



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY APRIL 5, 2018

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of March 1, 2018 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 1. VFW Post 1638 Auxiliary 75th Anniversary request
 2. Continue discussion and reporting of alcohol licensing
 3. Fair update
 4. 2018 & 2019 Fair dates
 5. Calendar of Events
- IV. Monthly Reports:
 1. Food Vendor Rep. Christensen
 2. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
- V. Public Comment Period
- VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES • THURSDAY MARCH 1, 2018

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Norton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rob Norton	Alderman - Seventh District	Present	
Tim Meehean	Alderman - Eighth District	Present	
Bill Bialecki	Mayor	Present	
Paul Russell	Alderman - First District	Present	
Neal Christensen	Food Vendor Rep.	Present	
Bryan Bloch	Rodeo Assn. Rep.	Present	
Brad Becker	Fair Assn. Rep.	Present	

Also in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Dave Buck, Dick Stoeckmann, Jill Viergutz, Mike Caylor Jr., Valerie Caylor and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of February 1, 2018 meeting

Motion (Meehean/Bloch) to approve.

RESULT: APPROVED

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Continue discussion and reporting of alcohol licensing

It was reported that the organization that was interested in obtaining a license is no longer interested. The possibility of a "mobile bar" setup was discussed, but that involves a rental service.

This item will be on the April meeting agenda. No action was taken.

2. Fair financial report/update from Fair Assn. Rep. Becker

Fair Association Rep. Becker reported that the fair itself made a profit of approximately \$12,000, but factoring in the pre-fair costs resulted in a loss of approximately \$9,000.

3. Update on clay for the arena

Rodeo Association Rep. Bloch reported that clay was hauled in beginning on February 28th. Unfortunately, the clay was so rocky that the order was cancelled. Four loads arrived before order cancellation. Two of the loads may be usable, but two are probably not usable. This will be a work in process.

Attachment: 2018-03-01 FGC Minutes (3187 : Minutes of March 1, 2018 meeting)

This item will be on the April meeting agenda.

4. Placement/site for new bathrooms

Discussion was held on the various locations for the restrooms. An aerial map of a proposed location was distributed.

It was agreed that the restrooms should be placed in a location that is as “user-friendly” as possible.

5. Review and possible action on restroom bids

Information on the bids was distributed. Five bids were received. All bidders are bonded.

The low bid (\$224,529) was from JAS (Wausau). This entity has been involved in several major projects in the Wausau area.

Motion (Meehean/Bialecki) to approve the bid of \$224,529 from JAS.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 3/13/2018 7:00 PM
----------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

6. Review and possible action on Steckling Building bids

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey reported on the bids. Three bids were received.

The low bid (\$69,668) was from S D Ellenbecker Inc. Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey recommends approving this bid.

Motion (Meehean/Bloch) to approve the bid of \$69,668 from S D Ellenbecker Inc.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 3/13/2018 7:00 PM
----------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Food Vendor Rep. Christensen (Vendor meeting minutes/notes will be provided by Food Vendor Rep. Christensen)

Food Vendor Rep. Christensen reported verbally. The last scheduled meeting (February) of the permanent vendors did not occur, due to lack of attendees.

At their January 25th, 2018 meeting, the permanent vendors were provided a copy of the monthly report from Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund.

Rental invoices for the permanent stands are being mailed. All permanent vendors have been reminded to begin preparations for 2018 events.

Food Vendor Rep. Christensen stated that the permanent vendor group will not be providing meeting minutes to the Festival Grounds Committee.

Work continues on a document that will be provide contact information as well as other information related to the permanent stands.

2. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund has met recently with the “underwriter” for the tractor pull.

Work continues on installation of a freeway sign.

Discussions are being held with a marketing firm geared to small towns. A sponsor has agreed to pay the associated costs.

Festival Grounds Manager urged the committee to being thinking about camping sites. He also urged the committee to proceed with caution on the installation of a perimeter fence.

Two more weddings have been booked recently. Efforts are being made to book gun shows.

V. Public Comment Period

Alderman Norton reported that a business is willing to donate some 55 gallon metal trash drums. If the committee wants to use them, all they need do is let Alderman Norton know how many are needed.

Options for garbage collection on the grounds were discussed. Alderman Russell suggested separate containers for garbage and recycling.

Representing the Merrill Riders Club, Jill Viergutz announced that the Merrill Riders Club has now decided that they want to schedule events at the grounds in 2018. She will contact Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund on this.

VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Thursday, April 5th, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. in the Bierman Center.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Bialecki/Russell) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 7:06 P.M.

UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

APRIL	04-05-18	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	04-07-18	Enrichment Center Craft sale
	04-21-18	Prom
MAY	05-03-18	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	05-05-18	Wedding
JUNE	06-02-18	Wedding
	06-07-18	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	6-8, 6-9, 6-10	Rodeo ARENA
	06-16-18	Gaming
	06-30-18	Wedding
JULY	07-05-17	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	07-07-18	Tractor Pull ARENA
	07-07-18	Wedding
	7-27, 7-28	Wedding

Riders Club have given me 5` tentative Friday dates for the Arena, however, I am waiting until they have their new officers in place and will then send out a new contract to them.

This will also be sent out in the packets for the April meeting.

Attachment: Events Calendar (3194 : Calendar of Events)

Merrill Festival Grounds

April 5, 2018

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

Identifying and sourcing an interstate facing billboard for possible location on City property discussion is ongoing with a probable underwriter. The underwriting has been discussed at several levels inside of the company that has expressed an interest in the project.

New lighting is a very welcome grounds wide addition. Installation of the new restrooms may be completed in time for the Rodeo with the location adjusted to be immediately adjacent to the power substation.

Identification and prioritization of capital improvements for the grounds is an ongoing exercise in accord with the TIF requirements and user group needs.

The Lincoln County commissioned study from 2015 is an extensive document (over 100 pages at a cost of \$50,000), and it refers to successful Festival Grounds facilities as:

1. Year-round facilities are multi-use
2. Indoor, fully climatized exhibition-style building
3. Entertainment venue customized for specific market demand in the form of a grandstand, race track, indoor arena, amphitheater, etc.
4. Defined and improved camping facilities
5. Dedicated livestock facilities
6. Up-to-date restrooms and patron amenities

The Study recommends that two key operational/positional characteristics for successful fairgrounds/event venues are:

1. Pro-active marketing and management of the facilities – This includes creating marketing materials, establishing co-marketing
2. Relationships with local/regional tourism organizations and businesses, conducting travel and tours for prospective clients and, in some cases, self-promoting of events and activities.

If a perimeter fence is included as a capital improvement, it should be considered in light of County Fair admission policy, safety and security concerns vs beautification needs and yearly maintenance costs.

To begin a capital improvement plan, the facilities within the grounds include:

- Bierman Expo
- Fair Association Office –Owned by Fair Association
- Lokemoen Building – Built 1974 – Owned by Fair Association
- Livestock Pavilion – Built 1927 – Square footage 18,224
- Old School House – Moved onto property 1960
- Fair Building – Owned by Fair Association
- Schultz Building – Built in 1880 – Square footage 4,595
- Our Savior Church Stand – Square footage 920
- Steckling Building – built 1965 – Square footage 6,150
- Sell Building – Owned by the Fair Association. – built 1980 – square footage 4,860
- Newest Bathrooms
- Knights of Columbus Food Stand – square footage 700
- St. John’s Church Concession stand – square footage 2,880
- County Owned Stand – they rent to various groups – square footage 1,232
- St. Francis Church Food Stand – square footage 1,409
- Eagles Club Food Stand – square footage 1,428
- VFW Food Stand – square footage 2,400
- Lions Food Stand – square footage 1,216
- Optimist Food Stand – square footage 783
- West Bathroom
- East Bathroom
- Grandstand
- Rodeo/Horse Arena – 100 x 220

The City of Merrill has moved past some of the recommendations/conclusions but it is always prudent to cast an eye to a comprehensive study so that future planning does not miss items.

Additional categories could include: Perimeter Fence, reduction of Humane Society footprint, paving/asphalt, plantings, trees, electrical grid, winterized buildings, canopies, shade and rest areas, picnic tables, sewer and water hook-ups,

Tractor Pull:

NTPA/WTPA specialists will conduct onsite inspection to assist Merrill to make the correct dirt preparations and plan for physical improvements if necessary.

WTPA has confirmed 4x4 class. Future events may include garden tractors, semi trucks.

Marketing discussions are taking place with a designer in conjunction with the Chamber and Rodeo focusing on social media, purchased time branding, logo design, web design and unified messaging. A retention agreement is anticipated by meeting time.

Pricing will be reduced to that of the year one event in concurrence with the sponsor and underwriter.

The event has a goal of excess revenue to contribute to the capital improvement of the grounds.

Antique Tractors event will end by 3pm to accommodate more extensive track preparation.

Bank attorney is trying to expedite the filing of 501-c3 or non-stock corporate paperwork.

Rodeo:

The committee has been approached to alter the arena set-up for the bulls and barrels event. That request is declined for safety and security reasons.

A new, sanctioned event is being discussed. Angel underwriting and financial assistance is being sought.

County Fair:

August 15-19

Consistent with every major Fair and Festival in the state, it is strongly recommended that fencing inside the fairgrounds be reduced or eliminated. Check points for age should be maintained with a stamp or wristband given for daily ID. Encourage all beer stands to provide entertainment.

Use Expo stage for contests and additional programs.

County Fair has a new Carnival Producer. The poor show produced last summer left the community upset. Changing the vendor should increase capacity, excitement, value, income and content. The Carnival producer is also bringing free entertainment. Early promotion of this change will serve the Fair very well. County fair would be well served by establishing a multi-year contract for this producer. Because the Lincoln County Fair is a smaller event, it is in danger of being dropped down date priorities or being left without a Carnival completely. It is strongly recommended that the Fair extend its one year contract to multiple years with the producer since there will likely be at least one fewer carnival producers in the state starting this summer.

The committee in charge of the livestock auction (the fair is a terminal show) has done a superb job of lining up corporate and private buyers for the auction. It is one of the better auctions in the state in the county fair category. The work done by the committee is a model for the fair to use in seeking additional support, sponsorship and possible angel underwriting. Such additional support will help the fair continue to be a "free fair".

Observations and suggestions following last year's fair are as follows. Implementation of some or all could help the fair present a friendly face and encourage greater attendance:

Need to turn grounds lights on earlier
 Need to have a heavier presence of management during set-up
 Need electrician presence at electrical panels for set-up
 Carnival trucks parked inside fairgrounds. Park across street.
 Camper locations move to ends
 Sr Center closed. Open and put up passive displays of programs and projects.
 Many electrical cords across walking aisles
 Cars and trucks inside pedestrian areas
 Electric panels open unlocked
 Parkers still on a 9 but no gate traffic
 Arena dirt used for rain fill
 Bulls and Barrells show is weak. Replace if possible
 Move butter carving and pie eating into Expo
 Do more contests in Expo
 Add kids contests
 Try school tie ins prior to school closing for the summer
 Carnival closed at 10, buildings at 10:10
 Not enough traffic to warrant one way on 6th St.
 Credentialed and vip parking signs for E end.
 Chicken barn closed for judging
 Demo derby ½ hour late start, 1st heat took ½ hour
 Beer vendors in GS too loose
 Beer tent set-up tables behind trailers...VIP?
 No need for one way on 6th St
 Karaoke return would help bolster content for the overall show
 Reduce Monster Truck berm runoff
 For a 3-truck show, the producer stretched the content into a good show
 Fenced pavilions appear to not serve the fair's best interest
 Carnival tear down too early.
 Think about expanding demo derby and monster truck days
 Eliminate bulls and barrels or seek different producer
 Consider keeping the booking in August.
 Submission of State report to DATCP

Bierman Expo Hall:

A group has been contacted for potential sale of alcohol at expo events. The total number of potential events will not represent a significant annual potential gross sales.

Reservations for weddings in summer of 2018 are increasing monthly. Diane is superb at talking with the potential users. She has excellent acumen for event business.

Jack Koshick, talent buyer for NRG Radio is interested in the Expo as a possible concert site.

A promoter for wrestling shows has shown an interest to visit the facility and consider doing a show(s) here.

Cameo Roets, Marketing director for WIFC, WDEZ, WSAU, WOZZ AND Fox has visited and is considering producing radio station entertainment concerts at the expo. She and her operations manager were very impressed with the facility and its application to their event needs.