

**Board of Directors Meeting
September 14, 2026, 7 pm**

(Subject to approval by the Board at the October 5, 2026, Board meeting)

Zoom remote online and live streamed on YouTube

YouTube recording link: https://www.youtube.com/live/Pb8X6zlfV7g?si=JX5E_2vNVZW_gNPU

Board Directors present: Anthony “AJ” Jackson (President), Lawrence “LT” Taylor, Felicia Kirsch, Zahra Indigo Ronlov, Sandra Bauer, Paxton Hoag, Trevor Ross (Vice President), Jon Steinhart, John Govsky and Teresa Vaughn. Absent Board Members: Kevin Levy and John Davis. Other Board officers present: Hilary Anthony (Treasurer) and Anna DiBenedetto (Recording Secretary). Staff present: Kirsten Bolton (Executive Director), Alex Zabala (Office Manager), Mark Malaska (Senior Event Manager) and Steven Berkson (Facilitator).

Announcements

Sandra: Thanks to Norma Sax for creating a document with all the Board motions from 2010 to current. It will be on the .net site and updated monthly. This is a goal that has been desired for years. You used to have to review all the meeting minutes to find motions, which could be a very long process. Norma did the tedious process for us all.

Indigo: The Jill Heiman Vision Fund received \$21,658 in checks, food vouchers and cash from Fairgoers, volunteers and Fair booths, plus the \$20,000 match from the Oregon Country Fair’s Board of Directors, which means that Fair donors raised \$41,658 for Basic Needs Nonprofits. The JHVF will donate the money to groups helping people meet basic needs. That means that each of these five nonprofit agencies will receive a little more than \$8,300:

- **The Kareng Fund/Caring Fund** for a safety net aiding local artisans who experience crises.
- **Mid Lane Cares** for water heater and hygiene supplies at a shower and laundry center serving unhoused and housing-insecure families in Fern Ridge.
- **Oregon Community Asylum Network** to help ICE victims meet basic survival needs.
- **Volunteers in Medicine** to provide free health care to low-income adults in Lane County.
- **Willamette Food & Farm Coalition** to direct surplus harvests from local farms to food pantries.

Since the fund began in 1996, donors and the Fair Board’s match have made it possible for the Jill Heiman Vision Fund to give more than \$738,000 to area nonprofits.

Committee Best Practices Committee is hosting open meetings to gather Board committee members’ feedback around a proposal for the Board. All Board committee members are invited to a meeting on September 21 from 7 to 8:30 pm for a work session to continue to refine the topic of recommitment. There is a draft motion that is a framework for the discussion and will be updated with collective input. Ongoing, they meet on the third Monday of the month from 7 to 8:30 pm and the Zoom link is on the .net site. They will be utilizing fun, creative ways to have committee members share their voices with the Board through committee work. They will be reviewing the

CBP manual and hope to add new insights. Please join them! They need to grow the committee with new members. The meetings are open to all Fair family.

Membership Comments

(YouTube video: 0:06:30)

Ann Bennett Rogers: She is still advocating for hybrid meetings. There are 22 people on the Zoom meeting. There are people that want to interact and network. People could work on projects together before or after the meeting.

Consent Calendar

Items on the Consent Calendar are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion on these items unless a member of the Board requests that a specific item be removed for separate action.

1. Approval of the Agenda.
2. Approval of the minutes of the August 3, 2026, meeting.
3. Committee and Working Group Reports:
 - a. Food Committee held a Closed Work Session on July 28, 2026.

Committees should send their reports to Vanessa (vanessa@oregoncountryfair.org), to be posted on the .net site and included in the Board packet.

Staff Report – Executive Director

Kirsten: **Administration:** The 2025 Comparative Financial Statements are completed. They are in the Board Packet this month. The 990 and CT-12 Tax Filings for 2025 are complete and will be submitted to the Board for approval at the October Board meeting.

We sent a membership drive email to more than 15,000 participants on September 2. We have registered approximately 333 new members through the database between September 2 and September 8. Since the feature became available in May 2026, 528 members have registered. This is a new era for our organization where our database now does more than just issuing passes, it includes membership. Thanks to the OCFIS Team for continuing to grow the scope of the database.

The last date to register to vote in this year's election was Thursday, September 10. The Candidate's Forum is Sunday, September 27, at 4 pm. Submit questions for the candidates by Friday, September 25, at 10 am to gotv@oregoncountryfair.org. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 10, at 6:30 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church. This is a hybrid meeting, and a Zoom link will be provided. The Board of Directors Election is Saturday, October 17. Ballots are due at the Eugene office by 8 pm on that day. There are five seats available. The top four vote-getters will serve three-year terms, and the fifth-highest vote-getter will serve a one-year term.

Marketing: Commemorative Sales were the highest sales ever. Big thanks to the Commemorative Sales Crew. A reorder was done because of the high demand, so be sure to check out our Merchandise site at merch.oregoncountryfair.org if you didn't get an item that you wanted at the Fair this year. All of our posters are available for reprint. We will do a fourth-quarter merchandise sales push. A fourth-quarter direct donor campaign will launch October 1.

Event Management: The Teddy Bear Picnic was a huge success. The weather was perfect! Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to enjoy the picnic and thank you to the volunteers who helped put it on! The annual Beaver Open Hacky Sack Tournament took place September 5 to 7. We love hosting this group, and the tournament was a success. The annual Elmira High School Track Meet took place on Wednesday, September 9. Every year up to 500 youth from around the state participate.

Guideline Changes: Form will go live on the .net site on October 1. Closing date will be November 15. The Board will vote on guideline policy changes at the December Board meeting.

Site Management: The site is looking good and winterization efforts have begun. Culture Jam was a huge success. Congratulations to Jans and his team for another successful year.

Treasurer's Report

(YouTube video: 0:12:14)

Hilary: The 2025 Comparative Financial Statements will be posted on the website after the annual meeting. Highlights include a presentation that conforms with generally accepted accounting principles. We do budget to actual to report internally, so we will need to regroup a couple of things. They tell a different story such as grouping according to crew, staff and programs. The totals and numbers are the same, just grouped differently. We compare our overall financial health to other nonprofits. Their terminology is a little bit different. Generally accepted accounting principles consider CDs as something different than cash. The balance sheet says that at the end of 2025 the balance was \$2.9 million, but financial statement says cash plus CDs went up \$150,000. Cash flows show the cash went up \$500,000 because the \$400,000 of CDs is not counted as a cash asset. It's an accounting convention that is not intuitive.

We had a good year. Our event income was up about \$50,000, but the cost was up \$300,000. We are having a great recovery. Commemorative sales were big. We are doing the best we can, considering we're not retaining the same sales that we had pre-COVID. We aren't hitting 15,000 attendance on Friday and Saturday, which is a different economic reality than pre-COVID. The statement of functional expenses is where we break out direct and indirect expenses. Programs include the event, youth programs, philanthropy, property tax and payroll. Eighty percent of all expenses are related to the event. We can look at this in more detail at the Annual Meeting.

We look at cash a lot. We have been shifting from designated funds (\$1.5 million pre-COVID) to accommodate longer-term planning, but they became tedious to track. Now we have shifted to long-term capital projects, such as the water project. We have five years to complete them. We have about \$500,000 to complete long-term projects, mostly the water project. The next big one will be about Emerald Ash Borer. We also have a rainy day fund. Reserves are not just for rainy day fund, we could fund a capital project, buy land or accommodate an emergency. The rainy day fund was used for COVID. We don't know what the next "rainy day" will be. We need reserves

that equal about a year's worth of income, or \$4 million. Right now we have about \$2 million in reserves. The reserves are not sacrosanct; we can use them sometimes, but we should keep the goal of trying to increase them.

Old Business

(YouTube video: 0:20:48)

Establish an Alcohol and Drug Recovery Space Task Force to research, develop, and present a comprehensive proposal for creating a dedicated recovery space during the week of the Oregon Country Fair. (AJ Jackson, Sandra Bauer, Kevin Levy, Jon Steinhart and Zahra Indigo Ronlov)

AJ moved and Trevor seconded to establish an Alcohol and Drug Recovery Space Task Force to research, develop and present a comprehensive proposal for creating a dedicated recovery space during the week of the Oregon Country Fair.

The purpose of this task force shall be to evaluate and recommend how the Fair can best provide a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for individuals in recovery from alcohol and other drugs, as well as those seeking recovery support while attending or participating in the event.

The task force will be responsible for:

- Assessing the needs of the recovery community within the Oregon Country Fair.
- Researching best practices from comparable festivals, events and organizations that provide recovery support spaces.
- Identifying potential locations, operational considerations, staffing or volunteer needs, scheduling, accessibility, and resource requirements.
- Developing recommendations for partnerships, programming and meeting formats that foster a safe, welcoming and recovery-oriented environment.
- Evaluating budgetary implications and any necessary policy or operational considerations.
- Presenting a written proposal, including recommendations and an implementation plan, to the Board of Directors for review and consideration within one year of the creation of the task force.

The Board affirms its commitment to fostering a culture of inclusion, wellness and belonging by exploring opportunities to support members of the recovery community through intentional and accessible programming at the Oregon Country Fair.

AJ: Over the 20 years that he has been at Fair, a constant thing that he has heard is that there are Fair family who don't feel safe attending Fair anymore due to their addiction. There are meetings, but there is not a ton of space available and the timing can be tricky. People can even be turned away. He is not an expert or knows what is needed to support these folks, but it is a serious need. He would like to be able to welcome folks back to Fair so they can enjoy it again.

Member Input:

Steven Berkson: What would the relationship be to what White Bird already provides?

Michael Connelly: He supports developing something like this for the Fair. Dead Heads have Wharf Rats and String Cheese and Burning Man have sober supports. He hopes this is approved. It's much needed and will be very helpful.

Board discussion:

Jon Steinhart: He supports the motion. Wharf Rats are self-organized, not sponsored by the Grateful Dead organization. A few years ago, we got a request for a Native American camping space. Jon Steinhart called the person who made the request and asked what was really desired and he said that he wanted a less tempting camping space, since many folks in that community have a predisposition to addiction. Hopefully that idea can be incorporated into the review.

LT: He enthusiastically supports this. A beloved, longtime entertainer told him that it's too hard to maintain sobriety at Fair. Many folks would benefit.

Paxton: He's seen the need for this for a long time. We have several resources at Fair, but they're scattered at Community Village and White Bird. We need to inventory them all and manage them all together. Other big events have been starting to do this and it's necessary in this current environment. He misses the Drug Info booth from the 1980s.

Trevor: Personally, he has longtime folks in his life who are embracing sobriety, and they don't feel like they can safely be at Fair. This would be an inclusive way to include sober people.

Sandra: This is an important and safe way to care for folks in our community while they discover new ways to live.

Teresa: She appreciates the points made by Steven, Paxton and Jon Steinhart. This task force needs to connect with folks who are already providing services. Spoken Word also has something related.

AJ: He got a chance to spend time with someone who came back to Fair after almost a decade to talk about whether this idea would work. He walked around with him to see if it would make sense. He is so happy to hear the support here. This would change things for several folks that want to return.

The motion passed: 10-0.

New Business

(YouTube video: 0:33:20)

Oregon Country Fair approves a sponsorship of the Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN) 2026 event at the \$5,000 sponsorship level, with funding to come from the Board-approved sponsorship and community engagement budget. (AJ Jackson, Paxton Hoag, Trevor Ross, Sandra Bauer and Kevin Levy)

Next Board Meeting – October 5 at 7 pm via Zoom