

**CITY OF MERRILL
FESTIVAL GROUNDS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022 MINUTES**

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Alderpersons John VanLieshout and Mike Rick, Bryan Bloch, Brad Becker, and Michael Caylor

Members Absent: Mayor Derek Woellner and Alderperson Steve Sabatke

Others Present: Festival Grounds Manager Rick Bjorklund, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Administrative Assistant Krista Mitchell, Finance Director/Deputy City Clerk Kathy Unertl (remote), IT Manager Dustin Brown, and Merrill Productions video operator

1. Chair VanLieshout called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Agenda Items for Consider:

1. Update on Electrical, Lighting, and Emergency Public Address planned improvements

Johnson reported that back-ordered electrical parts have been received and will be installed before end of May. The emergency public address system improvements are budgeted for 2022. The \$150,000 lighting improvement funding request is pending before the Bierman Foundation.

2. Continued discussion of lease agreements and rental fees

A new event is requesting potential lower rental fees. Committee member consensus that the rental fees are reasonable.

3. Rodeo Update

Bloch reported that Wisconsin River Pro Rodeo has sold more tickets than past years. There will be video board for advertising. The organization received a State Tourism JEM Grant for advertising in the Fox Valley. The same food vendors open in 2021 will be open for the 2022 Rodeo.

A portable generator will be bought in for electrical power. Having adequate electrical power continues to be a challenge.

The organization is interested in obtaining grant funding for potential 80' x 40' pavilion which could include kitchen prep area in addition to shelter. Potential site mentioned was where the former Lincoln County Humane Society building was located (just west of Memorial Dr.).

Bloch requested information on whom to contact at Lincoln County Pine Crest Nursing Home regarding potential overflow parking.

4. Fair Update

Becker thanked the City of Merrill for the major efforts to deal with the heavy rain on the Wednesday of the 2021 Lincoln County Fair. Those efforts to dry out the grounds were critical to continuing with the event.

Becker advised that the concrete approaches to the Livestock Barn need to be reviewed and potentially improved. A new dirt motor event show is being planned for the Lincoln County Fair. Monster trucks will not be back for the 2022 Fair.

5. Calendar of Events

List of dates for February through April 2022 events was included in the agenda packet. Mitchell reported that there are increasing calls for weddings in 2023 with Festival Grounds Manager Rick Bjorklund showing the City facilities.

3. Monthly Reports

1. Meeting minutes from September 2, 2021 – Motion (Rick/Becker) to approve the meeting minutes. Carried.
2. Festival Grounds Manager – Bjorklund emphasized that the car show and post Labor Day event was positive. Future wrestling events will be on Saturdays (instead of Fridays). Interest in future events is picking up.
3. Food Vendor Representative – Caylor advised that nothing to report. There has not been a recent Food Vendor meeting.

4. Public Comment Period – None.

5. Establish date, time and location of next meeting – Call of the Committee Chair

Caylor requested review of potential refunding of past fees be included on the next Committee meeting agenda.

6. Motion (VanLieshout/Rick) to adjourn at 6:20 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Kathy Unertl, Finance Director/Deputy City Clerk