

Yuma County Fair Board Meeting
March 20, 2023 7:00 pm
Yuma County Election Center – Wray

The regularly scheduled February meeting was called to order by Chairman BJ Mekelburg at 7:05 at the Yuma County Election Center in Wray. In attendance were Fair Board members Baylor Buck, BJ Mekelburg, Tom Mekelburg, Justin Crossland, David Blach, Harold Blackham, Micah Seyler, Jaden Campbell and Robin Schneider; Rodeo Manager Cassidee Rogers; YC Fairgrounds Manager Mike Criswell; YC Fairgrounds Event Manager Carmen Murray; YC Commissioners Scott Weaver, Adam Gates; CSU Extension Taylor Travis, JoLynn Midcap; 4-H Superintendents Mariya Mekelburg, R Curt Lapp.

BJ Mekelburg introduced the county's new Fairgrounds Event Manager Carmen Murray. A copy of the scope of the position was handed to the fair board members. The board welcomed C Murray to her position and are encouraged by her experience with the fair and in the extension office. The February minutes were reviewed and a motion by D Blach to accept the minutes as presented was seconded by J Campbell and the motion passed.

Committee and Special Reports – (only committees with action or discussion are listed)

- Fairgrounds - M Criswell said he is currently working on adjustments to the sale ring. He would like a few items answered such as size of the ring for the sale vs shows, how seating will be set up around, etc. Criswell will present a map for recommendations on moving the ring at the April meeting for approval.
- Rodeo – C Rogers reported all contracts have been turned back in and she is looking forward to some repairs getting started in April. Sponsorship letters will be going out. She had a good conversation with someone about a procedure for looking into a stock contractor after the 2023 season is complete and then speaking with Cervis about wants/needs and budget.
- Superintendents - D Blach mentioned one of the beef superintendents was very disappointed there were no changes to the beef weight limits as he feels the beef industry is changing and the board is keeping the weights too low or controlled for what the markets are doing. The board reiterated future changes need to be made earlier in the year if they are considered in 2024.
- Livestock - met about selecting judges for the 2023 fair and feel confident they are covered. The judges will be named in the Fair Book, the YC 4-H Facebook page and the county website.
- Marketing and Vendor – (Jackie Seyler joined via phone) a rough map was presented for the Board to consider division of the old hog and sheep barns for the use of the Beer Garden, Vendor Market and Buyer's Dinner. The proposal is to utilize the south end of both covered areas (old sheep and hog) for the Vendors Market area and utilize the north ends for the Beer Garden and dining space or other functions. They are proposing extending the vendors' use of the covered space all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday to fully utilize the space for the public market. There was good feedback from the Board for extending the timing of the market and into the evenings of the Livestock Sale, etc. More discussion about utilizing the other areas of the grounds (past market area by old concessions and grandstands) for vendors and activities so the public is encouraged to visit ALL parts of the grounds and ALL the things to see and do. The Board asked the committee to come up with ideas for utilizing these other areas. An additional idea was to have the public participate in a "Bingo game" which would ask them to visit and attend several different areas and events at the fair including the night show and rodeo for a chance to win a 42" lawnmower from EZ Irrigation (approximate \$3500 value). The Board told the committee to move forward. The YC Fair Photo Contest was completed and winners had been recently selected. The committee was printing the winning photos and they will be displayed in the same locations as 2022.
- Sponsorship - J Crossland stated the committee held their first meeting and were looking at past sponsors and would be trying to reach out to some new contacts rather than going back to the same sponsors all the time. The committee plans to make personal contacts and also seek corporate sponsors with local branches and ties.
- Beer Garden – There were a few items discussed about coordination of the Beer Garden and the changes to the sale ring.

OLD BUSINESS

There is a contract for Night Show entertainment on Friday evening and it should be finalized by 3/31. The commissioners did not want to name the entertainment until it was fully signed.

The livestock judges have been selected and confirmed. The list is as follows:

Beef - Landon Eldridge

Sheep/Goat/Swine - Brian Anderson

Horse - Julie Wickerath &

Poultry - Tawney Reuter

Dairy - Alan Barry

Robin Scherbarth

Selecting the judges for the 2024 Fair and also coordinating dates for the 2024 was discussed. The 2024 calendar will make YC Fair either later or earlier than typical and the pros and cons of the dates were discussed. Two options considered would be Wednesday 8/7 - Monday 8/12 or Wednesday 7/31 - Monday 8/5. No decisions were made and it was decided for the group to consider other surrounding fairs and activities and table the decision for discussion at the 4/17 meeting.

The 2023 Fairbook is currently being worked on and will be posted once complete and sent to the printer.

A cleaning crew for the Fairgrounds was discussed with both positive reviews and response from last year's crew. Per county policy the work will be advertised and a successful contract hopefully signed soon.

NEW BUSINESS

Cattleman's Division of the Beef Market Show was discussed. Dr Ritter (ultrasound scans) is happy to come back for the fair this year. It had been suggested to add an educational piece to teach the youth how to read the scans and the importance of the information about their beef project. The list of adjusted rules will be put into the fairbook. Discussion was held about changing the name with the following considerations: Back to Basics Beef, Slick Cattle, Carcass Cattle, Conception to Carcass, or Producer's Division. It is possible the YC Cattlemen may sponsor the contest. Confirmation was made to hold the beef weigh-in at 10 am (2 hrs earlier) for time to complete the scan, etc. There is a possibility the scan may be opened up to more beef exhibitors than just the Cattleman's Division with a minimum fee to be paid by those exhibitors.

C Murray asked for clarification on printing of the fairbooks. In the past they have mailed approximately 250 and printed approximately 500 units. The Board left that to the discretion of the office and confirmed how many liked having a printed book rather than referring to an online copy but noted that there did seem to be some doubling up of copies.

No further new business was brought before the Board, "For Good of Order" was received:

- D Blach gave an update on the Ag Innovation project. The group is going forward into Phase II and looking at several grants. Changes may be to the original Phase II plans and the group is considering enclosing the west end of the livestock barn for year-round use instead of continuing with an Event Building. There is currently some brainstorming going on and working with DOLA to steer the group in a direction that may help with funding as well. Murray, as Event Manager, will also look at it with the goal of making the fairgrounds a viable space for year-round events.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm. Next meeting will be April 17th at 7:00 pm in Yuma at the YC Fairgrounds.

Respectively submitted

Robin Schneider, Secretary