

Oregon Country Fair

Craft Committee Minutes: August 13, 2025

Format: Zoom

Committee attendance: Lucy Kingsley, Sue Theolass, John Govsky, James Nason, Jay Shuster, Tash Wesp (new committee member, welcome Tash)

Guests: Morningstar, Paxton Hoag, Doug Quirke, Autumn Maker, Adam

Staff liaison: none

Board liaison: John

Scribe: Christine

Announcements: none

Agenda Approval: Jay moved to approve August agenda. Lucy seconded.
Agenda approved.

May meeting minutes approval:

Jay moved to approve May minutes. Lucy seconded.

Meeting minutes approved with changes - add that Arna and John are the board liaisons.

Board liaison report (John): Fair was a big success! Ticket sales off by \$170K but made up in other areas. A lot of discussion about extending the work time about the EIDB group. Tabled till the next meeting. Added some people to the Fixed Assets committee. There will be some bylaws discussion at the next board meeting. A staff member, Mark Malaska the Event Manager, resigned on good terms. Paxton added that on the 18th the board is having a listening session, taking lists of major topics and trying to get folks together to give comments on the Fair. Normal evaluation process on the day of the Teddy Bear Picnic, August 16. Alice's firepit at 11:00 at the picnic, show up at firepit, write your topic on a notepad, people will be grouped together to break out into groups to talk about.

Fair wristbanding discussion - Some folks had not known that technically you don't have to get your wristband until Thursday - you can set up and avoid the line without a wristband on Wednesday.

Folks had a hard time getting water while in line - should add a water station out there.

The cashier line in particular continues to be a big problem. We have found over the years the trend has been to really clump on Wednesday, much more relaxed on Thursday. Morningstar suggested that we sell Wednesday day passes.

Can be escorted to the front of the if in distress. They do have that option if the line is a particular problem. Need a way to disseminate to the booth reps about telling their members so it becomes common knowledge that you don't have to stand in line on Wednesday.

It's not working anymore to use the cash line to bypass the regular line. Last year there were fewer spaces open to pick up wristbands for crafters by a couple of slots. Not sure if that was the case this year but adding two more folks from Reg to help out would make a big difference.

Historically we got a lot more people on Thursday when they made a big deal about how you had to get a worker day pass to come in on Wednesday. People are also getting there earlier. Have created our own problem by moving the bulk of people to Wednesday. We shouldn't be selling worker day passes if people are just getting in for free.

The cashier line was specifically related to the Sunshine database - was the fastest we could do with Sunshine. Hope it's fixed next year. There's no way to get the line faster unless we fix it. Not a people problem, but a software problem.

People have been coming earlier and earlier. Booths can open at noon on Thursday and people want to be up and ready to go.

Paxton said he is seeing a changing dynamic too. The bug with the software needs to go all the way to Kirsten who is working on those interfaces that slow things down. She has a team now that can work on rewriting the code. So that's a bug that needs to be reported.

We get vehicle stickers in June and people can pick them up or get them in the mail. Some of the bigger booths get all of their vehicle stickers at the mandatory food meeting in June and take care of distributing them to their folks.

We had 3 different members of the Sunshine team at the Sticker booth this year to see where the problems are. Optimistic about some changes that will be made. Some of them spent time in the registration hut, sat down with our crew and are getting a better understanding of where the pinch points are. The reins need to be given to the younger folks - changing of the guard.

This was the third year in a row we have done in-town banding on Tuesday for food booths in an air conditioned building. What if craft booth reps were allowed to get banded there? This year elders did banding at the same location during the afternoon. Also on Tuesday a very small handful of people were banded at their booths this year - maybe going through 4A, having a formal process for that. Limited by number of people on crew and physical limitation in terms of the number of windows allocated to us. On Wednesday at peak times we are using every window available to us. There is a proposal for moving the sticker booth slightly closer to Fair.

Jon Steinhart sent around an email about a month ago saying that reg crew did not track extra pass requests for crafters. We didn't use the way that he added to Sunshine without consulting us at all. We have a whole separate system that we've used for years and we definitely did track extra pass requests.

The focus should be not on changing people's behaviour but on figuring out how to process more people on Wednesday during the peak time. We should be more responsive to the needs

of our Fair Family. Waiting in 2 hr line in hot sun is just really not acceptable and it gets worse every year, not better. We need to be a little more creative.

Morningstar has talked to someone from 4A about getting some folks out of the line whose health is at risk, move booth reps plus folks who physically can't stand in line. We can come up with a solution. We only have so many windows. We would have to take over other people's banding windows in order to get more.

Paxton says make a formal request to Water Crew and also talk to site manager, Alexis. How can we make a cooling station with ice boxes, a blower? Sue says when making requests we should remind the people we are talking with that we are a major revenue stream.

Doug says we're really going to miss Mark after 4 years on the board. Hoping that position gets filled with someone as great as Mark has been.

Old business: Informing artisans of jury scores - there have been instances in the past when a new craft didn't get accepted even though they had the right score. Or people who think they scored high enough but didn't know for sure.

We are asking people who want permanent status to tell us their score history. Anyone who requests their score can get it by emailing to ask. We ended up just providing a range because of the functionality of the ZAPP platform. We can send scores, but only the individual scores from each of the six jurors. Adam will make that happen.

Booths - Morningstar shared a spreadsheet showing all the booths we have available. We have 27. Explained each booth structure, whether camping is allowed, and any issues going on (construction, holds for other purposes etc.) with photos attached to each.

We possibly have one booth available to give away. We have 11 and have to keep 10. We're up to about a dozen people who want to apply for a permanent booth.

3 or 4 booths will be coming though by next year, save and do it as a batch next year.

Paxton and Sue are on Path Planning. Need to develop better communication between this group and Path Planning. Raise the number of 1YO's or booths that can be passed on. They will bring this up at Path Planning meetings to try to facilitate this.

If we change the wording of the Guidelines from 10 full sized booths to 20 spaces, then we just opened up potentially 18 spaces and some of them might be able to go to permanent places. We could add flexibility to the 1YO process and have spaces to give away. Even if 30 1YO crafters, that's still 18 that maybe could go to permanent places.

The goal is to find out how many permanent booth spaces we need to give away for 2026.

The Guidelines tell people that these deadlines exist every year. Suddenly cutting out the 2025 guidelines and saying we have a permanent placement process going this year - we should make a Guideline change if we don't want to offer this every year.

Determining the number of permanent booths is a collaborative process. It's Booth Reg's job and we get to provide input because we deal with artisan concerns as a committee.

The fewer booths we give away for permanent space, the fewer people we can bring in. 400-450 applicants each year. If we give away booths, that also means we can't have new crafts at Fair. There are many years that we don't give away booths.

Some felt that it doesn't make sense to award only one permanent booth space, better to just not do it for 2026 and continue on with 1YOut and what we do with the Wait/Share list.

Paxton says it's perfectly appropriate to make Guideline change re: population growth on site. We set a limit on how many people we can have on site. Two thirds of it is us, one third is the gate.

James says he would rather we go to just giving away one every year. Would like to see us give away one just because it gets discouraging.

We need to look at that idea of how we look at the spaces that we give and how we award the spaces. Discuss with Path Planning and Construction about this whole topic.

People have reached out already and we have told them to wait until the tail end of the application period. Need to look at the application window in the Guidelines and figure out what makes sense if they will be applying for permanent booth.

From year to year it's not always the same - booths get displaced, we have to move people and find new homes for them. Jay would much rather see one or two given away every year. Way better to pass them out in small doses.

As we make decisions that result in bringing more people on site - at some point we can't keep doing that. Will mean fewer people somewhere else (ticket sales). Adjust thinking.

2024 was the last year that we awarded permanent booths. If we don't award for 2026 that is two years without awarding any.

Paxton says we need to realize the Fair is as much for us (20,000 people on site) as it is the people in the gate. We need to do more of joining of the Family - the participation that we offer - dynamic might shift a little. We need to have a Fair-wide discussion on "who do we do this thing for?"

Sue was told we had failed to meet our revenue goal. Food committee had done a lot of work to try to trim the passes. Booths responded well, reduced passes by a good number. So to be told we have failed to meet revenue goal then why are we talking about limiting growth?

Adam says we can't give away booth "spaces" so should keep Guidelines as reserved "booths."

Still too many things in play right now - the Monkey Palace situation, some shifting in food booth world, possibility of dividing one of the booths. Maybe let people know we don't have one to give away in 2026, aim for 2027.

James wants to give away one booth. Not convinced that we just don't have it. We have at least enough to give away a single person booth. In the future we have to be more conservative, never give out more than 2 in a year.

If we change the guidelines we can give away spaces, not full booths. We're supposed to hold enough space for 10 double booths (20 spaces). We have more than that. Overall opinion is to trickle booths out. We have to change the Guidelines. Willing to run with whatever Registration thinks is appropriate. But there is nothing in Guidelines that says full size booths, just says booth. The guideline predates the advent of single crafter booths.

Paxton recommends a path forward: make a formal request of Path Planning to develop a permanent booth structure that can be used every year as part of the process.

We go through process of identifying 1Yos in walkabouts with Reg and Craft Inventory. Put on their plate that we would like a consistent booth to give away.

James agrees with Jay and is willing to say whatever works with Registration.

50-55 are on Wait Share list. If we give away booths that's less people to pull from list. If we give away a booth they have to pull someone from the list. We do get inundated every year with people wanting spaces.

We can divide more booths up into two person booths. If a big booth becomes our booth and we can split it up, we will. Especially if it's old and is going to be demo'd anyway. We should look into the idea of giving away one person booths. Single crafter booths have no camping - meant to be temporary.

Lucy says, Many nuances and moving pieces. Thank you for effort, thoughtfulness and attention to fine details that goes into this decision making.

Meeting evaluation: Paxton learned a lot, thanks everyone very much. Stay cool!

Next meeting: 9/10/2025 5:30-7:30 Zoom