

Josephine County Fair Board Meeting
April 21, 2026

Josephine County Fairgrounds Friends Building
1451 Fairgrounds Rd, Grants Pass, Or. 97527

Present: Board Chair: Dean Saxon, Vice Chair: Karl Haeckler, Julie Lockman, Jennifer McGowan, Authur O’Hare, Kim Gasperson and Tamra Martin Fairgrounds manager

These are meeting minutes only. Only text enclosed in quotation marks (“) reports speaker’s exact words.

1. Call to order

Pursuant to notice through the media and in conformance with the Public Meeting Law, Dean Saxon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Agenda

Jennifer made a motion to approve the Agenda for April 21, 2026, and Karl 2nd the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Minutes

Karl made a motion to approve the minutes from March 17th, 2026, and Jennifer 2nd the motion. The motion passed unanimously

4. General Public Input: Guest in attendance Anne Byers, Sierra Falk, Frank Boothby, Bob Schaller, Trent Tocher, Trent Carpenter, Libby Watts, Ed Luke

- Trent Tocher- has decided to withdraw his application for Fair Board due to family reasons. He mentioned last March’s meeting and capital improvement presentation by Horse Racing and the OSU proposal for leasing the Community Learning Center. He was disappointed that it seemed that there was more support for Horse Racing than OSU which he stated both bring value to the community. He was also disappointed that in regard to leasing the building, there was discussion on how it was managed before and thought that it should be recognized that there is new leadership and that shouldn’t have been taken into consideration.

a. Tamra addressed the comments. She let Trent know that not only does Horse Racing pay the Fairgrounds for the use of the grounds, but they are also fundraising to pay for their proposed improvements. In the OSU lease proposal, the rent was below market value and also proposed a reduction in rent for repairs.

5. Reports:

a. **4-H/OSU Report- Frank Boothby-** he has an opportunity to go to 4H training. He got lots of info on Fairs and behind the scenes. Shout out to Tamra to help with questions. He says there will be a modest display and participation from 4H this year for Fair but they will be there.

b. **Auction Committee Report- Jen McGowan** – they meet earlier this month. She reviewed how pre-fair went. 37 steers, and 46 that already weighed in. 2 more pre-fairs coming up for sheep and goats and swine.

- c. **Facilities Committee- Dean Saxon-** they met this past month. Primary discussion was the entrance into the dance center. Replacing some things, possibly doors, enhancing hardware, etc.
- d. **Friends of the Fairgrounds Report- Dean Saxon** met with FOF and they are planning additional dates and fresh ideas for Bingo to raise more funds.
- e. **Director's Report**
 - 1. **Grounds Report-** great Rodeo last weekend. It was packed and ran smoothly. They did some promotion for the Rodeo night at this year's fair. All buildings are still booked. Tamra finished submitting initial draft budget proposals to county.
 - 2. **Horseracing Update- maintenance** crews have moved in and began setting up. Getting ready to launch the campaign for the new "Racing to a Brighter Future". The State funding that they were awarded will come to the County but is managed by Oregon Horse Racing committee.
 - 3. **Fair 2026 Update-** secured Clay Walker!!! Making announcements, headliners, posters, banners, etc. Only 41 VIP tickets left.

6. Business:

- a. **Small Business Saturday-** Kim Gasperson spoke about using the Commercial Building. Looking to remodel the booths to create separate "business spaces" and then have these open on Saturdays for new and small businesses. There are urban renewal dollars for small businesses development that we could request. The thought is that perhaps the City would match some funds to help with this type of project. Kim is going to do some additional research and report back to the Board.
- b. **Community Learning Center-** potential lease with OSU. Tamra has put together a proposal for a subsidized lease. OSU has the proposal and they are looking into all options.
- c. **Fair Board Candidate Interviews-** 4 applicants were interviewed and asked questions by the board. Ed Luke, Trent Carpenter, Bob Schaller & Libby Watts.

Kim made a motion to recommend Trent Carpenter as first choice and Ed Luke as 2nd to the Board of County Commissioners, Jennifer 2nd the motion. The motion passed 5 yes.

7. Other Business:

- a. **Additional Discussion-** Tamra printed out final goals of the fairgrounds from the SWOT analysis.

8. Next Fair Board Meeting: May 19th, 2026 @6:00 p.m.

Motion was made to adjourn at 7:15 by Jennifer and 2nd by Julie Lockman. The Motion passed unanimously.