cheese. In talks with implements dealers such as Bobcat, Proven Power, The Corral, etc. Theisen's will return with their sale trailer.

Tickets/Gates: The template for the schedule is complete and ready to be filled. Civic organizations are currently being solicited for gate coverage/fundraisers. There will be a food pantries day on Thursday, July 9th. Ticket costs have gone up to \$13 with Fair Fun 5 Packs are \$38.00.

Fairest Program: Megan Doherty, the 2026 Fairest of the Fair is scheduling appearances for the summer. A new event, Tea & Tiaras, will be on Friday, July 10th at 11:00am.

Marketing: The program book is in progress. Yard signs have been ordered. Billboards and digital marketing is in the planning stages.

Entertainment: Roberts & La Movida organizers have mutually agreed to not have La Movida Day in 2026. Will possibly fill the space with a bingo event. There will be no Pig & Duck Races, rather a different new attraction to take that place. Wednesday, July 8th will feature a Jefferson County Homegrown Showcase. The Saturday Horse Pull will be moved to the Grandstand from 1:00pm – 7:00pm. Still looking for Friday entertainment.

Kids Zone: This year will feature a roaming robot, Pier Pups, Magic Side Show, Agri-Gold, corn pit, etc.

Other updates to note: Sensory Day will return on Wednesday. The poster contest is in progress. Bleachers, Tents, Porto Potties and other logistical elements have been ordered.

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

Roberts gave an update on staffing. There have been changes to the maintenance staff. A second part-time Administrative Assistant will start Monday, April 6th. Roberts reported that FP employees are currently contributing to "Workplace Continuity" documentation as sort of a succession planning record. Schopen gave an update on upcoming FP events.

There was an update on Capital improvements such as lighting updates throughout the park. There could be funds leftover to update the decorative streetlights along the road. The kitchen & conference room ceilings will also be replaced. As a part of the capital budget, Restroom #1's doors will be replaced and Roberts is working with John Fox to get quotes on asphalt to be sealed and striped. Additionally, water heater in the Milking Parlor needs to be replaced and we are currently looking for a solution for a broken floor scrubber.

Roberts reported that she has been in discussion with several Fair Park sponsors. Pepsi & Frank's have both signed multi-year agreements. Other meetings lined up are with Premier Bank, Jones Dairy Farm, Sinnissippi Solar, Aztalan Bio and Kikkoman.

10. Discussion and possible action of Master Plan RFP draft:

Roberts presented the draft document of the Master Plan Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP will be released in February, with responses due by March 31, 2026. A motion was made by Backlund and seconded by Skalitzy to approve the draft as presented. One member abstained. Motion carried.

11. Discussion and possible action regarding residency parameters for Junior Exhibitors:

A new policy regarding Youth Organization Residency was presented. With limited exceptions, the policy would require junior exhibitors to reside in Jefferson County or an adjacent county. This policy was recommended by the Fair Board for adoption. After discussion, a motion was made to approve by Hafften and seconded by Goose. Motion carried.

12. Discussion and possible action on exhibitor ineligibility related to bans or suspension from other WI fairs:

Roberts gave an update on a newly drafted policy regarding whether or not an exhibitor should be allowed to exhibit at the Jefferson County Fair if they have been previously banned by another fair. This was also a policy reviewed by the Fair Board and moved forward to FP Committee for consideration. After discussion, a motion was made to approve by Backlund and seconded by White. Motion carried.

13. Old Business:

A severe weather policy plan is currently in development, with a draft of the current state of it emailed to all committee members earlier in the week. The revised draft of the UW-Whitewater impact study was received just prior to the meeting. Roberts will present it at the March meeting. There are no further updates on possible property acquisition opportunities.

14. Discussion and possible action to tentative future meeting schedule and agenda items: Nothing offered.

15. Adjournment:

Motion made by White, seconded by Backlund to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:55am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager