

Oregon Country Fair

Craft Committee Minutes:

January 14, 2026

Format: Zoom

Committee attendance: Lucy Kingsley, Jay Shuster, Sue Theolass, John Govsky, James Nason, Ken Kirby, Kim Allen

Guest: Adam Budd

Staff liaison: Vanessa Roy

Board liaisons: John Govsky, Laurence Taylor

Scribe: Christine Claringbold

Announcements: Vanessa may have to leave at 6:30 for the Budget meeting. Thank you to Lucy and Sue for representing at the board meeting during the Guidelines discussion.

Laurence introduced himself, known as LT. Recently returned to the board and has been assigned as secondary liaison. Has been at Fair since 1973. Served as Sanitation coordinator and as a board member, now an Elder and co-liaison.

Jay asked if Christine wants to join the committee now that she is eligible. Christine will think about it.

Agenda Approval: Sue moved to approve January agenda. Jay seconded.

Sue wants to include discussion of motion for renewable terms of three years (see below).

November meeting minutes approval: Sue moved to approve minutes. Jay seconded. Laurence and Ken abstained. Minutes approved with note that Jay's last name does not include a "c."

Board liaison report (John): George Braddock, founder of the Ritz, has passed. He had a stroke and didn't recover.

2026 Spring Fling is May 2. Culture Jam July 30-Aug 6. Teddy Bear Picnic Aug 16. Craft applications due March 1. Entertainment applications close Feb 15.

John had used language drafted by Booth Reg and language from an email from Adam into proposed changes to the Guideline about wristbands. Another board member had another idea of what he wanted to see which wasn't what most of our committee wanted to see; the board member was frustrated because no one from committee or Booth Reg engaged with him on his

proposed changes. John's goal was to forestall changes he would propose in meeting and to not get bogged down in amendments. So he massaged the language a bit and was mostly successful.

Pass (wristband) allocation will be a big board issue in the future. John expressed that to AJ as well and AJ might form a task force to look at long term growth.

Ken endorses the idea that craft booth passes are not a problem and as a staff member and long time committee member, we should always defend the creators at the fair.

Staff report (Vanessa): Tickets go on sale Feb 15. Normally on March 15 but this year giving people what they want. We will begin doing callouts to crafters for donations for Culture Jam which will feature Culture Jam alumni! Working to bring some of the artwork that has been created by these talented individuals to the event and get some of them on stage to perform.

About to finish the first proofread of the Guidelines. They will be ready to print by March 1.

Ticket pricing is the same. Database opening March 1 and payment gateway should not have any changes this year.

Starting to reach out regarding Peach Pit submissions. Now is a good time for crafters to make edits to their listings.

Craft Policy Review: Items are on the .net site. Table it to next month's meeting. Jay will put together a draft and send it out.

Annual work plan: Lucy sent out with a budget. Lays out the important items to do each month of 2026. In February we will talk about the topics tabled tonight and work on the final packet letter. Annual report due in March, Lucy will do. Work on refining the jury process. Town Hall is Sunday, May 3, 5-7 pm, need to talk about it in April. More convo about the booth rep system. Jury results discussion also in April. FFN article to come out in June. No meetings in June or July. August post-Fair reports. September permanent booth placement preparation. Work on booth placements and Guideline changes in October and November, and have our craft policy review in November. No meeting in December.

Changes to jury process: Opening jurying to whoever wants to come. Can do trial judging at that point in time. James will be working with Adam on putting that together.

Committee assignments: Assignments include board meetings, committee meetings, adding new committee members, reports to the board, customer complaints, artisan concerns, holding closed meetings as necessary.

Ken mentioned that for this year's April meeting we might want to schedule for 3rd Wednesday because the 2nd Wednesday is the 8th, to give Adam a chance to process the jury results. Lucy will be in Japan at that time.

Permanent placement process: We do this as a committee in conjunction with Booth Reg and Craft Inventory. Participate in cutoff score decision making. Share feedback. Prepare registration materials.

Preparing photograph books (of OCF logo items): This is a big task that Sue has been doing. Last year neither Rachel from Craft Inventory or Sue had time to do it and didn't do it and oddly enough they got no questions from any of the folks who typically participate. Rachel and Sue are ready to let it go.

People engaged with it the first two years we did it but not so much anymore. Ken said it might be nice to get feedback from Info as to how many people have come to Info booths looking for that information.

Peach Pit has a peach next to any booth that has a logo product. That is a new thing. So there is a way for logo artists to be identified. Sue will check with Peter and find out. Kim says as a logo person she would be in favor of dropping that. The effort on the crafter part isn't really worth it.

Committee email address: Kim has been checking the old email inbox. Jay says we should use the new email box that Vanessa set up to keep things consistent and is willing to start checking it. ocfcraftcommittee@oregoncountryfair.org

The old @live email is easy for Kim to check. Vanessa will set up an auto forward so it goes to the old @live address, and update the address on the web page. Kim will continue checking that email and forwarding emails to Sue when they come in.

Discussion of Native and Oasis areas: Discussion tabled.

Discussion of succession of the Ritz: John understands that the Ritz is not under our purview in any whatsoever, is that true?

Adam offers the clearest perspective that exists in his 11 years as coordinator:

The Ritz was listed as a Craft Booth in the crafter records with George as the crafter with the craft of Saunas. There was a history of them selling toiletries and such in that area. There was an agreement and the board voted to allow them to sell, with the understanding that they should provide hand crafted toiletries from OCF artisans if possible.

This was considered a craft booth for the majority of its existence. The conflict arose over the years. Craft Inventory was checking on them, many conversations about the validity of selling

merch there etc. Never any clear decision that Ritz was not a craft booth but as of last year there was a decision that they would be allowed to sell their merch because of an agreement they had made historically with a Fair manager. So essentially the Fair has their own private contract with the Ritz which supersedes any agreement that would normally be held between a crafter and the Fair organization. The contract did not specifically lay out any agreement related to craft sales.

Recommends looking at a copy of that contract, not sure if it defines succession of that booth. If so then he would say it would fall in the same category as the succession of any other craft booth. Of course the board has authority to override those decisions. Ultimately Booth Reg would approve the new booth rep. If the contract says something else then it would supersede normal process.

Staff organizations are obliged to do what ED says. John says he's raised some questions as a new board member and had been told in no uncertain terms that the Ritz is a private business and will name their rep and we have nothing to do with it. That came from staff. He asked how much money passes through the Ritz and was told we can't know that, can't ask that, it's a private business. Just wants to do due diligence if we have a contract with this entity, essentially a monopoly, wants to make sure members aren't being gouged.

Adam says you're experiencing what I've experienced for the last decade. It doesn't fit into our structure, it does what it wants, and it contracts individually with the fair. John is struck down every time he asks a question about the Ritz, it's odd and confusing. This has been going on for almost as long as Ritz has been in operation. Not transparent, violates Guidelines with impunity with regards to construction, lack of follow through with issues around digging and archaeological site, long history of opaqueness in terms of the relationship between Ritz and Fair. Private agreements have been made with various Fair general managers that George had cultivated that has allowed that to continue over the decades.

James asks about the materials of the sauna itself - thousands of dollars worth of materials. Assumes George was the owner of those materials - who is the owner now? Ken says this reflects his experience too. He was co-coordinator of Craft Inventory 30 years ago. His opinion is that it should be removed from Craft Inventory records, should no longer be treated as a craft booth because of the unique character. Ought to rework that agreement now that George has passed. Craft Inventory members have sometimes been met with antagonism when they go in to check. We should wash our hands of it, but include some stipulations encouraging the sale of crafts made by approved crafters whenever possible (factory made stuff like toothbrushes) in whatever new contract is made with George's family. Should include a mechanism for checking on what is being sold there. Adam agrees it would be great to have a broader scope of perspective and voice.

Sue says George turned the Ritz into a trust about 5 years ago. The contract is the MOU that management sends to the board every year. Has nothing about what they sell, more about number of passes, tokens provided to volunteers. Held it up a couple years ago because of a

possible violation that got cleared up. Happens every year around March or April. So John asks the committee, do we want to communicate to the board that we want it to not be under our jurisdiction? Need to have a discussion about it. And also acknowledge that the Ritz provides very important services to the Fair Family.

Lucy asks John to bring this back to the committee for when it would be an appropriate time for us to have this conversation. James says include in the convo whoever takes over the Ritz. But we will probably just be told to mind our own business.

Changes to booth construction Guidelines: John has heard there will be no more lofts allowed and current lofts can stay that way if they don't do more than a certain percentage of construction on the booth in one cycle. Sue says at path planning meetings this has been discussed and it is a reality.

Ken says that new lofts have not been allowed for the last 10-12 years. There was a change in personnel at the county level in building permits and we had a longstanding arrangement which changed more than 10 years ago that existing booths could get grandparented in, but there would be no new lofts because of safety regulations above and beyond what we can do.

John says maybe what needs to be clarified is how can you maintain existing booths and stay within the Guidelines?

Sue says any structure more than 120 sq ft needs a building permit. County does it in bulk. Booth reps don't need to deal with the county - talk to Alexis.

Lofts were allowed in an 8x8 space but that has been disallowed for a couple of years.

Jay says a new booth construction manual is coming out soon and these topics will be covered.

Terms for committee members: John originally raised this idea to the board. Another board member wrote a motion to put that on the agenda with some detail he wasn't prepared to think about, so John asked them to postpone that because there was no adequate discussion at board level. Wants to make clear it's not aimed at anybody, he just found the practice of lifetime appointments kind of odd. There was no consensus so his understanding is we need to have a conversation before it becomes a motion on the agenda.

Ken has been on this committee for almost 25 years. He and Kim were appointed at about the same time. He thinks the committee is well served by people with long experience. Particularly from Craft Inventory perspective where he is formerly co-coordinator. He would shy away from any limitations. Might be a committee by committee discussion. For our purposes it's important to have institutional memory.

Sue serves on 4 committees and in the past couple years they have all seen people leave and people join. Most committees are functioning pretty well.

Lucy has been part of Fair since the beginning, 1969. Has served on many committees off and on. Her experience is that Fair as a whole is served by having people who have long memories and creating space and opportunities for new blood as well, that's how we thrive. It's not a lifetime appointment, you can come and go on various committees. Decided this committee was the one thing she wanted to keep doing, which dramatically changed her relationship with Fair.

John says the proposal wouldn't result in a loss of long term members. There have been committees that are quite problematic in the eyes of board members. Lots of discussion about how to end it. He had asked, why not wait until their terms expire and was told there are no terms. So it's not necessarily universal that all function great. John is on three other boards. Board members have 3 year terms. Never heard of lifetime appointments.

Jay is not opposed to the idea but thinks 5 years makes sense, longer than board member terms because of institutional knowledge and just because right now we think people would automatically get reinstated, but if there are board members who have had conflict with committee members it might come up to a heavy discussion. Not all is in perfect harmony.

James thought it was a crazy idea at first but thinking back to when he first joined this committee it was coming out of a pretty dysfunctional state of being, several people had quit. So as it is right now it's fairly functional and works well together but there have been times that it wasn't like that, so he's a little bit torn as to whether or not it's a good idea.

James thinks the switch to online meetings has changed the dynamic.

Meeting evaluation: It was a good meeting. Discussed meeting in person. The occasional in person meeting is good. John lives the furthest away in California. Zoom is the only way some of us can participate in the meeting, would have to drop out unless it was hybrid. Lucy says it was lovely to be together virtually in our magic squares.

Next meeting: 2/11/2026 5:30-7:30 Zoom