



**CITY OF MERRILL**  
**FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE**  
**AGENDA • WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2020**

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**Regular Meeting**

**Bierman Building**

**6:00 PM**

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- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
  1. Minutes of December 5, 2019 meeting
- III. Agenda items for consideration:
  1. Water & electrical along south fence
  2. Cattle Barn
  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 DECEMBER 5, 2019

Regular Meeting Bierman Building 6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Norton called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. Note: A quorum of members was not present at the meeting, so Alderman Norton announced that the meeting would consist of discussion only and that no decisions would be made.

Table with 4 columns: Attendee Name, Title, Status, Arrived. Rows include Michael Caylor (Food Vendor Rep., Present), Rob Norton (Alderman - Seventh District, Present), Steve Sabatke (Alderman - Eighth District, Present), John M. Van Lieshout (Alderman - Fifth District, Excused), Derek Woellner (Mayor, Excused), Bryan Bloch (Rodeo Assn. Rep., Excused), Brad Becker (Fair Assn. Rep., Excused).

Also in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund, Krista Mitchell, September Murphy, Darrell Barker and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Hunter Lane was present to videotape the meeting for Merrill Productions.

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):

1. Minutes of October 3, 2019 meeting

The minutes were not considered.

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Discuss location(s) for paving on the grounds in 2020

An aerial map of the grounds was distributed.

\$150,000 is available for paving the grounds in 2020. Options for paving various areas of the grounds were discussed. Mike Caylor suggested that no decision(s) on paving site(s) should be made until the permanent vendors have an opportunity to provide input.

After discussion, it was decided that this this item should remain on future agendas until firm decisions are made. Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey will be directed to further explore various paving options and provide cost estimates.

No action taken at this time.

2. Fair exhibit and entertainment options

This agenda item was not considered.

3. Use of cattle barn for animals during natural disasters

Alderman Norton requested that the order of agenda items be changed and that this item be discussed immediately after the call to order. Without objection, it was so ordered.

Attachment: 2019-12-05 FGC Minutes (4794 : Minutes of December 5, 2019 meeting)

Lincoln County Emergency Management Director September Murphy explained that she has begun researching the possibility of designating the cattle barn at the Festival Grounds as a shelter for pets and other domesticated animals in instances of natural disasters. The facility could be used for a single incident as well as for extensive disasters. Committee members in attendance supported this concept.

Work will continue on this. An agreement will be drafted for consideration at the next meeting.

No action was taken at this time.

#### 4. Calendar of events

The calendar was in the meeting packet.

#### 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.

#### V. Public Comment Period

Alderman Sabatke inquired as to the status of the cattle barn rehabilitation project. He was told that the project would be bid in the spring of 2020.

Alderman Sabatke then asked about the status of the proposed ordinance that would alter the composition of the Festival Grounds Committee. He was informed that consideration of the ordinance had been delayed until after the 2020 budget process was completed.

#### VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting

The next meeting was not scheduled.

#### VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 P.M. (No motion or vote).

**February**

Water & Electrical along south fence

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 (4795 : Water & electrical along south fence)

## UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

### 2020

<b>January</b>	01-02-20 01-03/04-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee Gun Show**
<b>February</b>	02-06-20 02-29-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee Wedding
<b>March</b>	03-05-20 03-06/07-20 3-28-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee Gun Show** Wrestling
<b>April</b>	04-02-2020 04-03/04-20 04-18-20	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee Craft Show Prom
<b>May</b>	05-02-20 05-23-20 05-29-20	Wedding Pig Show (cattle barn) - Tentative Riders Club (grounds)

\*\* Yearly Repeat Events \*\*

Attachment: Calendar of Events (4798 : Calendar of Events)

## Merrill Festival Grounds

February 6, 2020

### Grandstand and Grounds:

#### General:

The asphalt installations are a benefit to all events.

A youth ATV track could be developed in conjunction with local ATV dealers. Keeping the youth concept would help restrict the scope of the track to reduce operational expense; disk golf or frisbee long drive contests could be conducted with low cost operations but relatively broad appeal.

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.

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.

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: Barn replacement, 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.

#### 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.

Efforts have been made to move the Tractor events into the County Fair to help the overall health of both events.

#### 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 dust.  
 Consider improving hook-up service on S fence line.  
 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 only 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 last Wrestling Show produced about 340 attendees. Given the short lead time, it was an encouraging turnout. The promoter has scheduled another show for March 28 titled Merrill Mania. It will feature a former Merrill resident who went on to a WWF career. Ryan Schwartzman has helped the promoter tremendously and the Chamber has helped with sales and marketing. New sales at County Market and Mobile helped. The event is seeking sponsorship as well as angel backers.

The show that was originally held on opening day weekend was moved to early Jan. It did well and expects exhibitors to book more heavily in subsequent years. Attendance was over 1000. The consensus among the exhibitors is that the move to Merrill was good for all.

Reservations for weddings are increasing monthly and 4 tours of the building for new events have been given in the last 2 weeks.