

**CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, April 6, 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 Lori Anderson-Malm, Facilities Maintenance Manager Nick Wszalek, Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey, Enrichment Center Director Tammie Mrachek (remote), 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. Agenda Items for Consideration:

1. Loyalty Day Celebration Update – Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund gave an update and mentioned everything is on schedule. The schedule and parade route has been approved. There could be up to 70 units for the parade; currently there are 30 units.

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 they are still looking for volunteers to help pound fence posts. He also reported they sold more tickets to date than last year.

4. Calendar of Events – The list of events was included in the packet.

5. Discussion and recommendation on facility rental incentive – Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund brought this to the committee for discussion. Discussion occurred between the committee members regarding incentives for multiple rentals in a calendar year.

Aldersperson Caylor made a motion to charge every 4th event per calendar year at \$100; rent 3 at \$450 get the 4th for \$100. Aldersperson Rick seconded. After further discussion the motion was withdrawn.

It was decided this would be on the May agenda and the committee would look at the Park & Recreation policy and the Expo Center policy.

6. Discussion and recommendation on promoting the Festival Grounds and facilities –

Mayor Hass started the discussion by stating he would like to see the Festival Grounds and Expo Building used more. Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund stated his goal is to have 52 events scheduled every year.

It was suggested the Communications Specialist and Social Media Specialist should be included in the Festival Grounds committee meetings.

Aldersperson Caylor talked about Flea Markets and the space is underutilized in July. He also suggested moving the 4th of July fireworks back to the Festival Grounds; maybe have a parade and end at the Festival Grounds. He also stated the Humane Society would need to be included in the discussion but thinks this could be a very large event.

Rodeo Association Rep Bloch spoke about promoting campsites. He also stated he would like the Rodeo to be promoted as a destination. Have a drone fly down the Wisconsin River, Festival Grounds without any crowd in the stands and then with the Festival Grounds and stands full.

It was decided this would be discussed further on the May agenda and ask Police Chief Bennett to be included in that meeting.

7. Discussion on coordinating with the Enrichment Center on events – Mayor Hass stated the Expo Center and Enrichment Center need to work together with events and be mindful not to have duplicate events.

Enrichment Center Director Mrachek agreed with the Mayor regarding not overlapping events. She stated they are considering streamlining the Spring and Fall Craft shows. She will also forward their calendar to the Mayor and Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund with events they have planned through the fall.

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.

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

III. Minutes from previous meeting:

Meeting minutes from the October 6, 2022 meeting – Aldersperson Rick made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 6, 2022. Aldersperson Sabatke seconded and the motion carried.

IV. Monthly Reports:

Monthly Report – Festival Grounds Manager Bjorklund – the report was in the packet and he highlighted some of the items.

V. Public Comment – David Buck from the Fair Association spoke about the campgrounds and asked about fire pits.

VI. Establish date and time of next meeting – The next meeting will be Thursday, May 4th at 6:00 PM

VII. Adjournment

Aldersperson Rick made a motion to adjourn. Aldersperson Caylor seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 PM.

Minutes prepared by: Lori Anderson-Malm City Clerk