

Jefferson County Fair Park Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 13, 2026

1. **Call to order:**

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

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

Members Present: Libby Hafften (Virtual), Gary Skalitzky, Blane Poulson, Georgia McWilliam, Mark Goose, Rori Eilenfeldt

Others Present: Becky Roberts, Michael Luckey, Abby Schopen, Samantha Garvey, Ed Bielinski

Others Present via Teams: Danielle Thompson, Watertown Daily Times (James)

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

Michael Luckey certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law.

4. **Welcome to new committee member filling at-large vacancy:**

Rori Eilenfeldt was introduced as the newest member of the Fair Park committee.

5. **Review of Agenda:**

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

6. **Public Comment:**

Ed Bielinski commented on the exhibitor age policy as it relates to the auction. He compared surrounding fairs to the Jefferson County Fair. Exhibitors can age out at other Fairs then come here for their final year. He wanted to bring it to the committee's attention and will also be addressing this with the Fair Board.

7. **Approval of June 11, 2026, committee meeting minutes:**

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

8. **Communications:**

Roberts shared several emails and letters the Fair Park received post Fair. A wide variety of topics were brought up including entertainment, noise, handicap parking and the carnival.

9. **Discussion on Fair Exhibitor policy:**

Roberts and Garvey met with a club leader during Fair to discuss how the recently implemented Exhibitor Residency policy impacted his 4-H club. Healthy and positive conversations have happened and are continuing, which is suggested an amendment to the current policy. Review will be done by the Fair Board in the next few months.

10. **Discussion of Fair operations and results:**

Roberts offered that the Fair went well. The weather was ideal. There were a few underage drinking citations and one small vehicle fire but otherwise no emergencies. Roberts shared the sales report reflecting gate sales & redemptions. The report reflected a 2% growth in attendance and a 20% growth in revenue. Generally, the 2026 Fair beat every 2025 day except for Sunday. Other feedback included positive reviews of Community Stage, specifically the Friday night DJ party, The Homegrown Showcase, new accommodation for Rabbits, Expo Building, changes to the Horse & Draft Horse barns, Teas & Tiaras and Sensory Day. The Fairest of the Fair video updates were popular as well as the Jefferson Speedway cars coming in on Friday. Open Class and Sprouts Exhibitor participation was up 30% and exhibits themselves up 269%. Food Pantry Day brought in 380 pounds of donated food items. Some challenges presented were radio communication issues and last-minute changes not reflected in the program booklet, which led to confusing information. Mopeds/scooters on grounds, parking signs & water quality issues also surfaced for some continued conversation. Ultrasound class is currently under review in an effort to find a more educational opportunity.

Roberts presented a Digital Marketing report as well as Meta & Pacer.ai reports. There will be a Fair Appreciation Event on 8/25 from 5-8pm in the Activity Center.

11. Discussion and possible action on Future National Act entertainment at the Fair:

After much discussion Roberts requested formal action on having National Acts on the grandstand going forward. It was requested to put it on the September meeting agenda for further discussion and possible action.

12. Discussion of Fair Park Operations and updates:

Roberts shared the loss of a part-time maintenance & grounds person. Fair Park is currently looking to fill the position. There was an update on the lighting project, parking lot resurfacing and roof leak issues. Looking ahead, September is the busiest month for events. November brings the annual water shut off and moving winter storage in.

13. Discussion and scheduling of Master Plan project kick-off:

Stakeholder meetings with Johnson Consulting will take place September 1 & 2nd. Stakeholders have been invited to participate and we are seeing a good response to participate. This will be the first formal piece of the Master Plan project.

14. Monthly Financial Review – June YTD 2026 results

Year to date financials through June were distributed.

15. Old Business:

The LED lighting project is fully installed, with the dimming controls now working in the Activity Center. Property acquisition will stay on the agenda as a placeholder until such time that more information is available.

16. New Business

Roberts presented a copy of the 2025 Fair Park Annual Report. An updated Fee Schedule was presented to the Finance committee for the budget process. Changes include outdoor spaces and Winter Storage fee changes.

17. Discussion and possible action to tentative future meeting schedule and agenda items:

An alternate location for the September Fair Park Committee meeting will be communicated to the group. The new Fee Schedule, Fair Board Vacancies and an action on National Acts will be added to the September agenda.

18. Adjournment:

Motion made by Skalitzky, seconded by Goose to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:16am.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Schopen
Fair Park Events Manager