

August 2015 meeting of the Blaine County Fair Board
Thursday, Aug. 13 at 7:00pm at the fairgrounds.

In attendance:

Fair Board: President Don Richman, Vice President John Skoyen, Dale Williams, Loren Skoyen, Mike Copenhaver, Secretary Wendy Warburton

Guests: Denie Carrey (representing 4-H Extension Office), Terry Grabofsky, Helen Bucklin.

Minutes: Minutes of the last meeting were read by Wendy. Mike moved to approve the minutes as read. John seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Wendy reported that there was \$2,317 currently in Premium Money account, likely with many premium checks remaining out there not yet cashed, however. She provided hard copies of the current budget reports from the Clerk's office that she had emailed previously and reminded the board that Sandi Boardman had said these are preliminary only, as the official amounts will not be in until September.

Public Comment:

Thank you cards from Sweet Nursing Home residents (in appreciation for allowing the staff to bring a few residents to fair events without cost) and from the Ammen family (in appreciation for the Fair Board honoring Bill Ammen's 45 years of service) were passed around.

Guests Terry Grabofsky and Helen Bucklin attended on behalf of the Quilt Guild. Though the fairgrounds looked really nice and the Ag Building was the cleanest and best it's ever been, they did want to share a concern of trying to encourage the quilt guild to show more items so there is more to look at in the Home Arts dept. In the past they always had someone sitting at the table but sometimes there was no one there this year, and one quilt was initially hung up with thumbtacks. Denie Carrey said the Extension Office would be happy to share their supply of big clamps to hang quilts. This year there was confusion because Amanda Davies was listed in the premium book as the superintendent, but Mildred Dawson was actually supposed to be the superintendent. Wendy Warburton said she had talked to the girls working in the Ag Barn who hung the quilt when she heard about the thumbtacks and was told that the owner of the

quilt had OK'd it, but Wendy got Terry to help re-hang the quilted items properly and will make sure that isn't done in the future. Wendy had also talked to Amanda Davies and the Open Class manager Wendy Page at the fair when the error in the premium book was discovered to address the miscommunication. Wendy will also talk to Mildred Dawson to make sure she knows we didn't intend to leave her out. Don said be sure to let her know she is welcome to continue as superintendent if she would like. Helen said she would be willing to take over as superintendent, if it was okay with Mildred, with Terry's help. Wendy asked to clarify that they would be volunteering (not paid positions) and Terry added that they would also ask other quilt guild members to also help volunteer. Terry asked if the quilt guild could have a quilt show at the fair just to exhibit their quilts but not have them judged; that would increase participation, and there should be signs on the quilts that sat, "do not touch." The fair board was fine with that. Wendy asked them to also reach out to the Harlem quilt group to participate, and to look at the premium book and let her know if there need to be any changes.

Denie Carrey attended to thank the board for letting the Extension Office use the Old Fair Office ("Grandma's House") and decorate the fairgrounds. They would also like permission to put in a Master Gardener area with shade next to "Grandma's House." There would be no cost to the fair board. Mike asked that they place it on the East side of the building as we have power that we need to be able to access on the west. Denie also inquired about the possible moving of the fair dates, and there was discussion about the dates of other fairs, the swim meet, etc. Dale brought up the scheduling of the animal slaughtering. John noted that the Hi-Line fairs are working together on this and everyone is going to have to massage their dates, and the other counties are looking at changing their dates, too. Mike said if possible he thinks we should have the fair the 2nd week of August. It is a big complaint that the fair is too early. It's currently not at a good time for ranchers who are haying. However, Dale, John, and Don pointed out that a later date could interfere with harvest for farmers. Denie said the Extension Office liked doing the Wednesday all-interviews day before the fair in the commercial building and would like to do so again next year. The horse show could be done all in one day on Thursday. They can finish before the kids rodeo. That would also save money, as we would only have the judge for one day. We also could change the schedule to have the other animal shows Friday morning so more things are done and by Sunday only the dog, cat, and rabbit show, the

round robin contest and the 4-H sale are left on Sunday. Pigs could be shown on Friday morning, followed by lambs. Denie said they are also looking at changing the premium book to placement payment instead of points payment. Don noted the changes to the premium book for next year will have to be discussed with the Blaine County Journal because it will be their year to print it. Denie said the 4-H'ers would like to use the commercial building for their Achievement Night in late September or early October and requested that the fair board waive the rental fee. They plan to invite the whole community and all the 4-H animal buyers. John clarified we would do in-kind instead of the fee, rather than waive it. The full board agreed. Denie also announced that the Extension website and Facebook page are up and running now. Wendy asked Denie if more 4-H kids would consider donating buddy animals to the fair board as last year a 4-Her donated the sale of her buddy pig to the fair board to raise money for us. Denie said she would find out.

Old business

Sweet Home road: there was no new news to report.

Fairgrounds Drainage and water issues: Jeremy Siemens is supposed to get ahold of Don when he returns from vacation.

Wendy brought up a water leak between the Ag building and 4-H building. The board instructed her to call John Pike and get it fixed.

Wendy asked if the board would like to schedule a day in early October to blow out the water lines and turn off the water at the fairgrounds. The board decided to wait till next meeting and set a date then.

Upcoming events:

Wendy reported that FFA canceled the Aug. 8 tentative date for a dance but will likely hold one in the fall sometime. The Truck Pulls are Aug. 15 but Wendy asked if anyone else will be available in case of emergency as she would be out of town; Loren will be available. Sugarbeet Festival is Sept. 25-27. Gun Show Oct 1-4. Josh Nordboe wedding Oct. 31. A representative for the Chinook High School senior class had called and inquired about a possible Halloween party but commercial building was already reserved for Nordboe wedding. Wendy

suggested the Grandstand and advised them to look into the insurance costs, etc., and get back to us if they are interested.

The multi-county meeting of fair boards to establish a Hi-Line carnival route will be September 12 at 11:30 at the Glasgow courthouse. Don will not be able to attend. John, Loren, Mike, and Dale plan to attend.

The Rocky Mountain Association of Fairs Convention will be Nov. 11-15th. Only John, Loren, and Linda plan to attend. As previously instructed, Wendy had reserved rooms at the convention hotel, but they were very expensive, \$179 per night. The board authorized her to reserve rooms at a less expensive hotel nearby. Wendy will be available by phone and reported that she had met with county attorney Kelsie Harwood and Kelsie will also be available by phone to review any contracts as needed, even after hours or over the weekend.

Events Center/Kitchen: The dividers are currently stored in the Ag Building instead of the commercial building, since the Moxley wedding. The board said to keep them there for now.

Don reported that he met with tribal chairman Mark Azure. Mark assured Don that day that he thought he could have some money for us (to make up for the promised \$17,500 from Fort Belknap toward carnival pre-sale that never came through) but Don is still waiting for a response from Mark about that. Don also talked to Rocky Boy and learned that they have paid Hill County from \$10,000-\$30,000 for discount carnival tickets every year, although this year they dealt with the state fair in Great Falls instead because the discounts weren't offered by the Great Northern Fair.

Building repairs/maint.: Wendy asked about turning off the electricity for the year. Loren will turn it off. Wendy is to get padlocks put on the electrical boxes. She will need to buy more padlocks to do so.

Wendy asked about Grandstand "turnbuckles" – she found a line in the old Groundskeeper Manual about tightening turnbuckles but didn't know what or where they are or how to do so. Dale said they are probably between the steel girders, the frame for the roof, big steel rods that criss-cross and there is a bolt or nut in the middle. Also, Dale noticed outside the east commercial bldg. doors a fan was running and the filter was dirty, so he blew the filter out with his air compressor and turned it back on. The filter will need to be checked once in a

while. He was not sure of its purpose. Wendy will ask Suzy about it. Wendy reported one toilet needs to be fixed in the Grandstands men's room and she had called the plumber and left a message.

The board asked that Wendy send a letter to the Weed Dept. before the fair next year that we will need the building cleared by Tuesday before the fair so we can be in there to set up the sheep barn by that day. We will also need it left open thru Sunday/Monday until the carnival people leave as that is where they shower.

Dale will contact the college at Ft. Belknap and ask them about getting carpentry students to put up the tin interior roofing in the Ag Building this fall.

Wendy is looking into getting a cover for the boiler shutoff button in the commercial building and ordering new paper towel dispensers for the grandstand bathrooms as the board had asked.

The board discussed the metal sign/sculpture that is to be donated for the new rodeo arena arch and naming the fairgrounds arenas after George Ortner and Bill Ammen for their 40+ years of service on the fair board. John moved to name the grandstands arena "Ortner Arena" and add a stencil of a cowboy roping a calf. Loren seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The board plans to name the Little Arena "Ammen Arena" when the new indoor arena is built there.

Budget:

Loren reminded the board that Commissioner Delores Plumage had said to put something in writing regarding the money owed to the fair board from the Road Dept. for the 5 years of electricity bills. Don asked Loren to get the numbers to Wendy and Wendy to make up a bill.

John reported that Dave Taylor wants to buy the 4.5 acre corner of fairgrounds land that he has rented from the fair board for years. We'll need to talk to the county and see if we can do that and if the money can go into our budget. Dave went to the commissioners a couple years ago to see what needs to be done to buy it and they referred him to us. John noted the lease contract includes "first option to buy".

John is also working on selling the fair board's unused water rights, for which we are charged taxes even though we don't use them, but that is going to take some time. He is working with Kay Blatter of the irrigation district on it. Loren asked if

we can lease them out, if we don't sell them. Wendy will ask county attorney Kelsie Harwood what the options are for the sale of the land and the sale or lease of the excess, unusable water rights.

John reported that Dave Taylor also said he would be happy to be a sponsor for about \$750 a year for one of the signs we'll be selling on the building.

Mike got a quote from Heather DePriest for those big, vinyl signs: \$214 apiece. That seemed extremely expensive and he planned to check into whether aluminum signs would be a good option. He had learned from Jay Eslick at the school that their big football field signs cost only about \$139 and they had them made in Havre. They are vinyl with a UV coating over the top.

Loren will check on sign prices with Cat Graphics and Outlaw Embroidery in Great Falls, and Floren's Hill County Printing and Griggs Printing in Havre. Don will check with The Clothing Company in Harlem.

The signs will be posted year-round on the Grandstands exterior, fair office exterior, on the fence along the concession stands area, etc. To launch the project and spark interest, the fair board will put up two signs, for Moxley Construction and Red Rock, as an in-kind for all their donated work on the arena. All of the other spots available will be sold based on Gold, Silver, or Bronze sponsorships:

- Gold Sponsor, \$1,000: 8'x4' sign, arena banner, and VIP tickets for 2 to all fair events.
- Silver Sponsor, \$750: 8x4' sign and VIP tickets for 2 to all fair events (NO arena banner).
- Bronze Sponsor, \$500: 8'x4' sign only.
- 4th level: Arena banner only. Price will be increased to: \$150.

Derby sponsorships will remain separate from this program, as that money is required to build the \$10,000 purse to attract the derby drivers.

Wendy will create a letter/brochure about these options and bring to the next fair board meeting for approval before selling to businesses.

On the topic of signs, Mike suggested asking the 4-H kids and FFA kids to make new signs for the animal barns.

Wendy provided an update regarding the damage to Ralph and Wendy Page's vehicle on the fairgrounds, caused by one of our employees. We have a \$2,000 deductible. Ralph initially got a \$1,388.80 estimate from Precision in Chinook. Then the hail storm happened and Precision wasn't able to get them in and referred them to a company in Billings. That estimate was over \$700 higher. Wendy asked Ralph and Wendy to please get a couple of additional estimates. They agreed and will send them to Don's office. John suggested having them get an estimate from the shop Scott Skoyen uses for his vehicles who is very reasonable, sometimes half price. Wendy will ask Ralph and Wendy to do so.

Rodeo arena, Indoor arena plans:

Laine Jorgenson told Wendy she wouldn't be able to attend the meeting tonight but plans to get to work on the indoor arena project. She also requested that the board consider allowing the Milk River Challenge to have their rodeo on Friday night of the fair, before the concert. They had people requesting that and she also thought it would be easier on everyone not having to clean up after the derby with a fine toothed comb so early on Sunday morning. The board discussed this but concluded it was not workable. Also, the rodeo participants left a large amount of garbage for us to pick up out in the grassy area.

Wendy said Justin Simenson with the Bear Paw Roundup had called and asked about the possibility of having the Bear Paw Roundup during the fair. The board discussed but didn't think it was workable.

John reported that it cost the Phillips County Fair \$45,000 to get Clay Walker in concert, and they spent \$75,000 total to get the concert all set up. They lost a lot of money on that. Their facilities are getting pretty rough; they don't have a fair manager. But it was a very crowded fair. With our fair having lost money on this year's concert, Mike suggested looking into having a motorsport event instead of concert. Don had someone suggest having an MMA fight and boxing match instead, to fill the grandstand. The boxing only costs \$1,000. The MMA fights they have had in Malta have been packed houses and they have had to turn people away. Tables are sponsored for \$500 each. Loren said tables cost \$150 at the Eagles boxing event in Chinook. It was determined that having fights at the fair wouldn't match the family oriented atmosphere of the fair but could be considered as a possible fundraising event for the fairgrounds at a different time.

John, Loren, and Don had several people complain to them about the fence in the beer garden. If we could get rid of that, more people will buy beer because they can sit with their family. Only Havre and Chinook fence their beer gardens, not other fairs. Wendy will check with Mike Inman to see if it is an insurance requirement or something the board could change. Loren had also received complaints from women about the ladies room stalls in the Grandstands. John didn't think they should be too hard to fix.

Wendy mentioned the Sugarbeet Festival will have black pot cooking at commercial building, possibly team penning in the arena, and drive-in movie on the back of the grandstands and wondered what to charge the Chamber for that. She was instructed to charge the regular rental fees for the buildings plus an extra \$100 for the use of the grandstand and parking area, to be equitable with how we charge for the gun show. Dale added that if the FFA does the concessions, they should pay a fee or do some in-kind, too, as it's a money maker for them.

New Business

Review of the fair:

Per Connie Murphy, we need a fair evacuation plan. Shannon Sattleen was working on one for us and told Wendy there are almost no other counties doing so, so it has been challenging to find something to use as a template.

Wendy reported that the following derby sponsors still need to send in their money (they have been invoiced once; she will invoice them again, if necessary): Bear Paw Title, Black Butte Electric/Ross Lappy, Finley's Food Farm, Fisher Seeds, Frontier Lawn & Landscaping (Scott was going to do this one), Havre Ford, Heflin Fencing/Mick Heflin, JF Welding/Josh Frank, Little Kritters, LT Trucking/Lee & Lacey Farmer, Miller Motors/Harold Miller, Nu Wave Oil Tools/Darren Huestis (John will ask them), Rainbow Irrigation, Richman Insurance, Showtime Fireworks/Rick & Mischelle Fisher. Arena sign sponsors that still need to pay: American Garage, Bear Paw Meats, Cowan Select Horses, Nissen Angus, Pike Construction, and Ramblin' Rose. Also, the RV camper spaces used by the Handy Family/reserved by Ruben Kuntz, and by Keith and

Keri Hansen still need to be paid for. Wendy will plan to invoice/re-invoice all of the above.

Mike plans to handle the RV spaces differently next year, assigning spaces and putting signs up in advance for where people should park their campers. Mike also talked with Ben Hauptman from the extension office and came up with a different plan for next year for handling the wood shavings the kids used. Ben figured 2 bags are enough for each kid, per animal. We will just set them in their pens. If they want extra bags, they can buy them. Dale has told the Sheep kids all along, they get ONE bag per pen. Beef animals require more. Unfortunately, the honor system did not work this year, and Wendy reported that in spite of ordering the same amount that was used last year in advance, the kids had gone through all of that less than halfway through the fair and we had to make an emergency order of more shavings on Saturday because they were all gone.

Wendy reported on the income and losses from each fair event. Wendy has sent RMAF the letter from the fair board describing our experience with Paradise Amusements and recommending that they be expelled from the RMAF. The Carnival brought in, with the deposit of the pre-sale money, \$3,570. The Ft. Belknap Tribe did not follow through on the \$17,500 they had promised. They contributed only \$700 of the \$3,570 that was taken in for presale tickets. We had to pay Paradise Amusements \$50,000. We had to pay Midway Rentals for the Generator rental and insurance: \$1,311. We had to pay CHS/Milk River for the Fuel for the Generator: about \$260. Wendy did not charge mileage for driving the guys to Kalispell and back, and all of the volunteer truck drivers who brought the rides from Kalispell to Chinook for the fair donated their time at no cost.
Difference: $\$51,571 - \$3570 = \text{Loss of } \$48,001.$

The Kids' Rodeo brought in: \$1,655. We pay the Blaine Co. HS Rodeo Club \$1,500 to put on the event. Difference: \$155 (not counting ticket takers, whom we paid, less than \$100 total).

The Concert brought in: \$3,110. Costs included \$1,500 to the Bad Larrys and \$5,500 to Two Way Crossing. Hotel bill for 3 rooms for 2 Way Crossing: $\$73.83 \times 3 = \221.49 . Total concert expenses: \$7,221.49. Not counting sound man, ticket takers and wristbands or BBQ dinner hosted by Richman family. (Thank you, Richman family. And, thank you Dale Williams for donating the beef.) Difference: $\$7,221.49 - \$3,110 = \text{Loss of } \$4,111.49$ on the concert.

Demolition Derby brought in: \$27,468, as follows: Our share of Calcutta: Of the \$6,850 total Calcutta, we paid out \$4760 to the winner, so \$2090 leftover for the fair board. Ticket Sales: \$20,618. (Note: the \$5 increased back gate fee did not seem to deter people at all or make a dent in the back audience.) Also got Two deposits for "Entry Fees" of \$1,900 and \$150. The above does not include the \$10,000 total purse, which is paid out to the drivers. The fair board is responsible for \$3,000 of that; the derby committee is responsible to raise \$7,000 of it. This year, Dawn Colby worked diligently on getting derby sponsors and got 99 sponsors. We paid out \$12,040 in derby prize money, NOT including trades/comps, which were: Blaine Co. Journal for printing the Derby Programs, KE Beef/Kevin Elias for being the Announcer, Mangold Farms for the original sponsor car donation, Omimex and Skoyen Ranch for the coat prizes, Clothing Co. for the vinyl updates on the sponsor car, etc., The Creamery for the ice cream prizes for kids' derby, Montana Grafix for designing the Derby Programs. Most sponsors pay \$100 each, with the exception of: \$250 Best Paint – Custom Collision Repair (alternates every other year with Precision Auto Body). \$250 Mad Dog sponsor – Precision Auto Body (alternates every other year with Custom Collision). \$250 Shirt Sponsor 1 (meaning they get their business name on all the shirts) – Havre Distributors. \$250 Shirt Sponsor 2 (meaning they get their name on all the shirts) – Baker Amusements. Moxley Construction: \$100 plus backhoe use. John Pike Construction: \$100 plus backhoe use. Outback also donated backhoe use. Wendy said she felt that we could easily get more sponsors next year, say 125 paying sponsors, with the same effort, if we start earlier. Loren reported that we had 14 big cars and 4 chain cars. The Kids derby had about 6 kids.

Pig Wrestling brought in ticket sales of \$4,050. Cost: \$4,500 to Double D. Hog Wrestling. John noted it was kind of a pain moving the 2 sets of aluminum bleachers for the contestants, and next year we should just leave them where they belong and ribbon them off for the contestants.

The Milk River Challenge Open Rodeo brought in (our 10% of the Gate): \$476. Cost to us: Just ticket takers and wristbands, approx. \$100-150.

(Note, we also got 20% of the Beer Garden for the concert, derby, pig wrestling, and rodeo.) Wristbands & tickets for ALL of the events, total, cost \$154, and we

have some leftovers that we can also use next year. For our 20% of the Beer Garden sales, the Chinook Golf Course paid us \$794.

Regarding the Concession Stands: This board voted last fall to waive their \$300 each rental fees this year. They will still need to pay us back for their electricity used. Wendy will invoice each of them for their share of the electricity once she gets the July bills from the Clerk's office.

Sandy Boardman has informed Wendy that ALL fair employees, even temporary ticket-takers, etc., will need to fill out the full paperwork of a regular employee AND be covered by Worker's Comp, at our expense, next year. Even volunteers will have to be covered by Worker's Comp at our expense. Loren asked if we can we make them sign a waiver instead?

Wendy asked, since we spend a LOT of money with Clothing Co. for the derby T-shirts, etc., \$2,061.50 this year, should we do some type of trade or partial trade with them for one of our Gold, Silver or Bronze sponsor packages? Similarly, we pay a LOT of money to CHS/Milk River Co-op for the shavings for the 4-H and FFA kids animals and the pig wrestling and petting zoo contracts. (This year around fair time alone: \$2,530.94). Should/could we consider asking them to do this as a trade for a big sign on the building or something? John didn't think we should do trades, but just try to sell them sponsor packages, as trades would get too confusing and also would make any taxes, write offs etc. more confusing.

Wendy noted we charge \$100 for derby sponsors and \$100 for arena banner sponsors. There is some overlap. She and Dawn found it very confusing in invoicing and wondered if we could change/raise the prices for next year, perhaps to \$125 for a derby sponsor and the \$150 (as discussed earlier).

Dale has noticed that with the Ft. Benton fair coming up, every business from Havre to Great Falls seems to put a radio ad on the air with a plug in it for the fair. We should ask Ron Bruske to do a better job of this for us.

Meeting was adjourned. Next meeting will be Sept 10th 7:00pm at the fairgrounds.