

Minutes of a joint work session held at the Courthouse with the Board of County Commissioners, Fairgrounds Boosters, and Fair Board on May 18, 1978

ATTENDANCE

FAIR BOARD

Jerry Boyer
Charles Colegrove

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Adeline Hesse
Lorrie Maki

PRESS

Maynard Jensen, ARGUS
Lance Mushaw, THE JOURNAL
Harry Bodine, THE OREGONIAN

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AND STAFF

Miller Duris
Bill Bloom
Ray Miller
Rich Heisler
Dan Potter

FAIRGROUNDS BOOSTERS

Wally Lyon Dale Scheller
Agnes DeLashmutt Larry Smith
Dick Jossy Paul Alexander
Don Apple Carol Rohrer

CALL TO ORDER

Miller Duris called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He thanked those in attendance for coming. He stated the commissioners were willing to receive input from the citizen committee with relevance toward the future of Washington County Fairgrounds.

CO-CHAIRMAN
LYON WITH
DISCUSSION
FROM BOOSTERS

Wally Lyon thanked Dan Potter for arranging the meeting at the request of the Fairgrounds Boosters. He commented that the Boosters have held three general meetings and two sub-committee meetings to discuss workable alternatives for the fairgrounds.

Major findings were stated: 1. The committee found the general feeling among residents is to keep the fairgrounds open. 2. Current activities and financial reports are tied to year around usage of the fairgrounds. 3. Some progress on the Robert E. Meyer proposal has been gained:

- A. Fair gate has increased
- B. Off-season usage is up
- C. Full time manager has been hired
- D. Donated labor, material, and money along with service clubs are behind the fairgrounds.

The fairgrounds Boosters now need from the Board of County Commissioners:

1. more meaningful commitment for retention of the fairgrounds
2. more meaningful commitment not to sell the fairgrounds

The Fairgrounds Boosters want to accomplish drainage and roof repair for some relief to the current problems at the fairgrounds.

Dick Jossy related the importance of a commitment for no sale from the commissioners. Without the commitment the Boosters are unable to continue with their efforts. The community must know where the future of the fairgrounds is headed.

DISCUSSION Bill Bloom stated that the Fair Board has put the commission on the line and asked why the Board was not in full attendance.

Jerry Boyer, Fair Board Chairman, answered that the Fair Board has charged the Boosters to get the needed direction from the commissioners and has also spent many hours trying to work for viable alternatives. Right now a positive step is vital to the Boosters efforts. The Commissioners now must quell the rumors and give a positive commitment.

Heisler added that his intention is not to sell the fairgrounds, if it can be a viable operation.

Dale Scheller insisted that we must tell donators "yes it will be open and used for fairgrounds." It is a prime opportunity for the county to use the 80 acres for the good of the community.

Heisler asked if it can be kept open, are there dollars to support it?

Duris expressed hope that the boosters and other groups will support the fair and not be back next year for dollars from the county budget.

Mr. Boyer asked that the rumors of sale be stopped. Would the Board of Commissioners consider a viable program of operation for a designated period of years?

Agnes DeLashmutt re-established that this work session asked for by the Boosters was to find acceptable ideas the commissioners would consider. She asked what the commissioners see happening to the fairgrounds with the sale of Hawthorne farms, and asked of options now and later?

Bloom stated the commission represents the people of Washington County and the NO vote was against the concept of the election issues in February.

DeLashmutt answered that the Boosters represent at least 29 organizations and all have shown positive interest in the fairgrounds retention.

Boyer added that the commissioners gave the Fair Board a directive to get out and either save the Fairgrounds or they would be turned over to the county.

Miller indicated his opposition to a special election for money that should come from general fund, but reversed his opinion for the fairgrounds after weighing its potential. Miller added that in conversation with non-member 4-H, FFA taxpayers the vote now might be no. He would like to see the fairgrounds be self supporting in five years with sufficient tax dollars to do so. The taxpayers, if it is understood this would be the last time voting, would probably vote yes.

Dick Jossy commented that all together the county has spent only \$150,000 on the fairgrounds; that is not a very large burden for 53 year of fair! The voter education is a tremendous job and what happens if the vote is again no? School measures come up two and three times.

DISCUSSION Miller answered that it is the job of fair supporters to inform and convince the public

Lyon asked Duris if the fairgrounds could be self-supporting.

Duris answered that the fairgrounds complex can be and the county needs such a complex.

Boyer felt that the right ideas were presented before, but the timing has been so critical.

Duris responded that this project should not be in haste. A skeleton crew should be able to maintain the status quo. In the meantime analyze needs, plan how to realize those needs, and market the program.

Bill Bloom added that he "started this whole thing." He has no desire to sell the property; the Fair Board has come a long way, but has a long way yet to go. The Board of Commissioners will work with the Fair Board to make the fairgrounds work.

Miller reiterated that a good 'selling job' must be the key to success. Visit with all service groups, church groups, etc. and tell the story. If the program is a good one, only then will the taxpayer vote yes.

Paul Alexander restated that the job ahead has already been planned and is ready to be put into action, BUT it can not be done without the commissioners enthusiasm and commitment for the fairgrounds.

Miller thought that three years might be a good period of time to see how the fairgrounds has progressed.

Scheller asked why the commissioners are intent on selling the fairgrounds.

Paul Alexander stated we have enthusiasm, commitment, and a plan, will the commissioners give three years of progress time?

Bloom responded that the commissioners need a commitment from the Fair Board and Fairgrounds Boosters.

RESOLUTION Miller Duris referred to Dan Potter and stated that a resolution is
FOR APPROVAL being written up for the Fair Board and Boosters to consider. At this time it is still in the rough draft form, but could read: The Board of County Commissioners will agree to continuation of fairgrounds activity for three years. This agreement would be with full understanding and commitment from the Board of County Commissioners and equal commitment from the Fair Board and Fairgrounds Boosters. If they fail to achieve improvement of operations and facilities of the fairgrounds, the Board of Commissioners will reserve the right of support. The future of the fairgrounds at that time, will be again up to the vote of the people.

DISCUSSION DeLashmutt clarified that the Fair Board will come to the commissioners with the final plan, and not the Boosters.

Duris received approval of the drafted resolution from all present. He asked that a joint meeting with the Fair Board and Boosters again be held as final plans are finished.

Dan Potter read ORS 565.230 that the Fair Board has exclusive management of the fairgrounds.

RESOLUTION The next Board of Commissioners meeting will be held June 6th. The FOR PASSING resolution will then be presented for passage.

ADJOURNMENT Wally Lyon thanked the commissioners for their thoughts and resolution.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Lorrie Maki, Secretary