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CALIFORNIA FAIRS ALLIANCE

1776 Tribute Road, Suite 210
Sacramento, CA 95815
P: 916.927.3100
E: CFA@fairsnet.org
W: fairsnet.org

Monthly Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 7, 2023 – 10 AM

Zoom Conference Meeting

Call to Order: In the absence of chair Tom Mitchell, Michele Richards, CFA Vice-Chair called the meeting to order and asked Sarah Cumming, President and CEO to take roll.

CFA Directors Present: Michele Richards, Co-Vice Chair; Dana Stoehr, Co-Vice Chair; Joe Brengle, Contra Costa County Fair; Teresa Burrola, Merced County Fair; Patricia Conklin, Dixon May Fair; Matt Cranford, California State Fair; Laurie Giannini, Calaveras County Fair; Carlene Moore, San Diego County Fair; Mic Moulton, Redwood Acres Fair; Ryann Newman, Service Member Representative.

WFA Staff Present: Sarah Cummings, President/CEO

Others Present: Louie Brown, Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP and Norm Towne

CFA Directors Absent: Tom Mitchell, Madera District Fair; Becky Bartling, Sonoma County Fair; Carrie Bayley, Trinity County Fair & Dave Dillabo, Yuba-Sutter Fair

CFA Chairs Report: Vice-Chair Richards asked Louie to give the legislative report.

Legislative Report – Louie Brown reported on the list of bills distributed to the directors. They included AB 38, AB 415, AB 554, AB 1472; AB 1484; AB 1567; SB 59; SB 387; SB 416; SB 447; SB 544; SB 547, SB 624 and SB 867. Louie discussed the 1499 funding bill that would increase the percentage and that it will be revisited over the Fall. He spoke about the closure of Golden Gate Fields and the problems this is causing. Carleen Moore asked about the status of SB 447, Louie stated it was on the Assembly Floor and he anticipated it passing. Carleen then asked when it would take effect. Louie replied on January 1st unless an urgency clause was added to the bill. Louie also raised a potential issue with SB 234 which was recently amended. The bill would require amusement parks to have available opioid overdose medication and have employees trained to know where it is located. The recent amendments deleted the reference to permanent amusement rides which could bring in the larger fairgrounds in the State. He offered to reach out to the author and ask about the plausibility of that happening. A question arose regarding the Bagley Keene updates, Louie responded that it was on the Assembly floor and had a good chance of passing. Patricia Conklin asked why AB 1484 was listed as “gathering information” instead of opposing because it will affect labor at fairgrounds as currently written. Louie agreed it would affect the fairgrounds they are still working through the details, and they are watching it. Ryann Newman asked about a bill that would legalize the selling/serving/consumption of cannabis on fairgrounds. Matt Cranford said he saw the bill come up in July. Louie said he would look into it.

Service Member Report – Ryann Newman discussed the need for standardized operating procedures for concession audits at fairs. She explained that times have changed with automation and yet some fairs still require paper forms to be turned in daily even when the fair receives the reports directly through email. Also, the procedures could address if

impropriety happens. She felt that we need to discuss ways to attract new people to the fair industry – employees, food and beverage, vendors etc. She felt this was a big threat to the industry. Michelle Richards thought this would be a good round table at Managers Conference and/or convention. Ryann also thought that the industry is at a tipping point with prices. She is hearing more complaints about food prices and admissions. Patricia Conklin felt that we have a perception problem because events offering much less, charge more, she gave an example of a home show. Dana Stoehr thought that we need to have the marketing directors at fairs collaborate to get messaging out. Michelle Richards talked about how when she presents about the fair she discusses all the value you get all for the cost of less than a movie ticket. Mic Moulton said he heard vendor complaints about a neighboring fair and the costs and what was offered guests. He talked about the success of his free day. He would like to find a sponsor for each day to offer the gate for free. Discussion continued with CEO Sarah Cummings stating that possibly this could blend in with the CFA conference speakers and content.

President & CEO's Report – Sarah Cummings, President/CEO gave the report. She reported that the Feature Fair Tour to the Arizona State Fair. She explained that at the time the tour was chosen Arizona was not on the California banned travel list for state employees. She is hopeful it will be well attended. She spoke about the WFA convention January 3rd – 6th in Anaheim stating that they have two great keynote speakers that they will be announcing shortly. She reminded people to get their fair wrap-up forms in.

Area Reports – There were no reports.

Old Business – Managers' Conference planning - Sarah reported that they were busy working on the Managers Conference and have met with CDFA regarding the sessions they wish to be involved in. Carleen asked about the schedule for Managers Conference. Sarah responded that the conference will start at 10 a.m. Tuesday, November 6th, full day - Wednesday, November 7th and a half day Thursday, November 8th. Sarah further explained that since the collaborative exchange was on Monday, prior to the conference, they thought it was best to start earlier on Tuesday then they normally do, but still allow time for those who would be traveling on Tuesday to the conference.

New Business –

a) Survey development and distribution. The committee to develop a set of questions for the CFA members to gauge the level of satisfaction, direction, and issues that the members would like to see, reported. Members of the committee were Joe Brengle, Laurie Giannini, Mic Moulton, and Dana Stoehr. The survey had been sent to the CFA board to review prior to the meeting. Dana felt that people do not understand the structure of CFA and the survey is meant to “meter out what the constituents want,” and what California Centric issues can be taken care of. She talked about the democratic super majority and how we navigate that. Patricia Conklin commended the committee for putting together the survey and thought it was very thorough. She had one suggested change on question number 8 the removal of “And who should oversee CFA?” Conklin felt that this can be discussed if the membership wishes to form an independent organization apart from WFA. Discussion took place with the board agreeing that the question was not necessary at this time. Carleen Moore thought the survey looked good and suggested removing the word “substantially” from question number 9, she felt that without defining it people will interpret that in many different ways. The board agreed. Ryann would like to see a cheat sheet of acronyms for the industry. Joe Brengle stated that when developing the survey they knew they would have more questions to answer after it was taken.

Patricia Conklin asked CEO Sarah Cummings about the feasibility of question number 10 and the strategic planning session at Managers Conference since planning has been underway and it is September. Sarah said that they could do a strategic planning and that they had already programmed for a mini session at Managers Conference. Laurie Giannini reminded everyone that the survey will only be as successful as the participation of the members. She felt that there needs to be push to get them in, perhaps an incentive like a prize. The board agreed and was excited to get the survey out. Sarah would make the changes to the survey as mentioned and get it out.

Other Business –

Patricia Conklin asked if anyone had heard about the release of the \$12 million 1499 funds held at CDFA. Laurie Giannini said that she had spoken to Mike Francesconi, and he indicated that it would be out soon. Carlene Moore said she was on a committee, appointed by Michael Flores, with Rich Hoffmann, Tom Mitchell and Becky Bartling and they had been working on the funding policies and procedures recommendations and had not heard it was going to be released soon.

Carlene asked the group if they had heard about any of the union employee raises. Patricia stated that the contracts with the unions had not been ratified yet by the members.

The subject of PPP loans and CDFA audits came up with it being mentioned that the CDFA attorney is looking into the loans taken by some fairs. Questions arose as to why they would be involved in this since it is federal funds and the loans had to be approved through a lending institution that would have assured compliance with the federal requirements.

Next CFA Board Meeting – Thursday, October 8th – 10 a.m.

Having no other business the meeting concluded.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.