



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY MAY 3, 2018

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of April 5, 2018 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 1. Continue discussion and reporting of alcohol licensing
 2. Rodeo update
 3. Fair update
 4. 2019 & 2020 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 & location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES • THURSDAY APRIL 5, 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	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Tim Meehean	Aldersperson - Eighth District	Present	
Bill Bialecki	Mayor	Present	
Paul Russell	Aldersperson - First District	Present	
Neal Christensen	Food Vendor Rep.	Present	
Bryan Bloch	Rodeo Assn. Rep.	Present	
Brad Becker	Fair Assn. Rep.	Present	

Other attendees included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund, Alderwoman Kandy Peterson, Diane Wais, Steve Hass, Darrell Barker, Carrie Cordova, Becky Meyer, Alicia Weix, Jan Tesch, Michael Caylor Jr., Bill Smith, Cindi Christiansen and City Clerk Bill Heideman

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of March 1, 2018 meeting

Food Vendor Rep. Christensen noted that meetings held at the Bierman Building are frequently not videotaped. This is because Merrill Productions does not always send someone to tape the meeting.

Motion (Meehean/Russell) to approve the minutes.

III. Agenda itmes for consideration:

1. VFW Post 1638 Auxiliary 75th Annivesary request

VFW Post 1638 Auxiliary will be having a 75th Anniversary celebration at the Festival Grounds on August 11th. They are verbally requesting that the fee for this event be waived.

Alderman Meehean responded that, at a previous meeting, the Festival Grounds Committee took action to stipulate that no fees would be waived.

Alderman Russell suggested that it might be possible to obtain funding for this event via sponsor(s).

No action was taken.

2. Continue discussion and reporting of alcohol licensing

City Attorney Hayden reported that liability issues related to this are currently being examined. To date, no concrete proposal has been received.

Attachment: 2018-04-05 FGC Minutes (3242 : Minutes of April 5, 2018 meeting)

This agenda item will continue to appear on future agendas.

3. Fair update

Discussions to establish dates for the 2019 fair are ongoing with Spectrum Carnival.

4. 2019 & 2020 Fair dates

If all goes well with the carnival in 2018, the dates for the 2019 fair will be July 17th to July 21st.

Tentative dates for the 2020 fair are July 15th to July 19th.

5. Calendar of Events

The events calendar was in the meeting packet. Diane Wais provided additional verbal information.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Food Vendor Rep. Christensen

Food Vendor Rep. Christensen reported that the "Permanent Vendor Group" had met recently. He then distributed a sheet providing information on the permanent vendors.

The permanent vendors that will be open for the 2018 rodeo are all planning for that event.

Alderman Russell requested that missing phone numbers be added to the permanent vendor information sheet.

2. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The report was in the meeting packet.

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund reported that he is holding discussion with people from Milwaukee regarding the possibility of holding a wrestling event at the grounds. He is also having discussions on other potential events.

It was noted that the lighting on the grounds has been dramatically improved.

The City has already achieved many of the recommendations included in a 2015 study of the grounds.

Work continues on a digital sign that will be installed on the freeway. It will help promote events on the grounds as well as other community events.

Fair Association Rep. Becker addressed some the fair-related issues included in the monthly report.

V. Public Comment Period

Alderman Norton thanked Mayor Bialecki for his service and his knowledge of the Festival Grounds.

Carrie Cordova had questions regarding the possibility of the Optimist Club putting a shed behind their building. She was told to contact Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator Darin Pagel to discuss this.

Carrie Cordova also reported that the Optimist Club was planning a paper "Shred Day". She was encouraged to try to have this event coincide with "Recycle Day".

Cindi Christiansen, a member of the Fair Association, thanked the committee for their efforts, but stated that she has concerns with trust and honesty. She added that she did not appreciate having her integrity being questioned. Alderman Russell responded to those comments by suggesting that a future agenda include an item to discuss the relationship between the Fair Association and the Festival Grounds Committee.

Mayor Bialecki thanked everyone for the service on the committee. He provided a verbal history of upgrades to the grounds since the City assumed ownership.

Alderman Meehean stated that the City has done outstanding work in upgrading the grounds since assuming ownership.

VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Motion (Christensen/Russell) to hold the May meeting in the City Hall Council Chambers. Motion failed.

Motion (Bloch/Bialecki) to hold the May meeting at the Bierman Building. Carried.

The next meeting will be Thursday, May 5th, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. at the Bierman Building.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Bialecki/Bloch) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:55 P.M.

UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

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
AUGUST	08-02-18	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	08-3/08-4	Relay for Life GROUND S
	08-04-18	Wedding
	08-11-18	VFW Auxiliary (tentative)
	08-15/08-19	FAIR with set up and take down the month of August ARENA/EXPO/GROUND S
	08-26-18	Wedding

OTHER EVENTS

The Riders Club will be putting on (6) Friday shows in the Arena. They will be held on May 18th, June 15th, July 20th, August 10th, August 31, and September 14th.

4-H Dog Training will be held on the Grounds on June 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th, July 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th, and August 6th.

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

Merrill Festival Grounds

May 3, 2018

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

The Merrill Amateur Radio Group would like to do an overnight event in June. They are polling their members to see if they are able to pay a rental fee. More information will be known by meeting time.

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 and is conducted in accord with the TIF requirements and user group needs. Current projects to improve the appearance and function of existing buildings will be noticeable to the community and user groups.

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.

The City of Merrill has moved past some of the recommendations/conclusions but it is always prudent to review the 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, etc.

The Tractor Pull has retained a marketing designer focusing on social media, purchased time, branding, logo design, web design and unified messaging.

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 being contributed 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.

New web-site and marketing design is being rolled-out by the Kirtchman group.

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. 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 August dates for the Fair appear to be beneficial and should be considered for future years also.

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 but well attended event.
 Beer vendors in GS too loose no ID check.
 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, visited the facility and has agreed to bring 2 gun shows per year to the Expo (September and March).

A group has been contacted and agreed to operate food and beverage at expo events.

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.

Two promoters for wrestling shows have shown an interest in 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.