



Crook County Fair Board Minutes
Fair Board Meeting: 5:30 pm, September 15th, 2025
1280 S. Main St., Prineville, OR 97754
Telephone 541-447-6575

The regular meeting of the Crook County Fair Board was called to order on September 15th, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Gail Merritt.

ROLL CALL/BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING

- Gail Merritt, Chair
- Mike Kasberger, Vice Chair
- Larry Blanton
- Casey Kaiser
- Mike McCabe
- Jennifer Cummins

STAFF ATTENDING

Casey Daly, Manager

Haley Crow, Administrative Assistant Sr.

GUESTS: Commissioner Susan Hermreck, Angela Ostrander, Doug Smith, Garret Stephens, Scot Brees, Nancy Wiggins Condron, Laura McDaniel, Katherine Armstrong

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- Blanton motions to approve the minutes from August 18th, 2025 regular Fair Board meeting. Kasberger seconds the motion, the motion carries.

Board Member	“Yes” Vote	“No” Vote	Abstains
Mike Kasberger	X		
Casey Kaiser	X		
Gail Merritt	X		
Larry Blanton	X		
Jennifer Cummins	X		
Mike McCabe	X		

- **Public Comment from Scot Brees:** Runs a non-profit called Connect Central Oregon and is involved with Deschutes County Fair Board & Association and is involved in the rodeo here in the community. Grew up going to Josephine and Douglas County fairs, and coming to the Crook County fair this year gave him flashbacks to the small-town fair feel that other fairs, including Deschutes County, strive for. Here to learn more about the Fairgrounds and Fair Board and continue offering support to the Crooked River Roundup.
- **No other Public Comments.**

- **2025 Crook County Fair Highlights:** Copy of the letter mailed to 43 sponsors/donors that supported the Fair is in the Board Members’ binders. Most highlights were covered in the last meeting, nothing else added.
- **Consideration of Static Premiums Reinstatement:** for 2025 the Board voted on eliminating the premium payouts for the Open Class static exhibits due to budget strains. Daly notes that he believes the Fairgrounds could find sponsors to cover the cost of premiums, if needed.
 - Kaiser motions to reinstate the premiums for static exhibits for the 2026 fair, Kasberger seconds the motion, the motion carries.

Board Member	“Yes” Vote	“No” Vote	Abstains
Mike Kasberger	X		
Casey Kaiser	X		
Gail Merritt	X		
Larry Blanton	X		
Jennifer Cummins	X		
Mike McCabe	X		

- **Letter from Kim Griffin Open Class Livestock Superintendent:** Daly reads the letter sent by Kim Griffin. For 2025 the Board voted to keep Open Class livestock but revisit the topic for the 2026 Fair, due to the cost of livestock tents and budget strains. Kim’s letter states that to be able to plan a sanctioned dairy goat show for 2026 and support other Open Class livestock groups, she would like an answer from the Fair Board as soon as possible. She notes that many fairs don’t allow Open Class livestock anymore, and she fears that if it is eliminated from the Crook County fair, that it may never return.
 - The Open Class livestock premiums that were paid out this year were about double the entry fees that were taken in. Adding in the show ring sponsors and barn sponsors, the Fair just about breaks even on the cost of having Open Class. Space and pens are another topic of concern, but as we continue to purchase pens we have to rely less on borrowing from other fairs.
 - Kasberger motions to include large and small Open Class Livestock at the 2026 fair, McCabe seconds the motion, the motion carries.

Board Member	“Yes” Vote	“No” Vote	Abstains
Mike Kasberger	X		
Casey Kaiser	X		
Gail Merritt	X		
Larry Blanton	X		
Jennifer Cummins	X		
Mike McCabe	X		

- **Indoor Arena Bathroom Refurbishment:** Casey talks about the state of the Indoor Arena restrooms during the livestock auction at Fair – they are dirty, well-used, and run-down. They were built in the 80s. Blanton explains that the Indoor Arena restrooms are used by many groups year-round and believes that some refurbishment would be a huge benefit. It’s expensive to do, but with some donations and partnerships, we could bolster what we have left in our capital fund. We currently have \$410,000 left of our \$2M grant that we could use, according to Daly. Finding an architect to help with the initial ideas would be ideal. The Board mentions the need to refurbish most of the restrooms on the Fairgrounds.

- **Crooked River Roundup Proposal:** There was a proposal sent last week that was shared with the Fair Board for review prior to this meeting. The CRR is here to share their proposal (Doug Smith): Believes negotiations got off on the wrong foot this summer with the County legal counsel drafting a contract (notes that having “boiler plate” language didn’t “hit the spirit” of an 80-year partnership). Wants to agree on the principles that need to be in the contract and the things that need to be accomplished. The CRR is selling standing-room only seating during some event days and doesn’t believe they should pay a rent based on CPI increase without being able to increase ticket sales/seating revenue; won’t raise ticket prices by a possible 3% [75 cents] to keep up with rent increase, so the % would come out of the CRR income. Unless the Fairgrounds can contribute to increased revenue for CRR, Doug doesn’t believe they should have rent increases. Wants to get a long-term contract for 20 years and either party can only renegotiate one item per year (notes that between Rodeo & Races, the CRR commits ~\$700,000 in advance). Doug notes that they use youth groups to do the stall cleaning and having a short window [Doug states “24 hours”, but contract states 72 hours] to do it is difficult. He would like the 7.5% from concessions to be dedicated to a fund that is matched by the County, and then both groups look for outside funding as well. Hopes for a new contract by January 1st.
 - Blanton notes that for previous years, the Roundup did not pay real money for rent, and the “rent” would go into a fund where they could use that money for facility improvement projects. Blanton notes that he didn’t think the Fair Board has the authority to sign a 20-year contract.
 - Doug states that the CRR rodeo & race weekends generate the most weekend revenue for the Fairgrounds. Haley corrects that they use Fairgrounds facilities for a month, not two weekends, and that all other events at the Fairgrounds pay 20% commissions and the only group that doesn’t is the CRR at 7.5% commissions.
 - Doug notes that they bring in volunteers and use donated equipment for their events, unlike the youth rodeos at the fairgrounds. Daly and Haley note that CRR events put pressure on our staff, incurring overtime and cleaning up the aftermath (mucking stalls, picking up trash, etc.).
 - Katherine Armstrong asks to clarify the cost of using facilities; Haley says that if the Fairgrounds charged the CRR the same rate they charge the public (for the facilities used), the base rent would be around \$38,000. The \$25,000 base rent came from the understanding of the partnership between both parties, and to not raise the cost substantially from previous years. Armstrong asks if there are additional pain points, and Haley mentions not being given enough information to share with the public about the CRR events, and being the front-line for the group, having all the info would help Fairgrounds staff and bolster the CRR events.
 - Blanton mentions the roping event that was scheduled prior to the Rodeo without approval from the Fairgrounds and without the CRR events being under contract, and those event days were during another major event at the Fairgrounds.
 - After further discussion, the CRR and Fair Board come to the conclusion that they need to meet again before the next regular Fair Board meeting, where both party’s needs will be presented and discussed.

REPORTS:

- **Board Member Reports:**
 - **Mike McCabe:** none
 - **Jennifer Cummins:** none
 - **Casey Kaiser:** none
 - **Larry Blanton:** none
 - **Mike Kasberger:** none
 - **Gail Merritt:** none
- **Administrative Assistant Report (Haley Crow):** nothing other than the sponsor thank-you.

- **Financial Report (Daly):** In the board members’ binders. *Haley points out on page 5 that the Fair Vendor fees amount is not correct.*
- **Manager’s Report (Daly):** Through September to date, Carey Foster Hall was used as an evacuation center for the fire from the 1st-5th. Projected Fair attendance is 42k, but that doesn’t count any people that used off-street parking. We are still in negotiations with Wold Amusements for next year’s carnival. We’ve talked with Kasberger about a new entry into the parking lot so Fair traffic isn’t coming all the way down to the Y. October 16-18 is the OFA conference in Washington County, and I will be going with our Maintenance staff (they are having a “Maintenance Mania” day). WFA is in Reno January 18-21, if any board members are interested in going contact me.
- McCabe motions to adjourn the meeting, Kasberger seconds; the motion carries.

Board Member	“Yes” Vote	“No” Vote	Abstains
Mike Kasberger	X		
Casey Kaiser	X		
Gail Merritt	X		
Jennifer Cummins	X		
Larry Blanton	X		
Mike McCabe	X		

ACTION ITEM(S):

- The Board voted to approve August 18th, 2025 Fair Board Meeting minutes.
- The Board voted to reinstate static premiums for the 2026 Crook County Fair.
- The Board voted to approve having Open Class Livestock at the 2026 Crook County Fair.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:26pm.

Special Meeting of the Fair Board to further discuss the Crooked River Roundup contract for the year 2026 will be Wednesday, October 1st at 5:30pm.

Next regular meeting: Monday, October 20th at 5:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Haley Crow
9/23/2025