



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY DECEMBER 5, 2019

Regular Meeting

Bierman Building

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of October 3, 2019 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
 1. Discuss location(s) for paving on the grounds in 2020
 2. Fair exhibit and entertainment options
 3. Use of cattle barn for animals during natural disasters
 4. Calendar of events
- IV. Monthly Reports:
 1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
 2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor - No report, because Food Vendor Committee did not meet.
- V. Public Comment Period
- VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting
- VII. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
MINUTES • THURSDAY OCTOBER 3, 2019

Regular Meeting Bierman Building 6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

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

Table with 4 columns: Attendee Name, Title, Status, Arrived. Rows include Michael Caylor, Rob Norton, Steve Sabatke, John M. Van Lieshout, Derek Woellner, Bryan Bloch, and Brad Becker.

Other attendees included: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A representative from Merrill Productions was present to videotape the meeting.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of August 1, 2019 meeting

The minutes were in the meeting packet.

Motion (Becker/Woellner) to approve.

RESULT: APPROVED

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Cattle barn exterior

City Administrator Johnson reported on two potential options to maintain/rehab the exterior of the cattle barn. One option would be to replace the wood, at an estimated cost of \$40,000. However, repainting the wood frequently would be necessary. The other option would be cover the wood with metal, at an estimated cost of \$67,000. This would eliminate the necessity of frequent repainting.

Alderman Sabatke stated that he would not favor the second option, as he is fearful that could lead to moisture which could damage the wood and thereby compromise the entire structure. He noted that the building seems to be in remarkably good shape considering the age of it.

Mayor Woellner agreed with Alderman Sabatke on the potential moisture problems that could occur as a result of the second option.

Rodeo Association Rep. Bloch suggested demolishing the barn and rebuilding one in the same style. The new barn could then be used for more shows/events.

Attachment: 2019-10-03 FGC Minutes (4716 : Minutes of October 3, 2019 meeting)

No action was taken at this time.

2. Calendar of events

The calendar was in the meeting packet.

Alderman Norton reviewed the calendar.

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund provided a verbal update on a wrestling show held recently and then shared information on another wrestling show scheduled for December.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

The report was in the meeting packet.

2. Food Vendor Rep. Caylor - No report, because Food Vendor Committee did not meet.

Food Vendor Rep. Caylor reported verbally that sales at the fair this year were stable. There were some price increases (first in five years), but the increases did not appear to have a major impact on sales.

V. Public Comment Period

None.

VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting

The next meeting will be at the call of the chairperson.

VII. Public Comment Period (continued)

A second public comment period then occurred.

Alderman Sabatke inquired as to the possibility of relocating the fair office to the Bierman Building.

Alderman Sabatke then asked about the status of a pending ordinance that would amend the composition of the Festival Grounds Committee. He was told that the ordinance will be on a future Committee of the Whole meeting for consideration.

Several additional items that were not on the agenda were discussed during this portion of the meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion (Woellner/Caylor) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:37 P.M.

December

Fair exhibit & entertainment options

Use of cattle barn for animals during natural disasters

Calendar of Events (Attachment)

Festival Grounds Manager Report – Bjorklund (Attachment)

Food Vendor Report – Caylor (Attachment)

Attachment: Agenda Items (4719 : Discuss location(s) for paving on the grounds in 2020)

Heideman, Bill

From: Johnson, David
Sent: Wednesday, December 4, 2019 8:46 AM
To: Heideman, Bill; Norton, Rob
Subject: RE: Updated City of Merrill Meetings Schedule for December 2019

Bill,

Please add an item to the Festival Grounds Committee to discuss where to pave on the grounds in 2020.

David Johnson, City Administrator
 City of Merrill
 1004 E. 1st St.
 Merrill WI 54452
 715-536-5594

From: Heideman, Bill
Sent: Wednesday, December 04, 2019 8:40 AM
To: Clerks Office Distribution List
Subject: Updated City of Merrill Meetings Schedule for December 2019

Attached, in both Excel and PDF formats, is an updated City of Merrill meetings schedule for December, 2019.

The update is the addition of a Festival Grounds Committee meeting. That meeting will be held at the Bierman Building at 6:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 5th. I realize that it is very short notice to inform the public, but I was not informed of the meeting until this morning.

City Clerk Bill Heideman CMC, WCMC
 City of Merrill

Attachment: Agenda request for paving locations (4719 : Discuss location(s) for paving on the grounds in 2020)

UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

2019

December	12-05-2019	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	12-14-2019	Wrestling "Seasons Beatings"

2020

January	01-02-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	01-03/04-20	Gun Show**

February	02-06-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	02-29-20	Wedding

March	03-05-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	03-06/07-20	Gun Show**

April	04-02-2020	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee
	04-03/04-20	Craft Show
	04-18-20	Prom

**** Yearly Repeat Events ****

Attachment: Calendar of Events (4722 : Calendar of events)

Merrill Festival Grounds

Dec 5, 2019

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

City crews completed snow removal at a record pace. Given the shortage of personnel, they deserve to be officially recognized and congratulated.

A youth ATV track could be developed in conjunction with local ATV dealers; disk golf long drive contests, etc

In the process of removing snow mass from the sides of the Expo Hall building, it became impossible to do so without dragging landscape stone with the snow being removed. Future consideration to replacing the stone with another material may eliminate this problem but only if cost benefit is acceptable.

Addition of lighting needs to continue to be a priority to create a safe and user-friendly environment. Raising the grandstand poles and enhancing the light clusters is a priority for safety, production and ease of operation (not having to keep refocusing). American flag is missing from infield booth and a flag in the expo should be obtained.

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. Projects that have improved the appearance and function of existing buildings is very noticeable and appreciated by the community and user groups.

Capital improvement categories could include: Perimeter Fence (with caution and concurrence of user groups), reduction of Humane Society footprint, paving/asphalt at the Grandstand and improved elevation between the east and west bathrooms, plantings, trees, electrical grid, winterized buildings, canopies, shade and rest areas, picnic tables, sewer and water hook-ups for events not camping.

A new Pig and Swine show is being planned for late spring and early summer.

Tractor Pull:

The Midstate's Pullers replaced the WTPA/NTPA. The Dirt Flingers (minis and garden tractors and specialty classes) were added with the antique Pullers for the daytime free show.

Sales were level and show(s) were excellent.

It is being discussed to combine the Tractor Pull with the County Fair. The date of August 15 has been requested from the Midstate Pullers. If logistics and timing can be worked out, it is felt

that the change could benefit both events as well as benefit to Incredible bank sponsor. As more information is worked out, we will report to the committee.

Rodeo:

Entrance Gate created a nice welcoming sense of arrival.

The new layout of the grounds was excellent and well received by all.

Show did a good job of watering down the entrance area and practice areas to hold down arena dust.

Commercial and concessions set-up was accomplished rapidly and was a clean presentation.

Though the intent was good the use of orange plastic barrier was not necessary. Saw horse barriers look better and accomplish the same goal.

Double check electrical load balance along the Memorial fence line.

Increase infield electrical capacity to 600 amps.

Elevate arena light poles by 20 feet and continue to add lighting across the grounds.

Obtain a hydrant hose bib (similar to the ones used by the carnival) for better hose use.

Elevate/barrier an area with hose and water for horse washing.

Put benches along the chutes for use by contestants.

VIP and handicap parking worked very well.

Parking operation in general, was excellent; the best of any event.

Consider moving the tent a few feet west to better avoid utilities.

Consider "selling" deep discount tickets for Sunday to sponsor's favorite charities.

County Fair:

The elimination of fencing worked very well; it was also efficient to allow the beer stands to sell wristbands at the counter.

Seek to sell, trade or barter for display space under the Grandstand, west of the carnival and east of poultry barn. Perhaps, invite the military to move displays in at no cost. Attempt to leave no empty space between the east end of the grandstand and the cattle barns. Attempt to fill all buildings

Consider active and/or participative displays such as chain saw carving, wood working, fish tank, kid's shows, animal petting, jugglers, etc. Such shows are inexpensive, easy to book and easily fill space as needed. They give a sense of activity and fun and help to keep families at the grounds longer. Put all benches and picnic tables in areas closer to the activities.

Renovation of the restrooms was excellent. They were clean and well lit. Families appreciated it.

Review ATM vendor and fees. Require a report from the Processor of the ATMs.

Use the Expo stage for pie eating and butter carving contests and other such competitions and free programs. Work out re-scheduling use of the building to make sure the expo stage is kept busy.

Open the Enrichment Center end of the Expo for passive display of projects and programs; open the gift shop to sell items to the public and hand out information to increase public awareness and participation.

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 new altruistic support, sponsorship and possible angel underwriting of specific events. Sponsor each day of the fair. Such additional support is essential to help the fair continue to be a “free fair”.

Add lights to the east and west poles in the grandstand to keep from having to refocus lights. Consider raising the height of the north grandstand poles to reduce glare into the grandstand seating. Focus heavily on general lighting throughout the grounds. Light equate to safe in attendee’s minds.

Have a heavier presence of electrician during set-up. Lock electric panels throughout the fair, reduce hose and cable crossings and cover all crossings with heavy rubber mats. Assure that the electrician contractor is bonded, certified and insured.

Bierman Expo Hall:

The first Wrestling Show produced about 250 attendees. Given the short lead time, it was an encouraging turnout. The second show on Sept 27 had increased attendance and media support although neither show has reach =ed breakeven yet. The promoter is presenting the third show on Dec 14 titled “Season’s Beatings”. Ryan Schwartzman has helped the promoter tremendously and the Chamber has helped with sales and marketing. New sales at County Market and Mobile Station helped. The event successfully began seeking sponsorship as well as angel backers.

The Northern Wisconsin Gun Show producer gun show on Sept 13 and 14 did very well. The consensus among the exhibitors is that the move to Merrill was good for all.

Reservations for weddings are increasing monthly.