CITY OF MERRILL

FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE

AGENDA ● THURSDAY JUNE 13, 2019

Regular Meeting | **Bierman Building** | **6:00 PM**

I. Call to Order

II. Minutes of previous meeting(s);

1. Minutes of April 4, 2019 meeting

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Discussion on remodeling of bathrooms/showers
2. Fair dates - 2020 and 2021
3. Rodeo Update
4. Fair Update
5. Calendar of Events

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund
2. Permanent Stands Rep. Caylor

V. Public Comment Period

VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting

VII. Adjournment

CITY OF MERRILL

FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES ● THURSDAY APRIL 4, 2019

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	Alderperson - Seventh District	Present	
Tim Meehean	Alderperson - Eighth District	Present	
John M. Van Lieshout	Alderperson - Fifth District	Present	
Derek Woellner	Mayor	Absent	
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, Diane Wais, John Rathke, Bill Bialecki, Colton VanLieshout 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 March 7, 2019 meeting

Motion (Meehean/Bloch) to approve.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

III. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Labor Day - Mobile Food Vendors/Contract

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund will continue to work with Ron Liberty (Merrill Lions) to ensure compliance.

Motion (Meehean/Becker) to approve the contract.

RESULT: **APPROVED**

2. Fireworks information update

Information from City Administrator Johnson was in the meeting packet.

City Administrator Johnson explained that, based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) regulations, the company that displays the fireworks show would not be able to have the same type of show at the Festival Grounds that they would have at the Merrill Area Recreational Complex (MARC).

Attachment: 2019-04-04 FGC Minutes (4257 : Minutes of April 4, 2019 meeting)

Food Vendor Rep. Caylor responded that, while he realizes that relocation July Fourth celebration to the Festival Grounds is a dead issue at this time, he wanted it known that many NFPA guidelines, included the guidelines referenced by City Administrator Johnson, have not been adopted by the State of Wisconsin and are therefore not considered Wisconsin state law.

3. Rodeo update

Rodeo Association Rep. Bloch reported that the 2019 rodeo will be held June 7-9. Bands have been booked for Friday, June 7th and Saturday, June 8th.

Work on several enhancements to the rodeo is ongoing. Evening shows are scheduled for June 7th and June 8th, with an afternoon show scheduled for June 9th.

4. Calendar of Events

The calendar was in the meeting packet. Diane Wais reviewed the calendar.

IV. Monthly Reports:

1. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund reviewed the report and answered questions.

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

Food Vendor Rep. Caylor reported that their group will begin 2019 meetings, probably in April.

V. Public Comment Period

City Attorney Hayden mentioned that Diane Wais will be retiring in June.

VI. Establish date, time & location of next meeting

Thursday, May 2nd, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. in the Bierman Building Conference Room.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Meehean/Van Lieshout) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Attachment: 2019-04-04 FGC Minutes (4257 : Minutes of April 4, 2019 meeting)

JUNE

Discussion – remodeling of bathroom/showers

Fair dates – 2020 and 2021

Rodeo Update

Fair Update

Calendar of Events (Attachment)

Festival Grounds Manager Report – Bjorklund (Attachment)

Food Vendor Report – Caylor

Attachment: Agenda Items (4258 : Discussion on remodeling of bathrooms/showers)

UP COMING EVENTS AT THE FESTIVAL GROUNDS

2019

June	06-01-19	Wausaubicon Gaming ** CANCELLED
	06-13-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee)
	06-7, 8, 9	Rodeo (Grounds) **
	06-14-19	Riders Club (Grounds) **
	06-29-19	Tractor Pull **
July	07-11-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee)
	07-12-19	Riders Club (Grounds) **
	07-26-19	Riders Club (Grounds) **
August	08-01-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee)
	08-01	MASH Blood Drive
	08-09	Relay for Life
	08-10-19	Wedding
	08-14 – 18	Fair
	08-23-19	Rider's Club (Grounds)
	08-27-19	Community Night
September	09-02-19	Labor Day Parade/Festivities on Grounds
	09-05-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee)
	09-6/7/8-19	Wedding (3 days paid)
	09-13 & 14	North Central Wisconsin Gun Collector's Association Gun Show
	09-14-19	Pork in the Park
	09-20-19	Rider's Club (rain date if needed)
	09-21-19	Wedding
October	10-03-19	(Festival Grounds Committee Meeting) to be set by Committee)
	10-5-19	Silver "M": Club
	10-12-19	Wedding
	10-18/19-19	Enrichment Center Craft Fair

**** Yearly Repeat Events ****

This will be sent out in the packets for the June meeting.

Attachment: Calendar of Events (4262 : Calendar of Events)

Merrill Festival Grounds

June 13, 2019

Grandstand and Grounds:

General:

Asphalt completion at the grandstand began June 4 and should be in time for Rodeo. Thanks to the crews and the city for making that happen.

Perhaps a youth ATV track could be developed in conjunction with local ATV dealers.

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 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).

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. Such installation preparation should coincide with installation of asphalt.

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.

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.

Tractor Pull:

The Midstate's Pullers are replacing the WTPA. The Dirt Flingers (minis and garden tractors and specialty classes) are being added with the antique Pullers for the daytime free show. Additional activities are being considered to encourage people to stay on the grounds longer.

Additional marketing through tagging bank buys is being planned; bank marketing department has assumed full responsibility for sales.

Family pack pricing is being implemented

Attachment: Monthly Report - Festival Grounds Manager (4263 : Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund)

Rodeo:

By meeting time, the rodeo will have taken place so a current report will be available.

Vending could help concessions. ATM is a good concession.

Extensive photos of the grounds lay-out were taken as well as drone photos.

Upgraded infield electric panels are a priority as well as possible access to sewer.

County Fair:

Recommendations: 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. Consider eliminating the beer stand at the Grandstand in exchange for a re-stated financial and operating agreement with the permanent stands.

Sell display space under the Grandstand and east of the restrooms and west of the carnival and east of poultry barn. Invite the military to move displays in at no cost. Leave no empty space. 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. The only kids show this year was provided complimentary by the carnival owner.

Location of the new restrooms worked very well.

Replace the ATM vendor.

Statewide, the carnival business is experiencing unusual contractions and shifts. Steps to assure a carnival contract for future years should be taken. Consider alternative pricing structures.

Use the Expo stage for pie eating and butter carving contests and additional programs. The expo stage is rarely busy. Open the Enrichment Center for passive display of projects and programs, 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 additional support, sponsorship and possible angel underwriting. 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.

Attachment: Monthly Report - Festival Grounds Manager (4263 : Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund)

Have a heavier presence of electrician, labor and management during set-up. Distribute keys to assigned managers, lock electric panels, reduce hose and cable crossings.

No stock trucks or private vehicles should be parked next to or behind food stands. Set-up a stock truck area where ALL vendors must remain.

Campers restricted to infield or south fence line only.

Bury utility runs in a grid pattern across all areas to be asphalted. Asphalt as much area as possible and bring to a flat grade.

Reduce or eliminate vehicle traffic at the gate at the south end of the Expo. If it has to be used restrict the hours and credentials. Put livestock trailers across 6th St.

Arena dirt and roadway dirt is breaking down into dust and fine particles.

Remove Bulls and Barrels show. Consider doing 2 nights of Monster Trucks and Demo. Horse show on opening day is not attended by participants or the public. Replace it with a sponsorable show.

Not enough traffic to warrant one way on 6th St. Use the east parking area for credentialed and vip parking.

Make a show out of animal judging. Judges to be encouraged to talk about what they are looking for and why each animal has special features.

Grandstand shows need to be limited to 1.5-2 hour-time limit. Sunday show needs to start at 2 so the people attending the show stay on the fairgrounds afterwards and bring benefit to the vendors.

Bierman Expo Hall:

The wrestling promoter has set the show for June 15; ads and flyers are starting 10 days prior; Aqua Jays are doing set-up and clean-up; wrestler interviews are on Thurs; promoter is doing his own concessions. Ryan Schwartzman has helped the promoter tremendously and the Chamber has helped with sales and marketing.

The Northern Wisconsin Gun Show producer was very happy with the show results and looks forward to a long relationship at the Festival Grounds.

Attachment: Monthly Report - Festival Grounds Manager (4263 : Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund)

Marvin Krause Productions gained about 1400 attendance which is not bad for being on opening day weekend.

Reservations for weddings are increasing monthly.

We are seeking additional event genre for the Expo.

Attachment: Monthly Report - Festival Grounds Manager (4263 : Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund)

Permanent Stands Meeting

May 2, 2019

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

Present:

Lion's Club: Ken Adams, Ron Liberty

VFW: John Rathke, Mike Porath

St. Francis: Mike Caylor, Valerie Caylor

St. John's: Jim Schneider, Becky Meyer rejoined our group at 7:00 PM due to dual meetings

Knights of Columbus: Bill Hanson

City Meetings:

The permanent stands group has not met since last September. Since that meeting, Caylor has attended several city meetings regarding the festival / fair grounds. An update was provided as to what was covered at those meetings.

Potatoes: A discussion was held on the bulk buying from Antigo, two stands did it for the entire season last year, a third did it for Labor Day, two of the foods stands indicated they would like to join in on the bulk buying for 2019, this would make every stand on grounds 100% locally grown/purchased fresh cut potatoes.

Russ Davis Advisory: Russ Davis has changed the way they handle their local accounts. A discussion was held on the best way to purchase from this local provider.

Graphic Packaging: Mike Caylor has come to an agreement with this Wausau based company to donate seconds from their line for our food stand. Eliminating the need to purchase paper products such as boats will help our groups tremendously.

Prices: A discussion was held on the current pricing, the food cost to profit ratios and our projected future costs from our local suppliers for 2019.

Fair Board: Last September Clyde Nelson, Paul Russell and Brad Becker joined our meeting to discuss where the fair board is at. Two groups then discussed things of great importance between both groups; The Fair Board indicated they wished the permanent stands to provide more financial assistance to their group, at the times both sides decided to continue the discussion in the spring. After 7:00 PM, Clyde Nelson, Paul Russell and Brad Becker from the fair board joined us. Also along was City Council President Rob Norton, an invitee of the Fair Board.

Attachment: Monthly Report - Permanent Stands 2019-05-02 (4264 : Permanent Stands Rep. Caylor)

A discussion was held with the Fair Board Members about their request for financial assistance, their plans for the beer gardens in 2019, and an overview of the grandstand entertainment.

Mike Caylor covered the same information that was told to the fair board this year, his parish staff stated if they had the money, they would not be operating the fair stand. Our parish profit loss ratio as a whole is in the bulletin every week and the church is not swimming in money. The leases we pay the city are less than what we had paid in the past but nothing has come to the fairgrounds since the city took over in 2015 to increase our sales. Only St. Francis is opening for the Rodeo, and that is being done only if staffing will allow, St. Francis and St. John's are not being allowed to open for the tractor pull and the city just turned down the efforts to bring the Fourth of July back to the grounds. Everyone understands where the Fair Board is coming from but due to lack of volunteers and opportunities, the money is not always there.

All groups concurred they would go back to their respective boards and councils and return to the meeting scheduled at the end of May and continue the discussion with the Fair Board, none of the representatives told them no.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Caylor

Attachment: Monthly Report - Permanent Stands 2019-05-02 (4264 : Permanent Stands Rep. Caylor)

Permanent Stands Meeting

May 30th, 2019

Present:

Optimist: Randy Wixon

Lion's Club: Ken Adam's, Jack Kasper

VFW: Mike Porath, John Rathke

Eagles: Jay Schlueter, Bryan Plautz, Jerry Leopold

St: Francis: Mike Caylor

St. Johns: Becky Meyer

Knights of Columbus: Bill Hanson, Darrel Barker

Mike Caylor called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM

1. **Graphic Packaging:** Caylor reminded the group that Graphic Packaging in Wausau donated 5000 two-pound food boats to the permanent stand group. All of them are sitting at St. Francis's stand. Caylor will hand them out when we are all open, the net would be 1250 per stand.

2. **Rodeo:** The fair few groups that expressed interest in the rodeo might not open now due to the lack of volunteers. Other groups all agreed they would have opened, but they have no one to work.

3. **Prices:** None of the stands are making a profit consistent with normal food sales. Depending upon wholesale prices it is expected all stands will see a minimal increase in prices this year.

4. **Beer Stands:** The VFW and Eagle has met with the FB previously and discussed the future, currently the FB is proposing moving the "wrestling tent" down the midway and putting it right across the street from the VFW and Eagle's Stand. This will change the dynamics of entertainment for all stands.

Attachment: Monthly Report - Permanent Stands 2019-05-30 (4264 : Permanent Stands Rep. Caylor)

5. **Menu's:** The Knights, Lion's and St. Francis all plan on adding new menu items this year, these items will be discussed with the Fair Board prior to the fair for full approval.

6. **Fair Board Financials:** Each of the groups were approached by the Fair Board and asked to become sponsors for the fair, the donations would be used to underwrite the entertainment for the fair. Four of the seven stands made a financial commitment to becoming sponsors for the fair. The other three were working on becoming sponsors as well but had not finalized their commitment as of yet.

Paul Russell and Brad Becker from the FB joined us at 7:04 PM. Over the remaining meeting, a discussion was held with the Fair Board regarding:

Sponsorships, prices, parking, music volumes, seating, soda, 2020 plans, dates for future fairs, the use of social media both good and bad, in progress meetings during the fair to discuss issues, fencing, grandstand entertainment and menus. The discussion on fair food led to everyone being hungry and the meeting adjourning at 8:19 PM.

The **next meeting will be held in June** at the Eagles Club.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Caylor

Attachment: Monthly Report - Permanent Stands 2019-05-30 (4264 : Permanent Stands Rep. Caylor)