



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY AUGUST 2, 2018

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of July 12, 2018 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 1. Fair Update
 2. Calendar of Events/Feedback
 3. Skate Park Placement
 4. 2019 Capital Improvements/Budget Items
- IV. Monthly Reports:
 1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
 2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor
- V. Public Comment Period
- VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES • THURSDAY JULY 12, 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
Michael Caylor	Food Vendor Rep.	Present	
Rob Norton	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Tim Meehean	Aldersperson - Eighth District	Present	
John M. Van Lieshout	Aldersperson - Fifth District	Present	
Derek Woellner	Mayor	Present	6:10 PM
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, Alderman Paul Russell, Diane Wais, Kandy Peterson, Dave Buck, Darryl Barker, Bill Bialecki, George Henrich Jr., Bill Sorensen, Neil Christensen (arr. 6:07) and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A student was in attendance to tape the meeting for Merrill Productions.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of June 7, 2018 meeting

Motion (Meehean/Bloch) to approve, as amended, by adding language stating that information posted on Facebook was erroneous, and that the Merrill Area Public Schools (MAPS) had in fact payed the entire fee for Bierman Building rental for the prom.

RESULT: APPROVED AS AMENDED

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Rodeo debriefing report

Rodeo Association Rep. Bloch reported that everything went well at the rodeo. Proceeds were distributed as follows: \$5,000 has been given to the Never Forgotten Flight, and \$3,000 has been given to the Marshfield Clinic. Approximately \$5,650 will be given back to the community, to 12 different agencies (not including the Eagles Club).

The Rodeo Association would like to see electricity and permanent lighting installed in the ticket booths before the 2019 rodeo.

2. Tractor Pull debriefing report

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund reported that 103 tractors participated in the pulls. Everything seemed to go smoothly. The estimated total attendance for the day was 2,500. In the future, attempts will be made to increase marketing of the event.

3. Fair update

Attachment: 2018-07-12 FGC Minutes (3487 : Minutes of July 12, 2018 meeting)

Fair Association Rep. Becker reported that, to date, planning and preparation are running smoothly. Final planning for the grandstand shows is underway. Additional sponsors are being sought.

The fair this year will feature a different carnival (Spectrum Carnival).

4. Calendar of Events/Feedback

The calendar of upcoming events was in the meeting packet.

Diane Wais reported that the group that hosted a gaming event at the Bierman Building will be returning in 2019. For now, they will not be doing any camping as part of their gaming events at the Festival Grounds.

The Good News recycling event is scheduled for August 4th. All weddings held at the Bierman Building to date have had positive responses.

Rodeo Association Rep. Bloch asked how people can get tables and chairs for various events. Although the City cannot “advertise”, it was suggested that Facebook could be an avenue to provide options, as well as to provide information on caterers, “beer” buses, etc.

5. Recycling

Food Vendor Rep. Caylor had requested that this item be included on the agenda. The seven permanent stands would like to recycle as much as possible, and have the City recycling department pick up the recyclables. The frequent of pickup suggested was once during the fair and again on the Monday after the fair. The pickup would be for recyclables used by the stands only, and would not include any recyclables generated by fair patrons.

City Administrator Johnson agreed to try this arrangement at the fair this year, and then evaluate it after the fair.

6. 2019 Capital Improvements/Budget Items

Information on the Festival Grounds 10 Year Capital Plan was in the meeting packet. City Administrator Johnson stated that he wants the committee to begin considering items they want included in the 2019 Festival Grounds Capital Budget. He stated that he would be seeking \$120,000 for the northwest restrooms.

Lighting on the grounds was discussed.

Discussion and consideration of capital budget items will continue at the August meeting. No action was necessary, requested or taken at this time.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

Food Vendor Rep. Caylor reported that the “permanent” stands group would meet once more before the fair.

Rodeo Association Rep. Bloch questioned some of the language in #4 of the monthly report, related to the possibility the permanent stands having a “mobile” location under the grandstand during events held in the grandstand. He stated that there is waiting list of vendors who would like to sell at the rodeo. He also reminded everyone that, for the rodeo, all menus must be approved by the Rodeo Association.

2. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The monthly report was in the meeting packet.

The ground composition in the rodeo area was discussed.

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund reported that two wrestling promoters are considering booking a wrestling show at the Bierman Building. Gross capacity would be about 500, and it is anticipated that tickets would sell for \$20. The promoters are somewhat hesitant to proceed due to the element of risk. To minimize the risk, Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund and his family are willing to donate \$1,000 to the promoters. He made clear that he is not “investing” or “buying” a piece of the show, but instead this donation would help to convince the promoter(s) to book a show.

V. Public Comment Period

Bill Bialecki remarked that when he attended wrestling events at the fair 55 years ago, the cost of admission for wrestling was 25 cents.

Darryl Barker commented that, at Festival Grounds meetings, it is difficult to hear the speakers during meetings (no microphones).

Neil Christensen asked about the status of establishing a policy related to smoking on the grounds. He was told that this is a work in progress.

Neil Christensen inquired as to the status of the East Sixth Street project. City Administrator responded that the project would be starting soon.

Neil Christensen stated that he hopes for better communication to the public on items related to the Festival Grounds. City Administrator Johnson replied that several communication avenues, including social media, are currently being used to disseminate information to the public.

VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Thursday, August 2nd, 2018 at 6:00 P.M. at the Bierman Building.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Meehean/Woellner) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:55 P.M.

AUGUST

Fair – Update

Calendar of Events/Feedback (Attachment)

Skate Park Placement

2019 Capital Improvements / Budget Items (Attachment)

Food Vendor Report – Caylor

Festival Grounds Manager Report – Bjorklund (Attachment)

Attachment: Agenda Items (3490 : Fair Update)

Merrill Festival Grounds

August 2, 2018

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

Placing an interstate facing billboard on City property is ongoing with a probable underwriter. The underwriting has been discussed at several levels inside of the company and continues to pass review by corporate departments.

New lighting is being installed. Creating height with new or altered poles would be helpful. Addition of lighting needs to continue to create a safe and user-friendly environment.

Additional electric hook-ups along the fence line and in the infield are a priority along with sewer hook-up or dump stations and water connections.

Installation of the new restrooms took place in time for the Tractor Pull and were greatly appreciated by the public.

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.

For Capital improvement consideration, successful Festival Grounds facilities are generally described as:

1. Year-round facilities and are multi-use
2. Indoor, fully climatized exhibition-style building(s)
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

Additional categories could include: Perimeter Fence (with caution), 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 consultants made recommendations to assist Merrill to make the correct dirt preparations. Crews have opened the track and are using several methods for its preparation.

Additional marketing through tagging bank buys is being considered.

The committee is considering the addition of future events including garden tractors, semi-trucks, ATV's, motorcycles and Monster Trucks and may consider adding a day.

Pricing was reduced and was well received.

The Tractor Pull is being re-structured as a non-stock corporation by River Valley Bank's law firm.

Rodeo:

Next year, porta toilets will not be required so the physical layout will be better for all. In general, the layout was crisp and efficient.

Vending could help concessions. ATM is a good concession.

Extensive photos of the grounds lay-out were taken as well as drone photos. The layout was more efficient this year.

Upgraded infield electric panels are becoming a priority as well as possible access to sewer and dump station facilities.

New welcome signs could help at the entrance and at the entertainment tent.

We are seeking ways to scrub the grandstand after Sat show.

County Fair:

August 15-19

Recommended that fencing inside the fairgrounds be reduced or eliminated. Check points for age can be maintained with a stamp or wristband given for daily ID. Encourage all beer stands to provide entertainment.

Location of the new restrooms may reduce carnival footprint. Some adjustment might be possible east of the restrooms to increase capacity. The layout is a priority for the fair following last summer's poor carnival. Statewide, the carnival business is experiencing contractions. Steps to assure a carnival for future years should be taken.

Use Expo stage for contests and additional programs.

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”.

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). Discussions continue as to content and layout.

We have been complimented by user groups for such clean facilities, for the building being well laid out and equipped. Nick does an excellent job. Rental rates are very user friendly and equally applied.

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 as well as wrestling events. He has visited on-site and met with some of the city representatives and resources. We are exploring a joint-venture with another wrestling producer to reduce initial risk for the first event. An underwriter is being sought for \$1000.00 to help launch the event.

Cameo Roets, Marketing director for WIFC, WDEZ, WSAU, WOZZ AND Fox has visited and is considering producing radio station entertainment concerts at the expo.

Permanent Stands Meeting

July 26, 2018

At 6:32 PM

Chair Mike Caylor called the meeting to order

Present: Jerry Leopold, Mike Opichka, Jay Schlueter – Eagle’s Club; Randy Wixson – Optimist Club; John Rathke – VFW; Mike Caylor – St Francis.

Agenda Items:

Fair Prep: Everyone is set for the fair. The two beer stands met with the distributors to set prices for this year. The entertainment in the common area between the two beer stands is not what they had hoped for but they hope to build on their relationship with the fair board. The Eagle’s Club inquired if St. Francis would want to share fence access to their east side of their stand to allow for patrons of the beer tent to grab items from the food stand. Mike Caylor advised St. Francis was having a meeting on Monday and they would discuss it then.

Tractor Pull: Both the VFW and Optimist Club reported they were open for the tractor pull. They stated sales were down from previous years but they were happy with the results of the event.

Capital Improvements: Prior to the meeting a list of capital improvements planned for the grounds was distributed to all groups via email for the agenda this evening. Everyone agreed the improvements to the bathrooms were much needed and welcomed. Other ideas regarding the visions the stands have for needs on the grounds were discussed and will be on future agendas.

Recycling: It was explained the city is leaning to providing us with recycling containers and they would pick up the Friday of and the Monday after the fair. This is voluntary and your stand is not required to participate. Everyone seemed interested in trying it for 2018 and hoping that this is a positive step for a greener grounds.

Food Reminders: As St. Francis and the Optimist stands were the only food stands present we reminded the beer stands of what great food we each have.

Water Issue: The Optimist Club had a burst pipe in their stand. They think the issue was centered on a fitter that burst. The fitter may have just worn out or possibly, it could have been from an outside surge. Damage to the stand consisted of some cabinets that need to be replaced but the water may have been running for several days and it was found pouring out the door when someone stopped by. All other stands were advised by the Optimist Club as soon as the issue was found (thanks!) and no other problems were found on the grounds.

Next meeting: We are changing our meetings to Wednesday nights due to a conflict with some of our schedules and we hope this increases participation. Once Labor Day is done we may only meet one more time before spring or as needed for anything that develops on the grounds.