



Deschutes County Fair Board and Board of Commissioners joint meeting
October 18, 2022

In attendance

Board of County Commissioners: Patti Adair, Phil Chang, Tony DeBone.

Deschutes County Administrator Nick Lelack; Deputy County Administrator Whitney Hale

Fair Board: David Bishop, Steve Curley, Arron Curtis, Bill Kuhn, Carrie Novick, Libby Richie, and Jim Morrell.

Fair & Expo: Geoff Hinds, Director; Brandi Ebner, Sales & Marketing Coordinator; Luke Larsen, Sales & Marketing Coordinator; Carla Altamirano, Administrative support; and Elyse West, Administrative Analyst (via conference call).

Also in attendance: Courtney Conkle; Rick Russel; Cary Penhollow, Fair Association President; members of the Fair Association: Roxia Hinman Thornton, Rachel McIntosh, Holly Cole, Kathleen Curtiss, Lori Turel, Rich Castrow, Carol Schul.

The meeting was available via Zoom.

Commissioner Adair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

OPENING REMARKS

David Bishop expressed his excitement to gather again. He noted the success of the 2022 Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo, and acknowledged Cary Penhollow and the Fair Association's role in it.

Cary Penhollow shared the Deschutes County Fair Association (DCFA)'s operational plan, held with the Fair Board for review.

Commissioner Chang asked if changes are being considered for future years' Fairs.

Cary replied that the strategic planning of last year's Fair will continue this year, and improvements will be pursued.

Commissioner Adair acknowledged the volunteers who helped produce the successful Fair. She expressed appreciation to Roxia Thornton as Rodeo Director, and noted the rodeo won the NPRA Rodeo of the Year. She shared gratitude for the partnership with Road Department's Chris Doty for Fair traffic control.

Commissioner DeBone shared his enthusiasm for the tradition of Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo and its growing future.

BUSINESS & FINANCE REPORTS

Geoff Hinds shared an overview of the Deschutes County Fair & Expo (DCFE) and introduced its team.

Fund 615-Fair & Expo

Geoff provided an overview of the year-round operation fund. He noted the fund has a positive fund balance that continues to transfer into the capital reserve fund. Expenses this year continue to be managed conservatively.

Fund 616-Annual Fair & Rodeo

The revenue earned from the 2022 Deschutes County Fair & Rodeo was higher than anticipated. The increase in revenue was transferred into the capital reserve fund. Geoff noted the successful partnership of the Fair & Expo Team and the Fair Association.

Fund 617-Fair & Expo Capital Reserve

This fund continues to grow, but is under-funded in relation to the age and needs of the facility. Efforts continue to upgrade and replace facility aspects as needed. Investment into the property is a significant focus.

Fund 618-RV Park

Business continues to be successful, with revenue being added to the RV Park's reserve fund.

Fund 619-RV Park Reserve

This reserve fund continues to grow.

Geoff shared the calendar year-to-date statistics of 616,600 total visitors and \$70,000,000 of economic impact. The DCFE team works with local and state tourism partners to determine economic impact. August 2022 saw high numbers due to the Fair & Rodeo - with 179,000 visitors and \$20,227,000 in economic impact.

Brandi Ebner shared the estimate of \$113 spent in the community by each visitor; with Visit Central Oregon's rate being released soon. She noted that generally the term "visitor" focuses on people traveling from a distance; and many local event participants and attendees' expenses are unmeasured.

Bill Kuhn noted that the analytics data tool available to the DCFE team will be helpful for more accurate tracking.

Geoff shared his excitement for working with experts in the livestock and agriculture fields, to add growth to the Fair. He reviewed the net revenue of the Fair & Rodeo over recent years, and noted its increase. He shared successes such as improved traffic control and added Sunday entertainment programming.

FY22 saw many large-scale events that were highly successful, including Overland Expo which brought international attention. Additional popular events included Endurocross and the returning Columbia River Circuit Finals.

Brandi shared upcoming events including the returning Monster Truck fall nationals, District High School Cross Country Meet, and Christmas shows. She noted the Operations team has

equipment and facilities updates to focus on during the winter season, in anticipation of a busy 2023 event calendar. Brandi shared she is receiving an increase in requests for full-facility bookings.

Geoff noted the challenges that face the facility and team with the increased event traffic. Efforts continue in adjusting facility usage as much as possible.

Commissioner Chang noted the increased use and the age of the facility. He asked if refurbishing existing facilities or focusing on new construction is a more efficient route. David shared that his lengthy experience on the Fair Board has given him insight on facility expansion. He noted the DSL Land Exchange continues to see delay, and the land is an integral part of the facility's growth. He asked how the Fair Board could assist with the finalization of the land trade.

Commissioner DeBone noted the recent letter of support for the land trade provided by EDCO. He noted that he believes the plan will proceed after the election season.

Commissioner Chang agreed that the current state of the County and the State's lands differ from each other. He noted the legislation surrounding homeless populations residing on land, and suggested community support to provide alternate refuge will be critical.

Commissioner Adair noted ongoing efforts to provide refuge for the homeless population.

Carrie Novick noted the length of time transpired since the land trade has begun; and offered the Fair Board's support in securing the trade.

Steve Curley asked if the land trade had financial hurdles to overcome.

Commissioner Chang shared that his communication with State contacts leads him to believe cost is not the main challenge; but rather the displacement of the current population on the State land. He believes there is a possibility of a plan to share responsibility.

Carrie asked if there is an alternative property the County could offer to complete the trade.

Bill noted that DCFE is at capacity and critical decisions need to be made, which is difficult without an answer.

Both Boards agreed a letter of support from the Fair Board would be productive.

Pastor Rick Russell shared his Redmond Safe Parking presentation. He stated that he currently has funding to support more people than available locations.

Bill noted his own participation in local efforts to support homeless populations; including a successful Safe Parking program in Bend.

Libby Richie asked where a potential site at DCFE would be located.

Commissioner Adair shared an idea for a small trial period, perhaps located at the RV Park.

Steve shared his support of the program, and suggested that the topic could be discussed at a Fair Board meeting after more information is provided to the Fair Board and the DCFE team.

Jim Morell asked if the State could be approached with an offer to sell the land.

Arron Curtis noted the ongoing efforts of the Building & Grounds Committee to improve and protect the facility. He shared that rebate dollars have been collected and continue to be pursued, to potentially be used for several projects. Many recent projects have been smaller in

scale and cost but have a great visual impact on the facility. Focus on the RV Park continues in identifying projects to pursue.

Geoff noted the highest priority items include the well/water system and HVAC control system.

OLD BUSINESS

Geoff shared the Fair Board and DCFE team's ongoing conversations surrounding short and long-term planning. This takes into consideration the region's movement as well as the facility's potential.

CLOSING COMMENTS

David expressed his gratitude for the Commissioners' listening ear and perspective.

Commissioner Adair thanked the Fair Board for their efforts.

Commissioner Adair adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elyse West