

ELDERS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – Approved

Thursday, August 26, 2021

LOCATION: Online (Zoom)

MEETING TIME: 7:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Albino, Alan Cohn, Jain Elliott, Heather Kent, Robert “Mouseman” McCarthy, Eric Nicholson, Robert Jacobs

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Kay Kintzley, Michael James Long, Ann Rogers-Bennett

OTHERS: Hilary Anthony, Roberta Austin, Sandra Bauer, Colleen Bauman, George Braddock, Katie Cousins, Peggy Day-Fitzgerald, Carolyn Gsell (Scribe), Percy Hilo, Paxton Hoag, Anthony “AJ” Jackson, Spirit Leatherwood, Kevin Levy, Lica Shultz (Facilitator), Sue Theolass, Sue Barnhart, Jenny Wilson

AGENDA:

- Announcements
- Approve May and June minutes
- Elder Age eligibility – Hilary Anthony
- Future Zoom Meetings? Licia
- October Retreat? Licia
- Applications – new – Jenny and Robert
- Wristband Subcommittee - Carolyn
- BOD Liaison report

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Carolyn - Blue Cliff Zen Center is holding a Yard sale Fundraiser, Saturday & Sunday August 28 & 29 at 3485 Mill Street. Lots of cool stuff.

Spirit – New Executive Director Kirsten Bolton couldn’t make it tonight but would like to be here next time. Candidate list is out:

- George Braddock
- Paxton Hoag
- Sue Theolass
- Jon Silvermoon
- Lisa Parker
- Sandra Bauer
- Kevin Levy (write-in candidate)
- Bob Beebe dropped out of the running

Mouseman – Blackberries are ready for picking at the Fair site.

AJ – Saturday Market is back to earlier Pandemic rules with half the vendors rotating through alternate Saturdays

Approve May 2021 Minutes: Eric made a motion to approve the May minutes. Mouseman seconded. Motion was approved 6 – 0 (Diane Albino arrived later in meeting).

June Minutes. Mouseman made a motion to approve June minutes. Eric approved. Motion was approved 6-0 (Diane Albino arrived later in meeting).

Elder Age Eligibility – Hilary Anthony

This is a continuation of a discussion held some time ago at an Elders committee meeting between Hilary, Charlie, and Elders. The discussion was around age 55 being a bit too young for elder status. In 2019 we added 277 new Elders to the program*** (Scribe’s note – the 277 number is inaccurate. Please reference notes on last page).

There was a lot of receptivity to the idea, but Katie C. had suggested if age eligibility were to change that the age requirement be graduated over time.

Hilary said that as we plan (hopefully) for a 2022 Fair, the board and staff are taking a close look at the Fair's capacity. Looking ahead to 2022, with people born in years '65, '66, and '67, that could potentially qualify 300-600 Fair volunteers to be added into Elders/ Hilary would be glad to present some different scenarios. The thought is for the next Fair to bump up the eligibility age from 55 to 57. Over a few years the eligibility requirement could be bumped up until we reach age 60.

Last year, with companion passes-included, there were almost 1500 camping passes issued for Elders.

Robert Jacobs mentioned that there were probably a lot of Elders who received a camping pass but did not stay overnight. Currently we don't capture that data). There are some people in that 55-age group that are looking forward to getting their Elders pass. Colleen feels that with all the work to be done to put on the next Fair, we may need the 55-year (young) volunteers because we will need all hands-on deck. Christine said that one of the purposes of Elder passes is so that Elders who have worked on booths and crews can give over their space to people who are still actively working. Mambo said that Katie crunched some numbers some time ago. Katie said that nobody to date has requested the information. Mambo said that Katie's research shows that people were applying for elder status at an older age – the majority being in their early 60's. If we move the goal post it is not fair.

Sue said that Food booth committee has seen a lot of growth over the years. At last night's meeting the committee decided that because they expect a larger demand for passes, we want to meet with the people who run the booth to see if we can help them streamline their operation so that they don't need so many people. She emphasized that this is an example of how another group is working towards reducing numbers. The pass count reduction isn't about targeting Elders. It's about going through all the various groups who have been receiving passes and reviewing pass requirements and ways the Fair could potentially reduce the number of passes issued.

Heather mentioned the case where if a volunteer aged 55 can't get a position as a volunteer, they would turn towards applying to become an Elder. Heather doesn't see how increasing the Elders numbers increases the growth of the fair. Hilary responded that because Elders leave positions then new people need to come in to replace those volunteer positions. The budget projected for 2020 will need to be trimmed for the next Fair. Hilary said they are not just looking at Elders. They are looking at VIP passes, Trade Caps, and other groups. Hilary said that the Elder group size is growing faster than other parts of the fair. Mambo responded – where the Elders step down and new people come in, is not caused by Elders, it is caused by crews and managers not promoting and mentoring existing volunteers.

AJ made several points. 1. He would like to know the average age of Elders. 2. The Elders are not the only group being asked to look at the numbers. We are not putting this on the Elders. we are looking at all aspects of the Fair.

Steven B. said that he missed Hilary's earlier opening remarks. He had concerns over using 2019 numbers, that those numbers were an anomaly due to the 50th Anniversary. If there is a 2022 Fair the numbers will also be an anomaly. They are not "normal" years. He also pointed out that there are Elders who continue working in other positions. In the interest of fairness, maybe we make the transitions so that people who are closer to age 55 get less impacted compared to people who are younger and are further away. Katie was crunching numbers during the meeting. There are approximately 100 new Elders recently applying per year. Approx. 60-70% of all Elders apply for camping passes.

Compassion passes are something that Elders issue, but they are only for Elders who have a special need – we cover the cost of their wristband. Taking care of people who would be caught in the web of age change would not be covered under this group. As Elder numbers have increased the administrative work has become burdensome.

Roberta pointed out that as the Fair has expanded, and thus the number of volunteers has increased. This can't all be put on the Elders.

Spirit thinks age 55 is way too young. Starting next Fair by raising Elder age to 57 doesn't seem to be an issue. Population growth is NOT an Elder issue. It's a Fair issue and the board is looking at managing the population across the board.

Someone asked if an interim pass could be established for Elders who don't stay overnight but wish to stay past sweep.

Mouseman responded that was why we created Late Night Trips. Elders can purchase a Day Pass but it's only \$10 less for the 3 days compared to a full-on camping pass, so the monetary incentive isn't there. Hilary said it would be good to know how many Elders with camping passes don't stay overnight. Robert Jacobs said that creating a special pass for Elders to just stay late but not camp would add to administrative burdens. He feels strongly that age 55 is too young and

that we would support increasing the age each year until we get to the appropriate age for being an Elder. Katie reported that the average age of Elders is 67. Paxton said that the motion the board is talking about is for a population cap for everyone on site. 2019 is not part of the statistics they have been using. They are using 2015, 16 and 17. Heather would like to see an option to NOT CAMP but be there after sweep. Steven thanked Paxton for clarifying the dataset. What was the 2019 increase of 6000-7000 more people caused by? Hilary said they looked at all the numbers for issued day and camping passes, and admissions. There was a huge jump in 2019 mostly caused by admissions, but there were also a lot of internal pressures to issue special passes. It wasn't increases in crews. Peggy Day reminded that Elders have been working on this problem and that is why we came up with the Late-Night Trips program. She has heard from many Elders that now we are passed the 50th Anniversary, they will no longer be camping. Hilary emphasized this is not about scaling back existing Elders. It's more about setting a higher age bar. Peggy F. feels that if people put in their 20 years, they should get their due. Sandra said that Elders have added a lot of value to the Fair with Late night trips, FARTS, Geezer Pleezer, Archives and SLR, even after years of service. She feels that a gradual increase of age requirement over a 10-year period is rather gentle. Sandra said that after the 2019 fair, the land was battered. How do you back down the population in an equitable way? Mouseman reminded us that to become an elder there are 2 qualifications – be at least 55 and have given 20 years of service. Some people don't come to the Fair until they are over 55 – they will never become an Elder (given 20 years of service requirement). The nighttime was supposed to be the party for the people who worked all day. The problem is not the people who work, it's the people who get passes via the "I know somebody." Licia suggested that on our next Letter of Intent, if people asking for a pass are planning to set up a tent but not stay, or simply leaving each night and returning for the day, that we capture that information. Licia suggested Hilary send the spreadsheets to Carolyn and she will distribute to the group. Peggy volunteered to add some information about age eligibility changes to the Elders website.

Future Zoom Meetings – Licia

With the way things are going, using Zoom is the best method for including more people and considering the Covid situation. Licia asked if the group would be o.k. with staying on Zoom through end of 2021 and revisit the issue for 2022. There was general agreement.

October Retreat – Licia

Licia reminded us of our plans and says the way things look it is not likely to happen. Paxton said that Alice's likely wouldn't be available at all, though he is actively pursuing getting Alice's open. There was general agreement that we would not have a retreat in October. We'll need to communicate with Peggy I for Facebook and for the website.

New Elder Applications – Jenny and Roberta

There are 3 applicants to consider. Linda Reimer has been on the endowment committee, etc. Wide range of contributions over the years. Licia suggested that Roberta hold off on vetting this application because we need to strictly adhere to the protocol, because Linda's service is not in the normal realm of eligibility requirements. Paxton suggested the subcommittee find out if she has worked on staff or in a booth. Robert mentioned that if someone has helped put on a Fair, that should count. The Elder Applications Subcommittee was requested to do some more homework and the committee will revisit the application for Linda Reimer at the September meeting.

2nd application – Sarah Grimm. She has been with Blazing Salads for 10 years, then another 2 years as fill-in. She had been working in that booth since age 12. Then on recycling crew 1997-2005. Alan thanked Jenny and Roberta. He feels that Linda Reimer should be approved. Eric knows Sarah – doesn't know her involvement in the Fair but would accept the application.

Alan moved to accept the application. Jain Seconded. The motion approved 7-0.

Sandra said she would like to work with Roberta on Linda's application.

3rd application is for Beth Littlewolf. Norma had not been able to confirm one of her fair jobs on the Construction Crew (2008-2017). The coordinator could not locate her name in the records but thought that that Beth's participation

sounded right. Per Jenny she had other years with other booths. Licia asked if Jenny would continue to better confirm the application.

Licia thanked Roberta and Jenny for their work.

Wristband Subcommittee - Carolyn

Katie had mentioned to Carolyn that the person who volunteered to lead the WB subcommittee, Crow Sykora, hasn't been active or communicative. Jain agreed to reach out to him and have a conversation. It's important for whoever is taking the lead position to communicate with the Elders Committee. This is where the exchange of information takes place.

Spirit – Board report

Our new Executive Director Kirsten Bolton was introduced.

The fall fundraiser has been postponed due to Covid surge.

The Board passed bylaw change to article 7 – an amendment having to do with number of board members, alternates, and term length. The Board has approved the change. There will be 12 voting members upon the election of the new board. The first year the 4 people with highest votes will be in for 3 years. Over the course of the next few years there will be a vote for 4 new board members each year.

The FairCARE work group has been working on a revised grievance process. It will be looked at and updated. It fills in the holes that the current process doesn't cover. Check out the .net site to read a draft of the proposed grievance policy here: <https://oregoncountryfair.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/OCF-Grievance-Process-Final-21.08.02.pdf>

Virtual Fair – Haven't gotten a full report from Staff.

New Board Business – budget committee – includes motion to set overall limit of people per day at the three-day event at 35,000 (internal and public attendance combined). Additionally, Fixed Assets Committee is moving to approve the recommendation that the Winery will not be operated as a winery, and to work towards selling off winery production equipment.

Spirit encouraged Elders to view the August Board Meeting YouTube video <https://youtu.be/2oDCACIYbj0>

Reminders, requests, etc. - Licia

Licia asked Katie to crunch some Elder numbers.

Jain to reach out to Crow Sykora

Roberta to work with Sandra to assist with vetting.

Thanks to Spirit for the board report

Closing thoughts – Robert Jacobs

Reggie DeSoto passed last week. Robert and Reggie were in horse camp together. Reggie was a military vet and had been with the Fair since the beginning. Reggie's wife and Aunt Em are planning a memorial on site on Sept. 25.

May we never forget the feeling we shared, the reality.

the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 23 at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Postscripts

***Per Katie Cousins, "We did NOT add 277 Elders to the program in 2019. We added 118 new Elders. I believe what Hilary was referring to, since she said she got the data from Lucy Kingsley of Inventory, is that there were 277 more Elder wristbands handed out in 2019 from 2018. This would be due to three factors: new Elders, more Elders coming to the 50th anniversary, and companion passes."