

**MINUTES &  
NOTICE OF BOARD ACTION**

BOOK 156 PAGE 1793

APPROVED *October 11, 1994*

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**LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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*This document, upon approval in a public meeting by the Board of County Commissioners, serves as official minutes of such meetings as required under Open Meetings Law, ORS 192.650.*

Pursuant to notice made by mailing agendas to news media, a selected list of jurisdictions and individuals in Lane County, a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held.

Questions should be directed to The Board Office Specialist 3, ext. 4203.

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September 20, 1994  
5:15 p.m.

JOINT BCC/FAIR BOARD  
MEETING

County Building  
Harris Hall

Chair Jerry Rust presided with Marie Frazier, Ellie Dumdi, Steve Cornacchia, and Jack Roberts. Also present were Bill Van Vactor, County Administrator and Teresa Wilson, Legal Counsel. County Fair Board members Sid Voorhees, Robert Mattson, Pat Hansen, Cleve Dumdi were present. Also present, Wesley O. Brustad, Fairgrounds Director, Vernon Thompson, Assistant Fairgrounds Manager and Jeri Kaufman, Fair Board Secretary.

The meeting was opened requesting public comment. There was none.

Commissioner Frazier submitted comment sheets to the Board for review. Chair Rust stated he would have copies made and distributed to Fair Board.

In a spirit of good humor, Chair Rust presented Chair Voorhees with a children's book entitled "What's Wrong at the County Fair".

Chair Rust stated the purpose of tonight's meeting is to give the Fair Board the opportunity to share with the Commissioners what changes were made at the Fair this year and what affects resulted from those changes.

## 1994 Fair Report

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A memorandum entitled "1994 Lane County Fair Report" dated September 20, 1994 was reviewed in detail by Wes Brustad, which included highlights regarding attendance, financial results, food booths, exhibits and commercial vendors. Discussion ensued regarding formulas used for obtaining percentage amounts; how to get more accurate gate counts; commercial vendor numbers; comparative cost of big name entertainment versus free entertainment; decreased number of still exhibits; increase in premium for cattle.

A document entitled "CHANGES INITIATED IN 1994" was then reviewed at length by the Board. Voorhees commented that the Fair Board was having a retreat next week for purposes of reviewing the fair and all suggestions from tonight's meeting would be reviewed at that meeting by the Fair Board. Highlights and comments regarding the changes were:

1. **Discontinuance of Free Days** - Voorhees reported that this idea was discussed in detail by the Board members and it was determined by them that the free days devalued the Fair and that was the rationale behind discontinuing them. The discontinuance of the Safeway breakfast was a mutual agreement of all parties. Commissioner Cornacchia stated that the way in which it came across "NO MORE FREE ADMISSION" had a negative impact. It was suggested that a more positive marketing approach might be taken next time to emphasize what is being given to the public for free, as opposed to what is being taken away. Chair Rust raised the question regarding the effect it had on Senior Day. Voorhees responded that the attendance was definitely down that day. Dumdi questioned whether anyone received negative comments from the Seniors themselves. Hansen responded she had heard from a few. Commissioner Cornacchia commented that he definitely saw fewer faces at the pie and ice cream social. He also suggested that the pie and ice cream social be held earlier. Most Seniors have a problem with the 4:00 p.m. time frame as it is in the heat of the day and an hour before dinner. He commented that there needed to be more shade and rest areas for the seniors. Cleve Dumdi asked if there was any way of helping those seniors who couldn't afford the entry fee. Voorhees responded that there was a definite opportunity to expand on the sponsorship programs which might help in those areas. Commissioner Cornacchia stated that it would be problematic if a subsidy program was arranged and limited only to the seniors. Commissioner Roberts commented that whatever is done, someone is going to be impacted. He stated that in as this was the first year of the changes it was likely for somebody to react to them negatively. He felt a couple of years should go by to let the people get used to the changes and see if things settle down. Hansen commented that not having the free days resulted in a more family oriented crowd. Commissioner Cornacchia stated there is a database that is of

public record and available which maintains the names and addresses of the School Districts' free lunch programs if the Board was interested in using it to devise some sort of a policy for the seniors and the low income public.

2. **"Name" Entertainment:** Brustad reported that the Fair more than broke even with the concerts and that they brought a significant amount of people on the grounds. Commissioner Dumdi asked if there was anyway that an ice show and big name entertainment could be done together. Brustad responded that the stage setup required for name entertainment required the tearing down of the ice and there wasn't enough time allowed to do both. Commissioner Frazier asked if there was a chance to bring in ice shows during the year. Brustad responded that as the shows become available, they are considered. Commissioner Cornacchia commented about the low prices of the concert tickets at the State Fair as compared to ours. Brustad responded that the State Fair's concert tickets did not include the price of admission. He also noted there are twice as many seats in the amphitheater at the State Fair; therefore, Lane County has to charge more because of its limited seating in order to break even. Commissioner Dumdi commented that for all the comments that she heard, "you would have thought that the admission prices had increased over last year"; but she checked and confirmed that admission price was the same as last year. The only difference was in the age of student admission.
3. **Kids' Park:** It was a big success. People want it bigger.
4. **Entertainment Areas:** Commissioner Cornacchia commented that there was positive response to the music. He stated that no matter where he went on the grounds, he was able to hear some sort of music. He did suggest that the dance floor in the Promenade Stage area be enlarged to house a bigger crowd of people wanting to dance. Commissioner Frazier concurred regarding the music. However she stated that she heard some negative comments from the vendors directly adjacent to the tent which stated the constant noise was a disruption to their activities. She suggested relocating the tent where there are no vendors directly adjacent to the tent itself.
5. **The Promenade:** Voorhees commented the problem with the Promenade was that people tended to stop where the pavement ran out and didn't continue on through to the Livestock area. He stated that next year that area will be paved and should alleviate that problem. On the other hand, Dumdi reported that the Promenade brought a lot of activity to the livestock area.
6. **Cavalcade of Horses:** Big hit.

7. **Draft Horses:** Great
8. **Cattle Tent:** Dumdi reported that everyone was please with the tent area. It worked out well.
9. **Parade:** Commissioner Frazier commented that it was a great addition to the Fair. Voorhees shared that on Dumdi's day in the parade, he took Noble Wheeler with him who celebrated 76 consecutive years at the Fair, as well as his 81st birthday. "It's a great opportunity to honor people", he concluded.
10. **Sponsorship Programs:** This year cash contributions was emphasized as opposed to trade for services. It was very encouraging. Voorhees stated that this is only the tip of the ice berg with all the possibilities that could be done.
11. **Newsletter:** Brustad reported that everyone entering the Fair was given a daily program. He commented that he observed people using the programs to plan their Fair day. Everyone agreed that it seemed to be well used. Commissioner Frazier stated that they came in handy because there were a lot of activities to see on the grounds, whereas in the past there wasn't. Commissioner Cornacchia commented that the Reader Boards inside the gates were also a good addition.
12. **Information Booth and Ambassadors:** Brustad reported that this seemed to be well used. The booth appeared to get steady attention and the ambassadors were out amongst the grounds for all to see and question.
13. **Elimination of Motorized Vehicles During Fair:** Brustad commented that by the end of the week, the vendors became used to this change. Commissioner Frazier asked how supplies were brought in to the vendors. Brustad responded that most vendors took care of replenishment of goods in the morning before 10:00 a.m. However, the Fairgrounds had a cart with ice which went around to all the vendors throughout the day as it was needed. Commissioner Dumdi stated that people commented to her about how clean the grounds were this year. Commissioner Cornacchia stated he noticed there were many more trash cans this year and he liked the addition.
14. **Group Ticket Sales Program Marketed to Businesses:** Brustad reported that the program definitely has a lot of promise, but is only in its infancy.
15. **Walk-Around Characters:** Comments were very favorable toward the characters. Brustad reported on the liability of the inflatable characters and the dangers in having them unattended. He stated that each character needed at least 2, sometimes

- 3, attendants with them at all times to keep them from being knocked over, poked with sharp objects, kicked, etc.
16. **Neighbor Appreciation Program:** Of the 3,000 coupons distributed in the neighborhood (3 block radius from the Fairgrounds), approximately 1,500 coupons were received at the gates. Voorhees reported that the Fairgrounds did "NOT" receive any phone calls of complaints from neighbors this year during Fair. Chair Rust commented that the cleanliness of the grounds was an improvement over the past years.
  17. **Discontinuance of LTD:** Brustad stated that the Fairgrounds initially made an arrangement with LTD to provide the shuttle service for to Fair. When talk of potential LTD strikes became public, the Fair Board asked for assurances from LTD that they could fulfill the contract. LTD could not make such assurances. It was by mutual agreement that the arrangement was then cancelled and subsequent arrangements were made with Mayflower to provide the shuttle service. Commissioner Dumdi commented that it should be known to the public that the shuttle service is not "FREE" to the Fair Board, that in fact, the Fair Board pays for that service. This year the cost of Mayflower was \$11,167.90. Last year LTD was paid \$19,000 for their shuttle services. Commissioner Frazier asked if the Board was looking to use Mayflower again next year. Brustad responded that the entire shuttle program will be reviewed.
  18. **Increase in Entry Fees for Livestock Exhibits:** Dumdi reported that he attended a meeting with the Superintendents last night and received nothing but favorable comments regarding the Fair. Dumdi stated that it wasn't that premiums were raised that much for cattle, but just that they were spread a little more. Overall the comments were very positive.
  19. **Initiation of \$1.00 Entry Fee for Still Exhibits:** Chair Rust reported that he received feedback on the entry fees for still exhibits and it was his opinion that it was a contributing factor in the decrease in still exhibit entries.
  20. **Parity of Pricing:** Commissioner Cornacchia commented regarding the uniform pricing of drinks. He stated that "if you take away the incentive, you take away the desire for the service to be there". He reported that he received a lot of negative comments from the vendors regarding the Fair Board. He stated that if there was anyway to satisfy the vendors, that the Board will benefit in the end. Chair Rust commented that he heard the fairgoers had to pay a quarter for a glass of water. Brustad responded that EWEB had a booth at the fair that was giving free drinks of water to the fairgoers. Commissioner Cornacchia commented that it was

not the amount that was set in the pricing, it was the fact that the price was set at all. Commissioner Dumdi was surprised at the reaction to the uniform pricing. Cleve Dumdi stated that by changing the pricing, you were more assured of quality products and that is a plus that needs to be looked at. Brustad reported the reason lids and straws were not allowed was because they posed a potential threat to the animals. Brustad reported that at other Fairs straws were known to be used as pea shooters to agitate the livestock.

21. **Signage**: It was the consensus of all present that the signage was definitely a plus this year.
22. **Reduction of Public Entry Gates**: Brustad reported that the gates were reduced from 5 to 3 this year. Commissioner Frazier commented on the elimination of the gate behind the Convention Center. Comments made to her were very negative; commercial vendors felt a definite loss in business as a result of the elimination of the gate. Commissioner Cornacchia stated that a lot of people park behind the Convention Center and there is a great need for a gate to be there.
23. **O'Hara School Parking**: Brustad reported the reason the school lot was used was to assist in getting the people off the neighborhood streets. It worked well during the evenings when concerts brought additional people to the grounds.
24. **Passes**: Commissioner Cornacchia commented regarding youth that want to bring in an animal for the week, and the absence of passes for that youth's family to come in to support him for the week. He stated that if a youth is exhibiting, the immediate family should be given a pass so that they could come in and feed him and the animals, relieve him if necessary, or just be there for company. Commissioner Roberts concurred with Cornacchia and stated that we needed to be more flexible in passes for livestock exhibitors, and encouraged the Fair Board to re-examine that area. Commissioner Cornacchia suggested instituting an "immediate family" pass. Dumdi reported that a program was instituted this year for the 4-H exhibitors which allowed them to show at the Fair for free. He stated in the beef cattle area they had about 8 exhibitors from 4-H utilizing the program. He stated the Board is trying to bring those youths in with free entry.
25. **Re-design of Exhibit Hall**: Commissioner Cornacchia reported that the people at Darigold were very displeased. Discussion ensued regarding Darigold being inside as opposed to outside. Comments were made regarding traffic flow problems which the Board will address at their retreat next week.
26. **Food Booths**: Brustad reported that the Fair Board had received considerable

criticism for kicking the donuts out of Wheeler Pavilion. He stated for the record that it was the Fire Marshal that demanded this action and not the Fair Board. The Fair Board offered them alternate space, which they refused. Discussion ensued regarding opinions regarding getting away from the "mom and pop" local vendors, and steering toward commercial food vendors. Chair Rust commented on the absence of the Lane County Democrats and the reasoning behind it. Voorhees commented that the Board would love to communicate with people but that it became a power play. Dumdi reported that the reason the Southern Willamette Broilers did not come back was they refused to use a cash register. Commissioner Cornacchia commented that it was important to bring back BBQ chicken. Commissioner Roberts commented that he supports the idea of reducing the amount of food vendors. He stated the "best test we have is where does the public spend their money". He stated he wanted to support the Fair Board in staying where they are as regards Food Booth operations and policies. Commissioner Frazier concurred with Cornacchia about the need for BBQ chicken at the Fair. She commented on the inferior quality of the chicken that was at the Fair. She also disagreed with the analysis of the power play issue and stated there were other reasons. Dumdi reported that he tried to contact the Broiler people but it was too late for this year, but that he will give it a shot for next year. He stated he was upset when he heard that Darimart was not coming. Their main reason was the sampling restrictions.

At this point Chair Rust opened the meeting up to public comment.

**Margaret Wilson:** Treasurer of the Lane County Democrats. She confirmed that they were offered a booth this year, but that she looked at the booth that was offered to them and it was unacceptable due to the way their booth was arranged. She also stated it would be hard to do a chicken booth in a tent. She suggested the Board consider remodeling the Food Booths instead of tearing them down.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Frazier suggested that the next time a logistical problem occurs, such as what happened with the Lane County Democrats, that the Board should be willing to work with the vendor.

Chair Rust commented that emphasis was put too much on the negative marketing. It came off that the Board was putting profit before the people.

Commissioner Roberts commented regarding "no more free admission". He stated the way it was focused was abrasive to people. He said the Board should emphasize what the people are getting in return.

Commissioner Cornacchia asked how do you deal with the community of a county fair and the realities of a Balance Sheet. He stated that if you allow yourselves to be drawn into the discussion of profit, the people will always use that against you. He said he would rather see the Fairgrounds marketed as a community asset. Commissioner Cornacchia stated he felt there was not enough emphasis on the physical assets of the Fairgrounds and the fact that the Board would have to improve or repair the facilities. He stated that the Board needed to maintain the infra structure in a way that ensures continued operation. He felt that the Board did the right thing by making all the changes at one time instead of a little at a time. He stated that we need to get the message out to the public why things are being done.

Voorhees stated that if the Board continued the way in which it was going, it would not be here for very long. He stated that it is not the intention of the Board to generate all the money in the world, but there has to be a positive bottom line. He concurred that the Board needed to do a better job in disseminating information to the public.

Mattson stated the importance of "community building" for the Fair. The ownership issue as to whose fair it is is a much bigger problem. He stated that how the Board gets represented to the public is an issue and that the media is critical for success in this area.

Commissioner Cornacchia said that he has 8 years of watching the media report the negative. He stated the reason you don't see the good things that are happening in government is because it's not news. Dumdi stated that the Board got headlined "profit...profit...profit" much too much. He stated that was not the Board's intent. He said that the Board has to make a profit, but "let's do something else to make the headline".

Commissioner Roberts stated that he "does not think that the public at large is upset with the changes at the Fair". He stated that this is not a community that invites change. He felt that the coverage that was received was not all that bad. He felt the Board "weathered the storm fairly well".

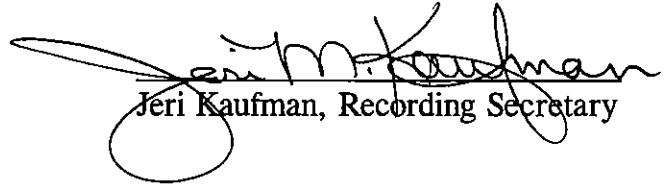
Chair Rust agreed with Commissioner Roberts' general comments. He stated that the fact that all these issues are going to be looked at in the Fair Board's retreat next week is more than the public can ask for.

Commissioner Dumdi stated that a lot of people assumed the negative but that once they went, they really had a good time at the Fair.

Commissioner Frazier commented on the common table areas that were between the food areas. The tables were apparently not kept clean. She suggested that someone be put specifically in charge of that area next year if it is something that is done again. She also

commented that she appreciated the Fair Board and their initiative and creativity and the courage to make the changes at the Fair this year.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

  
Jeri Kaufman, Recording Secretary