

Oregon Country Fair

Craft Committee Minutes: September 10, 2025

Format: Zoom

Committee attendance: Lucy Kingsley, Sue Theolass, John Govsky, James Nason, Jay Shuster, Tash Wesp, Kim

Guests: Morningstar, Autumn Maker, Adam Budd

Staff liaison: Vanessa

Board liaison: John, Arna Shaw

Scribe: Christine

Announcements: none

Agenda Approval: James moved to approve September agenda with addition of Peach Pit discussion because Vanessa won't be here next month. Tash seconded.

August meeting minutes approval:

John moved to approve August minutes. Sue seconded. Kim abstained.

Meeting minutes approved with changes: spelling of Kirsten's name, clarification of staff member who resigned, and that Sue is also on Path Planning

Jay suggested that when Ken can't make it we push back our start time to later.

Board liaison report (John): Meeting was fairly uneventful. Approved bylaws change that will allow us to proceed with online elections. Timeline is moving fast on that. Ballots go out Sept 24. Candidate forum on 28th at 4 pm. Candidates on Zoom, all else on YouTube. Oct 11 candidate meeting. Ballot return date is Sat Oct 18 at 8 pm. Results on .net site on Sun 10/19. elections@oregoncountryfair.org. Encouraging people to vote online. Can request a paper ballot. Last day to register and update contact info is Fri 9/19.

There was going to be an EDIB conversation which was tabled. A listening session was held recently. John could not make that.

Staff report (Vanessa) - Emerald ash borer signups will continue. Teddy Bear Picnic was well attended, got to sing to Norma on her birthday. Getting next year organized and ready to go.

Booth Reg report (Morningstar) - wrote a proposal on awarding permanent booths. Proposing that we shorten taking applicants to Spring of the year we would award permanent booths instead of May - December like we do currently. We lost booths last year. It's hard to make a decision a year beforehand. Propose to make the best decision we can in mid-April when we do Cut the Line with Adam. When those jury scores go out a letter goes out, "This year, we do not have a booth, please continue to apply, OR, we have a booth available this year."

At that time we should have more info on who's giving back their booth and any issues with the site, and when we do a walk-through a couple weeks later we can confirm that booths are available. We would only give them 3-4 weeks, would have to get application in by our May meeting. That person goes to number 1 spot, we place them first, then place the rest of the 1YO's. Not saying no to 2026 having a booth available, just going to decide that we would like to decide that in the spring. Bring more clarity and not waste people's time. Eliminate the mystery about the application process.

Will send letter to all juried crafters letting them know the guidelines. You have to have been awarded a 1YO in the year you apply. A lot of people have not scored high enough or they're not applying because they don't know they need to apply (and receive a score above the cut line).

Will receive jury scores by mid-April and will have 3-4 weeks to apply for permanent booths - that's the proposal.

Do we award when we only have 1 or wait till 2 or 3 available?

Where do we embed existing requirement on the .net site? Guidelines are confusing. There is misinformation out there. Need a separate communication outside of the Zapplication.

2 issues - approving the suggestion, and starting the process of making Guideline changes which we'll be doing over next couple months. Consider how we might change the Guidelines and how we might better inform people.

James explained that is the way we used to do this, and we changed to making the decision in November because it felt that things got much too crowded and hectic in the spring, trying to get ready for Fair, and the idea was to move it to November when everyone's more relaxed.

You can jury and apply but don't have to accept the position in order to get in. All we were saying is that we just wanted them to jury.

Want to take out the 3rd requirement of top scorers?

At least 5 years ago this change was made. Started in 2019. Jay remembers asking what top scorers meant and was told it was intentionally vague and did not need to be in top 10%. Make an individual judgment each time - is that fair?

We sign something every year that says we read the Guidelines. Not being informed about it is because you weren't getting the Guidelines. Everyone should know that becoming a permanent crafter is an option.

Jay said that having been through this process and receiving a perm booth - it was a very tight process to prepare product for booth, prepare brand new booth, and deal with choosing the booth - that's why we worked on the process and made it longer.

Maybe turn it into a two year process. It doesn't make sense because we don't have any idea of what numbers are going to be like until registration when crafters will be back. Agrees with James that having it vague provides freedom for us to work within how many booths we have. What if we have 3 but none of the top scorers have the other requirements to qualify?

Tash suggested that other things besides just pictures of craft should be counted toward perm space. What if you scored in the top 10 twenty years ago when you first started, should that be counted? What about the work you've done on the booth?

Erosion of booth space. Land condition, damage, trees falling. We don't know those things until late Spring sometimes. It is difficult to say what we can do 2 years from now. Lucy can see the value of wanting to do it in the spring because we know more of what the condition is, but it does put a lot of pressure on crafters to get their booth and inventory together.

From Booth Reg end, they want to alleviate conflicts with other crews about the timeline not working for them and also from artisans who are applying. Autumn says a longer timeline works just as well, can use a "now moment" of hey we have this booth, don't rush it, take your 1YO this year and come next year for selection process.

If a shorter timeline doesn't work then we have to say we do not have a booth for 2026. Create a wait list so people don't have to apply year after year. Put a limit on how big that list gets and make an acknowledgment that it is a complicated process. Because the status of our land is so uncertain we can't make a guarantee.

Booth reg will send an email to all juried crafters. So no permanent booths until 2027.

Still need a record of jury scores in last 5 years? If hope to apply, remember jury score is an important factor and make sure to jury.

Craft inventory (Adam) - nothing today

EDIB conversation

Sue asked us to bring curiosity to this conversation and set aside judgments and take an opportunity to take a breath if you find yourself getting activated, take a breath and sit and be curious.

Morningstar explained that we have an empty BIPOC booth and the native booth remains unfilled. We sit on Kalapulya land. What responsibility do we have to have some equity? Wrote a proposal.

Options -

We have no way of knowing what anybody's race is. You have to actually qualify to be a Native artist. Create an opt-in that is not given to the jury, doesn't affect scores. Just for our data. Then when we cut the line if there's an identified crafter in the top scores, great, but if none then we go below Cut the Line and pick the first Native and BIPOC artist.

BIPOC Oasis is X50 and X52 in Xavanadu. X17 etc. are the Native market. They have been unfilled for two years.

Fair has made two culturally specific booths. We have space for them.

The idea of those special areas was done without craft committee input. Native Area got established without management approval, Path Planning did it on their own.

Esoteric has their own jury and are going into craft booths. Actually taking space from crafters though not in direct competition. Morningstar doesn't understand why she is required to place an Esoteric but doesn't have to place people in culturally specific booths.

Maybe BIPOC folks are not interested in our event.

Arna is concerned about how far down the list we go if they don't make the cutoff. We have been trying for decades to improve the quality of crafts. How do we balance improving quality but going further down the list to bring in other people? Something to be looked at. Would rather reach out to see if we can get more applicants rather than trying to go down to people with lower scores. Outreach is needed.

Adam said that people do score but don't necessarily want to join the affinity areas. They are approved but they don't want to be pushed into that area. Who are we to say they have to be in their affinity area?

Lucy suggested making a multi-pronged approach.

John acknowledged it's hard in a room of white people to be talking about this. Concerned about role of committee vs. jury, Craft Inventory, Booth Reg. Not a decision that we make but just advising Booth Reg?

Sue said if we want change, we need to open the door and allow people in. If we have an adequate amount of crafters maybe we can help - she has no problem at all going below the cut line to bring in people who want to be in those areas, to represent, to help be a face of Fair. Wants a more diverse Fair. We are obligated to take this step to make it happen.

Jay understands why they aren't choosing to go to those areas. The Oasis booth is not a good place to make sales, or to hang out, because the sun is straight into the booth all day.

Tash suggested we ask crafters - say we're looking for more BIPOC people, do you know any?

Lucy likes the idea of putting the opt-in option on the application form as something used in the office that doesn't go to jury. Those of us on the committee who have contacts with crafters from marginalized communities can make the effort to reach out.

Adam said we've made an exception the last two years but next year everyone will be juried in.

Kim suggested a separate jury.

Adam said if native booths can't be filled they will be repurposed.

We need to welcome these folks into this discussion. (Stormy was supposed to be here tonight.)

Agreed to table this ongoing conversation.

Guidelines part 1 -

Think about changes, additions, some things left off 2025 that were in 2024 pertaining to crafters. Lucy will endeavor to add that back in. Will bring up at October meeting.

Sunday October 26 - work session at Alice's - follow up on issues from last retreat, with modifying the jury process and looking some more at the Booth Rep system. Talk about agenda at October meeting.

Peach Pit and Craft Directory (Vanessa) - asks committee for guidance on how to communicate better with crafters to get them to engage with the directory. Talking to Booth Rep and Peach Pit crew - 1YOs are placed after directory is printed. How to give them a better expectation of what to expect to see in directory? How do we get the info to the Peach Pit? Make sure crafters have time to get info into Sunshine and into PP? What can we do better to make directory be more accurate given May 15 deadline for PP? Booth Rep doesn't have all their info until after that. PP goes to print on June 1. Make it more transparent.

We can make it so they don't have to deal with getting messages from 6 different crews. Everyone gets a packet like what we used to send, instead of piecemealing things.

John mentioned that since his jewelry is not metalwork or beadwork, he ignores the directory because there's no place for him in it. We can look at that at our retreat.

Tash set up Sunshine for her 75 year old Booth Rep. Took Tash three days, many hours to figure it out. Have to use a computer, doesn't work with phones or tablets very well. Older crafters may see it as a hard system to try to do. It would be nice to have a workshop to figure it out and make it easier. Coaching people.

Sue likes the idea of sending a hard copy.

Continue this convo in November.

James would like to see us return to sending out an info packet.

For next meeting - booth fees, wristband fees. Booth fees get split up by all the crafters at the booth. They pay the \$200, paid however they split it up. For example, some booths will take labor instead of money. If you complain about your Booth Rep, if we take booth away from Booth Rep, then you also lose your space at Fair. Everybody in the booth loses. Should it be a rule to split fee evenly amongst all crafters? No guidelines on that. James thinks we should have one. Sue says James should write it. We can't police that guideline.

Meeting eval - thanks for stepping into the waters of challenging discussion.

Next meeting: 10/8/2025 5:30-7:30 Zoom