

**CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, May 4, 2023 MINUTES**

Regular Meeting City Hall Council Chambers 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Steve Hass, Alderpersons Michael “Gus” Caylor, Steve Sabatke, Mike Rick. Other committee members present: Bryan Bloch, Brad Becker and Festival Grounds Manager Richard Bjorklund.

Absent: Becky Meyer

Others Present: City Clerk Anderson-Malm, City Attorney Hayden Social Media Specialist Savall, Marketing Specialist Kuczmarski, David Buck Fair Association and Merrill Productions video operator.

- I. **Call to Order** - Chair Hass called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **Minutes from previous meeting** – Alderperson Rick made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 6th meeting. Alderperson Caylor seconded and the motion carried.
- III. **Agenda Items for Consideration:**
 1. **Loyalty Day Celebration Wrap-up** – Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund gave an update and mentioned the committee and State Organization were very happy with the results. All feedback was positive.
 2. **Fair Update** – Fair Association Rep Becker mentioned everything is on track for the fair. He would like to schedule a meeting with City Attorney Hayden and the Mayor to go over the lease.
 3. **Rodeo Update** – Rodeo Association Rep Bloch mentioned all is going well. Equipment will be arriving on June 2nd and June 3rd is when the posts and snow fences will be put in place.
 4. **Calendar of Events** – The list of events was included in the packet. FGM Bjorklund spoke about the ATV/UTV event that is scheduled.
 5. **Continued discussion and possible recommendation on stage rental fees to charge per event for usage** – Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund mentioned the building rental includes tables and chairs which makes renting the space very attractive. He also said it is not unreasonable to charge for usage of the stage.

Following discussion, Alderperson Caylor made a motion to set a rental fee for the stage rental of \$250.00 per event. Alderperson Rick seconded and the motion carried.

6. Continued discussion and possible recommendation on facility rental incentive –

Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund mentioned there were a number of single day events that happen multiple times. There are not a lot of events that require a multiple day rental. City Attorney Hayden did not think an incentive is necessary however after further discussion; Alderperson Sabatke made a motion to offer the incentive of three rentals, in one calendar year, at \$450.00 and the fourth at \$350.00. This is retroactive to January 1, 2023 and will sunset December 31, 2025. Alderperson Caylor seconded and the motion carried.

7. Discussion on promoting the Festival Grounds:

a. Fireworks at Festival Grounds – Mayor Hass started the discussion by stating he spoke with the Humane Society manager. She stated there is no concern for the animals if the fireworks were held at the Festival Grounds.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey reached out to the fireworks company regarding this and is waiting for a response. Alderperson Caylor mentioned Pine River uses Fireworks Depot from Wittenberg and also stated a number of citizens are in favor having the fireworks at the Festival Grounds.

Mayor Hass will reach out again to the fireworks company. It was decided this will be on the June agenda for further discussion and updates.

b. Campgrounds – Mayor Hass mentioned he spoke with Lincoln County Coordinator Krueger regarding ARPA funds that may be earmarked for camping for the cities of Merrill and Tomahawk and the surrounding townships regarding camping.

Marketing Specialist Kuczmarski spoke about on-line booking for events and the ability to have this option on the new city website. She stated it would be beneficial to have the ability to book the Festival Grounds and Bierman Building and have a calendar for people and coordinators to view availability of the space.

Rodeo Association Rep Bloch spoke about making the event a destination.

It was agreed this item would be on the June agenda for continued discussion and updates.

8. Discussion and recommendation of stage accessories – Mayor Hass explained the stage that was returned to the city after a theatre group disbanded. The stage is missing steps and rails for tables. The estimate for those accessories is \$3,100. This would allow the stage to be rented for events with the additional safety accessories.

Alderperson Caylor made a motion to approve \$3,100 for stage accessories to make the stage safe for users/renters. Alderperson Sabatke seconded and the motion carried.

IV. Monthly Reports:

Monthly Report – Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund – There were no questions and the report was in the packet.

V. Public Comment – There was no public comment.

- VI. Establish date and time of next meeting** – The next meeting will be Thursday, June 1st at 6:00 PM
- VII. Adjournment** – Alderperson Rick made a motion to adjourn. Bryan Bloch seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Lori Anderson-Malm City Clerk