

Oregon Country Fair
Committee Best
Practices Manual

revised 8/7/2024

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Introduction and overview

The Oregon Country Fair has more than a dozen active committees and several ad-hoc work groups that advise the Board and Operations on matters from land use planning to budgets to cultural diversity. Many thanks are due to the dedicated volunteers and staff members who participate and contribute to the well-being of the Fair. The establishment of standards for transparency, inclusive and diverse membership representation and involvement, meeting protocols, and other factors can foster wider participation and recognition of the essential work these committees perform.

This manual is the result of a survey of OCF committees in an effort to standardize committee practices to assure consistency, openness, transparency, equity and effectiveness of committees and work groups. Not every recommendation will be appropriate for all groups, but the hope is that incorporating the principles and protocols presented here will facilitate greater participation, effectiveness, consistency, and recognition of the hard work that committees do.

This manual includes recommendations for posting information about committee missions, meetings, agendas, and contact information; for communicating with the Board and Operations;

for protocols that enhance committee functioning and encourage underrepresented Fair Family involvement; and templates, resources, and other materials for further information. The website oregoncountryfair.net is dedicated to informing the Fair Family of committee activities, meetings and minutes. The website oregoncountryfair.org is for the public. Committees are encouraged to adopt the recommendations that are appropriate for their missions to assure greater continuity, participation, and effectiveness.

Best practices essentials to be posted on the oregoncountryfair.net website (see appendix templates)

- Committees have access on the .net site to create a website link (contact office for details)
- Mission statement or committee charge
- Usual meeting schedule, location, date and time. Notify office@oregoncountryfair.org with this information for the on-line and office calendars and update as needed. Preferably two months prior to meeting dates
- Draft agenda at least one week before the meeting
- Meeting minutes
- Designated email contact (could be XYZcommittee@oregoncountryfair.org or a Google group)
- Board liaison contact information
- Invitation to a “Friends of” committee email list, if applicable
- Ratified committee agreements (See Recommended best practices)

Recommended best practices for efficient, transparent and productive committee functioning

- Clarify the group’s agreement for method of decision making (e.g., quorum, voting, consensus, other)
- Determine the optimum number of members and develop methods for recruiting members that support diverse and equitable participation
- Write an attendance policy
- Reserve time for public comments
- Have a designated scribe and/or secretary (may or may not be a committee member)
- Designate a chair and/or facilitator (facilitator may or may not be a committee member)
- All committee meetings shall be open to the Fair family unless portions are closed by order of the committee chair for personnel or legal reasons. A report of the closed meetings shall be submitted to the Board of Directors
- Committees may create sub-committees. Sub-committees shall report to the committees. Sub-committees should follow Best Practices as is practical
- Provide a sign-up sheet at meetings to track attendance and contact info of members and non-members
- Consider group sharing platforms for committee communication
- Each committee will have a staff liaison who acts as a point person for assistance and information. Staff liaisons may or may not attend all meetings, depending on the committee needs. Staff liaisons are to receive meeting minutes and regular written reports from the committees

Board liaison role

- Attends committee meetings
- Works with committee to ensure annual checklist is updated and submitted
- Brings committee recommendations and/or inquiries to the Board
- Presents motions or actions to the Board
- Ensures communication from the Board back to the committee
- Supports best practices recommendations
- Presents committee meeting summary after committee meetings
- Supports and facilitates communication between committees regarding relevant committee work
- Uses appropriate methods and channels of communication to address problems within the committee
- Is familiar with and complies with the following Board Liaison understandings and agreements policy passed by the Board of Directors in December 2011 as written here: Indigo moved, Bear seconded, the following understandings and agreements are clarified and established for Board committee liaisons: After each Board election cycle, the Board shall appoint Board members as committee liaisons to committees. Liaisons shall serve for one year and may be reappointed so long as they continue to serve as a Board member. Liaisons serve as important communication links between the Board and committees. In order to aid policy deliberations, liaisons can share information between the Board and committees. A liaison cannot make decisions on either the Board's or a committee's behalf. Rules of confidentiality apply to any confidential information the liaison shares. It is the liaison's responsibility to inform their respective committees of Board processes and how to present issues and proposals to the Board. Liaisons will endeavor to ensure that their respective committee fulfills its reporting responsibilities to the Board. In general, liaisons will sponsor any motions coming out of their respective committee's work. A liaison has voting rights on a committee while they are an active liaison. If there is a desire to continue as a voting member of a committee after the liaison role ends, a letter of interest requesting appointment to that committee is to be submitted to the Board.
- Facilitators and Board Liaisons are responsible for ensuring that all present at committee meetings adhere to the Code of Conduct and will set and ensure that each member of the committee and other individuals, whether present or absent, will receive respectful and equitable treatment. *Passed August 7, 2023*
- Liaisons are responsible to assist committees to provide their annual report in a timely fashion. (See Annual Report) *Passed October 2, 2023*
- Board liaison(s) are expected to attend committee meetings. If, in the rare instance that liaison(s) cannot make a committee meeting, they should request another Board member attend that meeting in their place. If no Board members can go to the meeting, the meeting may continue and the liaison(s) should review the recording. This applies to all committees unless the Board has previously made or subsequently makes different arrangements for a specific committee. *Passed May 6, 2024*

Annual Report

Purpose

1. Provide the Board and others with succinct information of the committee's work.

2. Ensure the committee is meeting the committee's mission as identified in the original Board motion that created the committee.

Committee Annual report to the Board and membership

1. An annual report shall be submitted to the Board and officers by date chosen by each committee and annually thereafter. All accumulated annual reports shall be submitted to the staff no later than March 15, to be included in the April Board Packet.
2. Committee Annual reports shall be posted to the .net site after board approval. Liaison(s) Role: Liaisons are responsible to assist committees to provide their annual report in a timely fashion. **The annual report will include the following information:**
 1. Committee name
 2. Approved committee mission statement and additional directives.
 3. List chairperson(s) or contact person, officers, facilitator, scribe, and liaisons. If you don't have a regular facilitator or scribe, please describe your process for choosing them for each meeting.
 4. a. Voting members.
b. (Optional) years of service on the committee.
 5. Confirmation that minutes are posted on the .net site.
 6. Summary of work performed.
 7. Work plan for the coming year.

Passed October 2, 2023

Best practices for Board of Directors

- The Board of Directors should acknowledge that they have read a committees report. They should, after member input, vote to approve and adopt any recommendations, send the recommendations back to the committee or add them to new business for later consideration

Conclusion

This manual is the product of a work group that surveyed OCF committees for their practices and protocols then synthesized and summarized the practices that assure Fair family involvement and awareness of committee missions and actions. Thanks go to the committee members who participated in this survey. Recommendations in this manual are made to increase standardization, transparency, accountability, openness, and respectful, inclusive participation. Volunteers deserve to be informed, to be welcomed with good processes and protocols, to be educated about the inner workings of the Fair, to participate in community agreements, and to be able to help the Fair become even more wonderful for future generations.

Appendixes

- Agenda best practices
- Meeting minutes
- Officer job descriptions
- Scribe duties
- Work plan/action planning
- Meeting norms
- Meeting etiquette
- Consensus building
- Facilitator information

Agenda best practices

Develop a committee approved agenda template, and use at every meeting

Start building draft agenda when the previous meeting ends

Read draft minutes of previous meeting and vote to approve after any edits

Use a "parking lot" for ideas for future agenda items

Each draft agenda should include the following:

- Date, location, beginning and end time of meeting at the top of the agenda
- Introductions and announcements
- Reading and approval of prior meeting's minutes
- Public comments
- Agenda review, amend, approve
- Reports: Executive Director, staff, subcommittees, Board liaison, etc.
- Old business
- New business
- Homework review
- Meeting evaluation or last round
- Confirm next meeting time if appropriate

Example: Path Planning's meeting template

Title of committee

Date of meeting

Time of meeting (list beginning and end time)

Location of meeting

Draft agenda

Introductions

Announcements (Fair related)

Minutes (amend, approve) list the date of the minutes

Public comments (listed before agenda review so items can be added to new business)

Agenda review (amend, approve, add new business items here)

Work plan review

Reports:

Staff

Board liaison

Subcommittees

Committee liaisons

Old business: Items previously approved on work plan, or items returning

New business: Before the committee for the first time, or added during agenda review

Homework review: List in the minutes who has volunteered to do what by when

Meeting evaluation/last round: A time to thank someone in the room, to suggest an improvement in the process, to get something off your mind about the meeting for the good of the order, suggestions for next meeting's agenda, etc.

Confirm next meeting time and location (list the possible date on the draft agenda)

Minutes best practices

“Minutes are an official record of actions the Board or Committee took at a meeting, not a record of everything that was said. They serve a historical purpose...a legal purpose documenting the group's adherence to the proper procedures and bylaws. Minutes and recordings made during a meeting are discoverable in litigation, so it is imperative to be prudent about what is included.”
(from ASAE, the Center for Association Leadership.)

Items to include in minutes

- Name of committee
- Date, time and venue of the meeting
- Members in attendance, excused or absent, and staff in attendance
- Existence of quorum
- Agenda items (including if previous minutes read and approved)
- The main points
- Voting results (list names of abstainers and dissenters), and decisions made by the participants
- Reports and documents introduced/documents, images, attached files (note: it is not good practice to attach letters to the committee minutes.)
- Future action steps/or tasks/calendar or due dates
- Ending time of meeting
- Signature of secretary or scribe
- Record motions made and by whom, and a brief account of any debate, listing discussion points. Your committee should determine how much detail is desirable without cluttering the document with irrelevant data. It is best practice to avoid direct quotations or listing names of speakers
- Start the draft agenda for the next meeting when you end the meeting before

Officer job descriptions

Chair

Develop agenda or ensure it is prepared and circulated

Ensure appropriate preparation (supplies, seating, chart pad, etc.)

Chair the meeting

- Facilitate equitable participation and support cultural differences
- Clarify and rephrase as needed
- Summarize and test for agreement
- Keep members on topic
- Keep meeting on schedule
- Manage conflict
- Ensure decisions made clearly and explicitly
- Evaluate the meeting- get input of members on what went well and what needs improvement and use their input to alter procedures for future meetings
- Follow up with people assigned to do tasks

Respond to queries and correspondence

Plan for succession by developing new leadership who prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion

Enforce attendance policy

Vice Chair

To do all of the above in the absence of the chair or at the request of the chair. For example the chair may wish to step down temporarily to participate more fully during the meeting or due to a conflict of interest

Recording Secretary

- Develop and maintain contact list
- Inform committee members and all on contact list of meeting times and place
- Maintain and distribute accurate minutes of meetings
- Take notes during meetings and distribute draft minutes soon after meetings

Scribe

- Keep contact list
- Send agenda for meeting
- Send meeting notice(s)
- Coordinate calendar with OCF office
- Record minutes following note-taking best practices
 - Location, time, date
 - Record who is presiding and who is recording
 - Attendance
 - Motions
 - Discussions
 - Votes
- Within one week, circulate draft to committee
- Make desired corrections and recirculate to committee
- Submit brief report to the Board secretary for inclusion in Board minutes. Also submit brief report to the Board liaison to read at the Board meeting
- Ensure approval of minutes at following meeting
- Submit approved minutes to office to post on .net site

Meeting Norms

Process Norms

- We will respect everyone's time by starting and ending on time
- Only one conversation at one time. Refrain from side-talk
- Capture off topic items in a "parking lot" as possible future agenda items
- Be present with the people you are meeting with. Put phones in silent mode and use devices only for meeting related work
- Take short breaks as needed. (Good for long meetings.)
- Everyone is responsible for helping to stay on topic. Speak up if you feel like we're getting off track

- Challenge past assumptions and sacred cows
- Address differences head on. Ask clarifying questions. Seek common ground
- Everyone is responsible for upholding the norms. Acknowledge if you notice we are not doing so

Preparation Norms

- Be prepared and come ready to engage. Read the agenda and do any pre-work ahead of time
- Meeting material and agenda should be sent 5-7 days before a meeting

Communication Norms

- Ask questions for clarification to help avoid making assumptions
- Make sure everyone's voice is heard
- Balance your participation - speak and listen
- Listen actively without interrupting others
- Say it now, in the room. Avoid waiting until later to raise an issue
- All voices count. All opinions are valid, but offer reasoning behind your thinking
[From *MEETEOR*: Credit Mamie Kanfer Stewart, Aug 5, 2015]

Meeting Etiquette (from Eugene Saturday Market)

- Arrive on time or a few minutes early
- Practice active listening and wait your turn
- Do not interrupt the speaker
- Turn off or silence your electronics and only use for meeting work
- Pay attention, and refrain from side conversations
- Listen and try to understand other perspectives
- Be respectful of others
- In times of spirited discussion, address your remarks to the chair, not another guest or committee member
- Refrain from snickering, muttering or other disrespectful ways of communicating approval or disapproval
- Separate issues from people, and focus on issues. Separate emotions from content
- Speak for yourself and avoid making assumptions about others
- Clean up after yourself
- Be familiar with and strive to utilize the Four Agreements:
 - Be impeccable with your word
 - Don't take anything personally
 - Don't make assumptions
 - Always do your best

Consensus decision-making process (from Community Village guidelines)

To see how another's truth aligns with our own requires patience and open-mindedness. We

believe each person holds a piece of the truth. If you have something important to add to the discussion, please share it. However, due to time constraints and the number of Village members we often do not have the opportunity to hear each member's opinion. Speak loud enough for all to hear, be succinct, listen with respect, and offer clear presentations.

When the group arrives at a shared sense of the meeting ("CONSENSUS"), an individual may find it difficult to give consent.

The individual may STAND ASIDE, which allows the individual to avoid participating in a distasteful decision without imposing his or her viewpoint on the rest of the group. This is a personal statement. They are bound by the group's decision, but not expected to implement it. The facilitator will determine how many stand asides will prevent agreement on the decision.

A person who stands in the way of the agreement (BLOCK) in the interest of the group is not imposing a personal viewpoint, but the group's. If any person, after participating in the discussion, feels certain that the decision would be a mistake by and for the group, that person may block the decision. A person who attempts to impose a personal viewpoint on the group is not acting as part of the group, and thus has no power to stop the agreement. People who stand aside/block will be expected to provide their reasons and to offer an alternative. One block prevents agreement; consensus has not been reached.

Additional thoughts:

To specifically determine if the group has reached consensus, the facilitator or group member may ask if the group has reached consensus by reading the minutes and asking if everyone agrees, often by a show of hands or thumbs up.

Next the facilitator will ask if there are any stand asides.

Last, the facilitator will ask if anyone is blocking the decision.

Some people oppose consensus process because they believe it allows for the "tyranny of one." However, if used well, it will ensure that the best possible decision has been made for the group with acceptance by everyone. Additionally, one consensus trainer, Caroline Estes, teaches that a person should use a block not more than three times in their lifetime.

Attendance at a consensus workshop is strongly encouraged.

Some thoughts on facilitation by Jen-Lin Hodgden

The facilitator's role is to help the group get its business done in accordance with the group's process and protocol. Thus, the facilitation style may vary. At its most basic form, the facilitator is a cat-herder shepherding creative chaos while instilling a sense of order over the meeting.

Responsibilities include

- Awareness of the agreed-upon protocol and method for decision-making
- Maintain a list of speakers
- Agenda arrangement
- Timekeeping
- Help group stay on topic
- Vibes-watching
- Maintain a neutral position on agenda items

Awareness of the agreed-upon protocol and method for decision-making

The discussion and decision-making process for Robert's Rules of Order and consensus differ. (See other resources for more information on these methods.) The facilitator will lead the group through Robert's Rules specific structure to a final vote. During consensus, the facilitator may summarize the discussion and solicit other viewpoints. When it seems the group has completed discussion (including time restraints), the facilitator will reflect "the sense of the meeting" back to the group and call for consensus on a specific decision. The facilitator may also determine that the group has not reached a sense of the meeting without seeking a consensus decision.

Maintain a list of speakers

Cat-Herding 101; Maintain a list of speakers so that everyone may be heard and people aren't talking over each other. Again, different meeting protocols dictate who may speak when, e.g., time for public comment vs. committee members only, or free-for-all. Good facilitation will seek to call on people who have not addressed the agenda item before calling on someone who has spoken already. Similarly, a facilitator may choose to call on someone who rarely speaks before someone who speaks frequently or seems to always have an opinion. This action may help those who do not feel comfortable speaking in front of a group; it validates their right to voice an opinion. During consensus, a good facilitator is aware of body language, observe people who lean forward and appear to have something to say, but haven't raised their hands. In this case, the facilitator will ask the person directly if they would like to speak.

Agenda setting

Facilitating a meeting may also be likened to a symphony in which the conductor brings the musicians and audience on a harmonic journey. People are more likely to attend meetings if they know they will start and end on time. Ideally, facilitators would have input, if not control of the agenda arrangement prior to the start of the meeting. It is their task to help the group accomplish the work at hand. It is good for the committee to work with the facilitator to set agreed-upon times for each item. The facilitator should be informed of agenda topics and the amount of time the committee wants to spend on each. Being familiar with the topic and the participants, the

facilitator should be aware of how much time is reasonable. A complex and/or controversial item will require more time. The facilitator may organize the agenda such that the meeting begins with a simple, agreeable item. It lures participants into wanting to engage. The facilitator may intersperse simple and easy items with complex and controversial items. Thus, the group's energy and engagement remain even. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitator conducts an agenda review to seek agreement and/or adjustments to the order and time allotted. During consensus, the group may agree to add new items either interspersed in the agenda or added to the end to be discussed if time allows. The group and facilitator would be wise to maintain a workable agenda. Participants become discouraged when they cannot adequately address an item or the meeting seems rushed because the agenda is overly packed. The meeting should also conclude with a simple and easy item; this will leave a positive, last impression with participants and inspire them to return.

Timekeeping

Facilitators are responsible for starting and ending the meeting on time and adhering to the time allotted for each agenda item. They are empowered to set limits to the amount of time one may speak and close the list of speakers on a topic. The facilitator may ask for the group's approval to extend discussion on a specific item or to extend the meeting's end time. The facilitator may recommend a break in the middle of a long meeting or ask participants to rise and stretch to shift the energy after a controversial discussion. People's attention diminishes after a couple of hours. Stretching or taking a brief break will re-energize participants.

Help group stay on topic

The facilitator may intervene and remind participants to stay on topic. Often, agenda items have several related threads or involve other stakeholders. The facilitator may capture these salient points and relevant concerns in a "parking lot" for future discussion.

Vibes watch

The facilitator is sensitive to body language and side comments both overt and subtle. This is an integral part of consensus and is useful in other settings. The facilitator may interrupt discussion to call out the energy in the room that prevents participants from being fully present. Consensus process may include "ministry and oversight" to address that which is left unspoken, the silent undercurrent. These terms are taken from the Quaker practice of consensus. To minister, the facilitator or other committee member may speak with a participant who has a particular concern prior to the meeting. Oversight would be applied as a follow up to an action that occurred during the meeting.

Maintain a neutral position on agenda items

Facilitators should remain neutral on the agenda items in order to maintain the participants' trust that they are fair and do not influence the decision. This may not be possible in all situations, especially small committees in which one of the committee members is the facilitator. When facilitators want to express their opinion, they should clearly state that this is their opinion and not a reflection of the group's discussion. Ideally, they should literally move out of their seat or place in the room. This is based upon the belief that physical space holds power. As facilitators move out of the seat of power, their thoughts and opinions are equal to everyone else.

Facilitators may delegate timekeeping and vibes watching to other participants. This will allow them to focus on the participants. Facilitators may ask to have a co-facilitator if they want to speak on a number of agenda items. They would divide the agenda such that each one facilitates the portion on which they can maintain neutrality.

Resources

- OCF Bylaws <https://oregoncountryfair.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Bylaws-December-7-2015-signed.pdf>
- OCF Guidelines <https://oregoncountryfair.net/wpcontent/uploads/2019/06/2019OCFguidelines2.pdf>
- Contact email for Fair Family News ffn@oregoncountryfair.org
Note: FFN submission deadline is the Wednesday following monthly meetings of the Board of Directors

Diversity, equity, inclusion

Courtesy of OCF recycling coordinators

Educational resources

Learn about the organizations. These organizations represent a variety of platforms:

- Black Lives Matter <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>
- NAACP <https://www.naacp.org/>
- Campaign Zero <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/>
- Movement For Black Lives <https://m4bl.org/>

Anti-racism education

- White Awake <https://whiteawake.org/>
- Talking Racism With Your Kids <https://bit.ly/2YQhzXD>
- Real Talk: WOC and Allies <https://link.medium.com/RMoBJVBp7>
- Lace on Race <https://laceonrace.com/>
- Johnathan S. Perkins <https://www.johnathansperkins.com/>
- Catrice Jackson <https://www.shetalkswetalk.com/>

Books

- *How to Be An Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi
- *Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognize Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World*, Layla F. Saad
- *So You Want to Talk About Race*, Ijeoma Oluo
- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates

Podcasts

- Black&: A Sister/Brother Podcast <https://www.johnathansperkins.com/podcastblackand>
- Irresistible (formerly known as Healing Justice) <https://irresistible.org/>
- Ear Hustle <https://www.earhustlesq.com/>
- NPR Code Switch <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/>

Documentaries

- *13th* (Netflix)
- *Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am* (Netflix)

- The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson (*Netflix*)
- Rat Film (*Vimeo*)
- I Am Not Your Negro (*YouTube, Amazon Prime Video*)

Films

- The Hate U Give
- Get Out
- Do the Right Thing
- Fruitvale Station

TV

- Black-ish
- When They See Us
- Dear White People

Social Media

INSTAGRAM	TWITTER	FACEBOOK:
		<u>Fair Family For Justice</u> <u>White Nonsense Roundup</u> <u>Free Emotional Labor Club</u> <u>Educating “Karen”</u> <u>Black Lit Book Club</u> <u>Black Lives Matter</u>
@Rachel.Cargle	@Blklivesmatter	
@Ckyourprivilege	@JohnathanPerk	
@RacismRecoveryCenter	@Layla_Saad	
@BlackVisionsCollective	@PatrisseCullors	
@Blklivesmatter	@Jduffyrice	
@We_are_blackunity (Eugene)	@RachelCargle	
@Dontshootpdx (Portland)	@Osopepatrisse	

Additional Resources

- An incomplete list of Black people killed by police in the US
<https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2020/know-their-names/index.html>
- Lane County Black-owned business directory
<https://lanecounty.org/cms/one.aspx?pageId=16781820>
- Portland Black-owned eateries directory <https://iloveblackfood.com/>
- Letters for Black Lives conversation guide
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B7PrxYC0H9ECtPmx4x3OQyOPLKaQS4xMYVNQ2jtDV7c/edit>
- Rachel Cargle’s 30 day “Do the Work” free course sign-up link <https://bit.ly/2zODMwO>
- Black-owned bookstores by state <https://bit.ly/2zODMwO>

	Committee:	OCF Annual Work Plan											
	Project /task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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