

Board of Directors Special Open Meeting
May 20, 2022 – 6 pm
Zoom remote online and live streamed on YouTube
YouTube recording link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8AZJCV4aFk>

(subject to approval by the Board at the June 6, 2022, meeting)

Board Directors present: Anthony “AJ” Jackson (VP of Membership Engagement and Services), George Braddock, Jon Silvermoon, Lily Harmon-Gross (President), Lisa Parker (VP of Bylaws and Policy), Paxton Hoag, Sandra Bauer (VP of Philanthropy and Fund Development), Sam Rutledge, Spirit Leatherwood, and Sue Theolass. **Other Board Officers present:** Stephen Diercouff (Membership Secretary), Hilary Anthony (Co-Treasurer), and Kimberly “Kimmo” Howard (Recording Secretary).

Staff present: Corey “Redd” St. Germain (Operations Manager), Kirsten Bolton (Executive Director), and Mark Malaska (Assistant Manager).

Lily said the special meeting was called to address the vaccine requirement policy as we continue facing uncertainty in these unprecedented times. In November 2021 when this policy was made, it was during statewide mandated restrictions. Now we are seeing the health information change quickly, and we have to keep in mind that restrictions can become looser or tighter to ensure health, safety, and inclusivity of this event.

The Board and officers appreciate the more than 200 emails from members or other folks with their feedback and comments on this topic.

Old Business (YouTube video 6:25)

Spirit moved and Sandra seconded approval of the following vaccine policy update:

OCF will require all members, volunteers, artists, crafters, performers, and vendors, as well as their accompanying children (ages 5 and up), to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination status, as defined by the CDC. This includes everyone attending with a worker day pass, SO pass, VIP pass, and trade pass. Children 4 years of age and under are not required to be vaccinated.

Attendees with vaccinations (public)

OCF will require all public attendees to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, as defined by the CDC, with the option for a religious or medical exemption, in compliance with the ADA regulations, in the form of a negative PCR COVID-19 test administered by a licensed test provider, laboratory, or health care provider, 24 hours prior to the date of entry, in order to attend the Fair in 2022. Children under 5 years old are not required to be vaccinated.

Attendees without vaccinations (public)

Attendees unable to be vaccinated will be required to show proof of a negative PCR COVID-19 test taken within 24 hours prior to event attendance. This applies only to those who have a religious exemption, or a medical exemption in compliance with ADA

regulations, and are able to provide proof in accordance with OHA specifications. Children under 5 years old are not required to be vaccinated and are not required to provide a negative COVID test.

Our Safety Plan (internal)

OCF will require all members, volunteers, artists, crafters, performers, and vendors, as well as their accompanying children ages 5 and up, to provide proof of full COVID-19 vaccination, as defined by the CDC. This includes everyone attending with a worker day pass, SO pass, VIP pass and trade pass. Children 4 years of age and under are not required to be vaccinated.

Ann Cooley, MD / Medical Director for White Bird Rock Medicine, shared her viewpoint. She has been their medical director for eight years, and wants to be clear that she is not expressing her own personal opinion but is speaking as a medical expert. She spent the past week in meetings with White Bird and Lane County Public Health.

While vaccines are encouraged, it is not possible to keep COVID away from the Fair. Anyone who attends the Fair should do everything in their power to protect themselves. The OCF Board is commended for having a vaccine policy, but the policy should be as simple, straightforward, streamlined, and universally understood as possible. We should not overcomplicate this by requiring things that other events are not.

Medical experts recommend vaccinations from a public health and event safety perspective. Any policy we enforce should be viewed in terms of benefits versus expenditures. When it comes to transmission and requiring people to be boosted to attend the Fair, the benefit is extremely small. The benefit of requiring people to prove or justify their reason for having a medical or religious exemption is zero, as it does not do anything to make an event safer.

Ann said no one on the Board was unaware of her position as a medical director on this topic. She had previously told the Board when the policy was written initially that the requirement should be kept as simple, straightforward, and consistent with other events as possible. This allows us to spend our human capital and our energy on things that are going to make a bigger impact with our event safety. Ann said when she worked with the Fair COVID workgroup, she asked them to write the policy to state that a primary series of vaccines would be required, nothing more. Instead, the Board approved something different and made it complicated.

Ann reiterated that White Bird and Lane County Health support what she communicated. Her relationship with OCF must be based on trust. She has a medical license, carries extra liability insurance because of the risks, and oversees a kick-ass medical crew that provides fun and effective medical care. Ann expressed her frustration with the Board not trusting her expertise, and she felt like walking away in the week leading up to this meeting. But if Ann walks away there is no medical coverage for the Oregon Country Fair.

In order for Ann to continue as the Fair medical director, we must follow her medical direction and consult with her on any COVID-related topics. This vaccine policy needs to be simplified. The public should not have to show proof of why they are not vaccinated. It would cause slow public entry and put a huge risk on the public health of the surrounding community. We owe a service to the community of Veneta and Lane County, in addition to our

members who choose to attend this year. If the Board does not follow the directives by Ann, then she will leave and there is no one else with White Bird who can replace her. That means if Ann steps down, then White Bird steps down.

Corey "Redd" St.Germain, OCF Operations Manager, spoke to his concerns about how the current vaccine policy would affect Fair operations. If there are 12 crew people checking in a person every minute then that is 720 people we can let in the gates every hour. So, to check in more than 5,000 attendees would take over eight hours and we need to remember that half of the public attendance arrives in their own vehicles.

The CDC is changing and who knows what will happen between now and the event, and the term "up to date" is confusing. The crews would have to take the time to determine ages, then determine if they are eligible based on the type of vaccine and date administered. Having to go through this conversation with every attendee entering would be daunting for the ground crews. There will be people from other countries, or people who adhere to other world medical standards that would take longer to verify.

Even before the event, we will welcome 15,000 to 17,000 of our volunteers, staff, and vendors on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. It would take us 10 hours to process 9,600 people. We cannot let people wait in line for such a long time. Stamping people's hands would save some time, instead of banding, but even with attempting a 20-second check-in process it would still take hours.

We know that some booths are not coming because of the vaccine policy as a whole. Some booths have been told they are not welcome, because of the booster recommendation. Redd pointed out the definition of recommendation is a suggestion or proposal as to the best course of action, especially one put forward by an authoritative body.

Annie said she is in support of Dr. Cooley in spirit, and said incidents will increase with bottlenecks of people surrounding each other.

Emma said if we cannot have an event where the likelihood of succumbing to a system-wide debilitating and deadly virus is next to zero, we should not be having an event. If we cannot honor the humanity of immune-compromised people, we should not be having an event.

Dean said he supports vaccines but the current policy is an outlier. He checked many other festival policies and said theirs are less strict with no boosters, or no vaccinations required.

Bobbi Jo likes the policy as written, and while simpler may be great, just allocate more people to get the job done. We have a job to do, and that is to assert public safety.

Ichabod has attended recent events at Matthew Knight Arena and Autzen Stadium, and said it only took four to six people checking cards for the primary vaccinations.

Dave said nobody of the 20 food booths and carts that are not attending this year have made it known that it is a booster issue.

Debbie said as an artist she has done other events where they wore masks. It is a simple consideration.

Jennifer asked to choose inclusion over fear-driven policies that lessen the humanity of our fellow citizens. People can make their own choices about their own bodies after being advised and informed. Transmission of COVID is not stopped by vaccination and breakthrough cases happen regularly. It is shameful to disallow those who are not vaccinated to your set of standards.

An artist said all the art shows they have done this year had no vaccine requirements, no masks, and no questions at all. Art shows say they are following CDC guidelines. Many festivals are happening without masks or mandates. Some indoor art shows require masks, vaccines, or a current COVID test for the unvaccinated.

A policy of inclusivity was proposed by another member. Let us make this even more simple, and extend the same policy for all the people. Last fall, there was a show that created labs onsite and individual insurance; this is the safest option for everyone. We can help reduce transmission and the workload for the Oregon Country Fair.

Dani supports the Board in requiring vaccinations for everyone on site. After listening to Dr. Cooley, making it simple does make sense. Dani did not understand the exemptions, and does not support testing out.

Kim agrees with the medical piece, but is upset at the format in which this is going down. She said she asked what the rationale was for this decision, and was told it was operational and not medical so did not give feedback as she would have intended to.

Shawn supports the vaccination policy and Dr. Cooley's updated recommendation. But he cannot understand how a monumental decision like this was made without consulting with the coordinators. This year is already a heavy enough lift, and there has been a lot of outrage in our community surrounding this policy that is very challenging to manage with having to turn away people and find replacements. Another policy change will be another repercussion we have to deal with.

Ascha wondered how White Bird was going to deal with people that suddenly show COVID symptoms. She said California was on a roll, with tons of COVID.

Leah supports making this as streamlined as possible. It was stated that medically there is no increasable risk for allowing religious and medical exemptions for people who buy their

entrance into the Fair. Why is that not also being provided to staff members who uphold the operational possibility of Fair in the first place?

Crystalyne said yes, people have a personal choice to attend the event but the local community that surrounds the event does not get to decide if they want to attend, let alone host it. OCF has always been an intentional community that has historically strived to show a different way of interacting with the world around us, that it is possible for individuals to be kind and caring to others. OCF is being presented as if everything possible is being done to keep as many people as possible safe, yet slowly chipping away at the original mission is literally the opposite of that.

Justin said his focus is from a booth registration standpoint, and that people in the booth world have already made choices and this is going to throw this event. Even with the people that may come because of a change to the policy, there will be more people that are not going to attend because of the change.

Amy ceded her member input time to Justin, and he said the challenge is the commitments made to crews and booths. This change in policy is going to put us in a position where we may have to re-evaluate all of our booth allocations. The impact could be substantial as to whether people change their position about attending or not.

Richard said he wrote a letter to the Board, and hoped all the emails were read. He said this meeting was illuminating, having participated the past 40 years.

Adam said he agreed with Shawn and Justin, and said to talk to the coordinators about these things when making policy. Communication is lacking in that area. Late changes to a substantial policy is going to create serious difficulties, especially for folks who have already started preparing.

Spirit said the update to the policy came with great consideration after a coordinator meeting and when operations began planning. In looking back at Dr. Cooley's advice, Spirit knows that policy is only as good as the ability to be able to implement it. It was very clear that we were going to run into major issues, and while this may be an inconvenience, the Board has stated that everything is subject to change. It is imperative that we make this simpler and take Dr. Cooley's advice.

Jon S. shared that he lost his brother to COVID last week, and held his brother's hand as he left. This is now much more personal to Jon S. since then, and he is becoming increasingly convinced that the Fair does not care about COVID. You may as well call it the COVID Country Fair, as far as he is concerned. He has gone into the Fair office and staff are not wearing masks, and then learns later there was an incident of COVID at the office.

Jon S. has gone to a coordinator meeting on site and there were only four people wearing masks and we were in close proximity. We have a public that we are encouraging to

wear masks, and our own staff and coordinators are not willing to model the behavior. Jon S. is totally against changing the policy.

Sue said she has read all the emails the Board received, she is of two minds, when she can find her mind. She expressed appreciation and respect for Dr. Cooley, and also said changing the policy will cause a lot more chaos and hopes everyone can be patient with each other. Sue is vaccinated and getting a booster shot before Fair, so she can have the best possible protection for herself.

George said vaccination never promised immunity, but it did promise if you contract this disease the likelihood of you surviving it is greater than not. He is in favor of maximizing the simplicity for Fair admission, saying the Fair is critical for those choosing to come this year. It does not do us any good to have disturbances in our parking lots and admission areas which is inevitable if we keep these regulations. George feels strongly about letting go of the booster requirement for our staff, but does feel it is appropriate for staff to have the primary vaccinations because we are living together closely during the event.

AJ, having read hundreds of emails, said this topic has us completely divided, so much like our country. This is not an easy decision for the Board to make, and they are trying their best. AJ wants to see us all in future Fair years, and is weighing input from the medical community and the outside community, knowing that whatever decision he makes is going to upset some.

Sam said he has rarely encountered a policy dilemma that put so many of his core values in conflict with one another. We have heard good points on both sides, but science is clear in that vaccines and boosters help to reduce the spread of COVID and keep our community safe. Science only gets us so far, and there are values other than safety. Individual autonomy, operational logistics, the governance board model, and the love we share as members of this vitally important community will carry weight in Sam's decision. He understands that no matter how the vote turns out, many people he admires and whose perspectives are valid and valued will be disappointed.

From the start, Sam stood for the stringent policy we can implement but has come to accept that the safety benefits of requiring a booster do not outweigh the logistical challenges of retaining that requirement. Sam will vote in favor of amending the policy.

Lisa P. said on November 1, 2021, the Board unanimously approved the policy requiring proof of full and up to date COVID-19 vaccination for all persons on site who are eligible as defined by the CDC to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. This was done with the specific intention of protecting our ability to hold a Fair in 2022. Many Fair family were thankful and have made their plans according to this policy. If the vaccine requirement is relaxed, many will choose not to come. Either way we lose volunteers and people will be upset.

Lisa P. feels the Board is in an impossible position and there is no pleasing anyone. Whether or not to relax the vaccine requirement is an incredibly difficult decision but no matter what the Board decides tonight, White Bird will not abandon the Fair.

Paxton is in favor of simplifying under Dr. Cooley's recommendations, and understands calculating boosters is not efficient and operationally problematic. Paxton said he was fully vaccinated and still got COVID. He believes dropping the booster portion of the policy will generate more volunteers than we would lose.

Sandra supports amending the vaccine policy, saying that when the policy was originally made, we were in a very different circumstance then. The Board always knew they would have to respond to facts on the ground and there is another peak expected somewhere in early June. By July it could be different again, like a honeymoon period when you can go out and do things. So, with COVID, each person will have to decide for themselves what risks to take. Sandra said it is important that we have an event for our community and our people. We need to do it and everybody has to make their own decision.

Lily said her own position would be to require boosters because science shows that shots may wane. She said the policy could have been clearer and more operationalized with a just and equitable system, had they recognized how unclear it was. At this point, we need to listen to operations and staff. Lily said she will vote with what she believes is in the best interests of the organization as a Board member, as opposed to what her personal opinion about public health is.

Spirit said this is not about removing full vaccinations. This is about supporting staff and operations on the ground to make sure this event happens successfully, as safely as possible, with directive from our medical director.

Lisa P. said there really is no pleasing everyone and people will still be unhappy. No matter what the Board decides, White Bird will still be at the Fair. The Board has received a lot of correspondence on both sides of the issue and everyone feels passionately about what community and inclusivity means to them.

AJ thanked everyone who reached out via email or letters, and said if you are disappointed by any decisions the Board makes, know the Board is doing their best to meet everybody's needs and this may be a time when we are not able to do so.

Jon S. said this motion is more than just removing the booster requirement. The motion also changes the language relating to children under the age of 5. The CDC is poised to approve a vaccine for children under 5. It is disingenuous to say that we are trying to prevent the spread of COVID if we exempt children under 5 from the vaccine that will become available. Let's be honest with ourselves.

Sam said he supports amending the language for children, so that we are not scrambling to figure out what to do with children at the last minute if the CDC changes their recommendations.

Lily asked Dr. Cooley about the language to amend the vaccine policy and Dr. Cooley said she does not want people to have to fill out forms to justify their exemptions to the Oregon Country Fair. People have a right to their personal privacy. Dr. Cooley understands the frustration with a testing exemption for some, and said it is a federal legal requirement to allow religious and medical freedoms at public events. Not doing so would put us in violation of the Americans With Disabilities Act. Even if everybody is vaccinated and boosted, people are going to get COVID at the Fair this year.

Dr. Cooley said even though she has resigned as the medical director of Rock Medicine, she has decided to stay through the OCF event because of the commitment she feels in making the event happen this year. She does not want to put the Fair at long-term risk by not having an event. She will not continue to provide medical recommendations to us, only to find out later they were ignored. Dr. Cooley emphasized she wants any exemption requirement removed.

Spirit said she was willing to amend the motion, and remove the language that would require proof of an exemption. Sandra agreed. Spirit said she takes Dr. Cooley's advice seriously, and wanted clarification about if White Bird will still be at Fair if Dr. Cooley decides to step down. Dr. Cooley said she has been in meetings with the head of White Bird Clinic about her concerns, and she does not know what Lisa P. is talking about regarding White Bird still being at Fair. Dr. Cooley also recommended the motion language be amended to change "full" vaccine status to "a full primary series of approved vaccine." This will make the policy clearer since we know the CDC is changing daily. Spirit and Sandra agreed to further amend the motion.

As amended, Spirit moved and Sandra seconded approval of the following vaccine policy update:

Safety Plan for attendees with vaccinations (public)

OCF will require all public attendees to provide proof of a full primary series of COVID-19 vaccination, as defined by the CDC. Attendees unable to be vaccinated will be required to show proof of a negative PCR COVID-19 test taken within 24 hours prior to event attendance. Children under 5 years old are not required to be vaccinated and are not required to provide a negative COVID test.

Our Safety Plan (internal)

OCF will require all members, volunteers, artists, crafters, performers, and vendors, as well as their accompanying children ages 5 and up, to provide proof of a full primary series of COVID-19 vaccination, as defined by the CDC. This includes everyone attending with a worker day pass, SO pass, VIP pass and trade pass. Children 4 years of age and under are not required to be vaccinated.

Motion passed: 7-2; Jon S. and Lisa P. opposed; Sue abstained.

President's Peace (YouTube video 1:14:50)

Lily said tonight was difficult and was hard for her to know how to vote when the meeting began. We have to balance health and safety, inclusion, fun, and acknowledge the hardships of even having an event with COVID among us. There are varied principles on alternative lifestyles, what it means to be part of a community, and what science is in how we create an event that nourishes the spirit. The past two years of COVID have been so damaging to our world and our own local community, but we know this is a year of transition and rebuilding. It saddens Lily to acknowledge that there are some people who will feel shut out by the Board's decision or that they could not join us because of their safety. Our hearts and arms will be open and we hope to welcome all back in 2023 as we continue to strive to be safe and inclusive, while honoring personal choices. We love you. Thank you everyone for your hard work on this.

The next scheduled online Board Meeting is Monday, June 6, 2022, at 7 pm.

**Note, the Jun-ly Board Meeting will be held on site on Sunday, June 26, 2022, at 4 pm.
The plan is to also offer the meeting online.**

Upcoming Board meeting agenda items include:

Appoint Ron Chase to the Personnel Policies Committee.

ED Evaluation:

Direct the Personnel Policy Committee to advise and assist under the direction of the committee co-chair and HR professional, Sara Garcia, to create an evaluation document based on job description and performance for the 2022 Executive Director Performance Evaluation. The Board will review the process, provide feedback, and approve the survey. The HR professional will then conduct the evaluation by doing the rollup for the 360 evaluation and present the rollup to the Board to review, provide feedback, and approve. The evaluation process should be concluded by September.

Data Management Policy.

Privacy policy update.

Set 2022 Annual Meeting date; determine if online or in person.

Reparations Motion — tabled until August.

Establish an ad hoc Board committee to examine the question of whether the Oregon Country Fair should make reparations to First Nations peoples for the Fair's current ownership of land stolen from them and to make recommendations to the Board. The ad hoc reparations committee is to be comprised of the following:

- *Up to six Fair members or participants who are descendants of the First Nations peoples who occupied or used the land that the Fair currently owns*
- *Two Board members*
- *A Co-Treasurer or their designee*
- *The Executive Director or their designee*
- *One member from the Diversity Committee*
- *A member of the Archaeology Crew or Archaeology Committee who has professional experience interacting with First Nations peoples in Oregon*

In its deliberations the ad hoc reparations committee will consider the following:

- *Whether reparations should be made, including the question of whether ownership of the land should be transferred and*
- *If reparations are to be made, in what amount, in what form, to what entity or entities, and over what time period they should be made.*

The ad hoc reparations committee will strive to report back recommendations to the Board of Directors by the December 2022 Board meeting.