

Commissioners' Journal
July 24, 2020

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met in special session on July 24, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. in the Geauga County Fair, Lounge/School Building located at 14373 North Cheshire Street, in Burton, Ohio.

It is declared and determined that all formal actions of the Board of County Commissioners concerning and relating to the adoption of all resolutions that were adopted in this meeting, and that all deliberations of the Board of County Commissioners that resulted in such formal action were open to the public and were in compliance with all legal requirements, including section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The President of the Board, Timothy C. Lennon opened the special meeting at 1:02 p.m. by leading the Board and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The purpose of the special meeting was to hold a work session with members of the Agricultural Society / Fair Board to discuss matters relating to the upcoming fair, the fairgrounds and to review the renewal of the existing lease.

Commissioner Lennon explained to those in attendance that the purpose of the meeting was to hold a discussion and that there would be no public comments or questions.

President of the Fair Board Dave Parker thanked the Board of Commissioners for their continued support of the Fair and for attending the Fair Managers Conference in Columbus in January. Mr. Parker thanked the Board for their support of capital improvements and for providing funds towards those improvements. Mr. Parker explained that annually they come before the Board to provide an update on what they have been doing, and this year it has been very little, that they were keeping spending low due to the uncertainty and not knowing what will happen. They had only done some painting and a small roofing project but the majority of things planned had been put on hold.

Secretary Paul Harris explained that this is something we do every year with the Commissioners, but with the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020 has been a challenge, but that he had personally been in contact with the Governor and talking with fairs all over the state and the country. The question that keeps being asked is are we having a full fair or a junior fair, and the plan laid out by the Governor for Responsible Restart Ohio they plan to hold a full modified fair, by that meaning, no open class in rabbit, poultry or swine. Mr. Harris stated that they have stuck to the guidelines, reading from the guidelines:

“While COVID-19 had made it impossible to hold fairs in the way we have in the past, they are of such importance to communities that every effort should be made to preserve the Junior Fair competitions and exhibits, as well as the open class (open to adults) events and competitions.”

Mr. Harris stated that they are here to support the youth and the kids as they come together.

Mr. Harris explained that sanitation was a priority, that they were able to purchase some equipment for cleaning including a foam gun and all the chemicals to do solid block walls, like in the restrooms, along with static sprayer units. They ordered six and currently have three of each. Mr. Harris explained that they had been through viruses before, this is just ramped up and while they typically had 30 hand sanitizer stations out they have increased to 260 units this year and that the ride company was also supplying their own cleaning and sanitizing products. There will be wipes and cleaning products for the kids for their shows. Along with products at the gates along with masks.

Mr. Harris expressed that their PEP Insurance company had come in to do a risk assessment for them and that they didn't need any changes made because the set up was the best they had seen and that their COVID Prevention Plan was the best so far this year. All the chemicals and supplies that they had ordered are in.

Mr. Harris drew attention to the Junior Fair regulations due to COVID-19, that include the following:

- 1. Must complete project judging and quality assurance*
- 2. Must enter online for all Junior Fair divisions*
- 3. All DUNF forms required for market animals and lactating animals will be online*
- 4. All junior fair participants and their families are expected to monitor their health and maintain appropriate social distancing while on the fairgrounds*

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5. *All junior fair participants must have a signed COVID-19 participation waiver in order to take part in any junior fair activity, show or sale*
6. *All junior fair participants will adhere to drop off times assigned per species, enter through gate 9 and exit thru gate 8. No parking around buildings*
7. *Once project is dropped off, please leave the area around the barn*
8. *Directional traffic flow will be coordinated by Directors as well as closing areas in the barn to the public as needed during congested times*
9. *All show times are subject to change*
10. *No animals will be permitted in the sale ring*
11. *Every attempt will be made to have a live (in-person) sale and have it simulcast as well as online bidding*
12. *No physical contact between buyer and junior fair participant during the sale*
13. *Nothing will be distributed to buyers during the livestock sale, i.e. buyer packets*
14. *The green livestock sale boards will be mailed to all buyers for large animal projects and hand-delivered with the processed animal for small animal projects*
15. *All participants will work with advisors and junior fair coordinators to reduce congestion in barns during pen and stall cleaning and feeding times*
16. *All barns will be closed to spectators during shows and daily for pen cleaning and feeding*
17. *Any junior fair participant that is unable to participate, due to a reason related to COVID-19, may submit in writing to waive the showing and interactive experience of Jr. Fair*
 - a. *Provided the junior fair participant has completed project requirements – they may pick a primary project; the club advisor will work with the adult coordinator and Fairboard to care for the animal during the fair*
 - b. *The animal will be eligible to sell at the completion of the species during the Sale*
18. *Masks for all attending and participating are required – anyone not following this mandate will be removed from the fairgrounds and forfeit participation*

Mr. Harris explained that entries were being done online, and that the 4-H programming stuff had also been done online. They were changing how entry drop off was going to be handled in that they were going to start on August 22nd with the exhibit halls, get everything dropped off, judged and set up and then lock the doors until the fair opens.

Mr. Harris stated that the camping will be handled in the same manner, they will bring campers in the week before, set them up and they will sit until fair opens. Camping was not being restricted but they did set regulations for COVID-19. Typically, if they don't sell out they have put out the option to buy a second site, that has been shut off, to allow for extra spacing, along with campers not being allowed to face each other to eliminate gatherings. If you have a site and are unable to use it, they will hold until next year.

Mr. Harris stated that they would be closing the barns during showing, to allow the kids to be in them without public and that they would be closed to allow for cleaning and feeding periodically through out the day.

Mr. Harris stated that the livestock sale is important and they are working to make it successful, and are working to install a high-tech fiber optic line to do the auction live and with online bidding. You can watch and bid from home. There will be no animals in the auction, just the 4-H member.

Mr. Harris stated that they cut out all advertising for the fair this year, including tv and newspapers. Cancelled contracts with tv stations across the board. Mr. Harris brought up the programming schedule, the entertainment committee has worked tirelessly following the Governors guidelines. Grandstand shows are allowed and open to the public with a reduced number of grandstand seating to allow for distancing. There have been over 45 acts that were cut, including all local ones. Mr. Harris stated that the Band o' Rama has been cut from Sunday, they just can't regulate all the families that comes to watch without using tickets. The Board did agree to donate the normal \$500.00 to each school since that is important. Mr. Lennon inquired about grandstand seating, to which Mr. Harris stated that they limit the ticket sales to half of what the stands can hold. Mr. Harris noted that they held a Truck and Tractor pull in June and they limited sales to 800, sold 700 and had a great night. The box seats have plexiglass barriers and will not be split, you have to buy all 6 of the seats. Mr. Harris stated that

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the people movers have been eliminated this year from the parking lots. The gates will be adjusted and reduce the number of them being used as they anticipate a drop-in attendance to about fifty percent.

Mr. Harris stated that Summit, Medina and Lorain fairs are moving forward like us with a full modified fair following the same guidelines and are looking to them as a learning curve. Mr. Harris stated that the entry deadline is August 12th, once we know what is entered will tell us what we need to do. Mr. Harris stated that they cancelled the open swine, open poultry and open rabbits shows to reduce the congestion. They also canceled several of the horse shows. Mr. Harris stated that fair book mailings were reduced and force people to move to online entry. Mr. Harris stated that tag pick up will be done outside under a tent as a way to reduce the congestion. Mr. Harris stated that additional signage is up in the bathrooms reminding people to wash their hands as well as signs to practice social distancing. Mr. Harris stated that they have a meeting with University Hospital to assist with help and guidance moving forward.

Mr. Harris stated that the ride plan was submitted to the Health Department and I will state that it was not reviewed. Mr. Harris stated that anyone that has cancelled has not been replaced to allow for additional spacing. There was a discussion about ride safety, noting that the Responsible Restart Ohio states that if the Fair wishes to have amusement rides, it should comply with all orders of the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Mr. Harris stated that to date, the Ohio Department of Health hasn't issued any orders and the Ohio Department of Agriculture stated that they have no intention of issuing any additional orders. Mr. Harris talked about sanitation and social distance spacing. Mr. Lennon inquired about changes to the midways, to which Mr. Harris expressed that with the mask requirement if they work there is no need to worry about congestion, they anticipate reduced attendance and with cancellations they will be spacing vendors out.

Mr. Harris expressed that they have had a lot of interest in Senior day, it will still be on Friday, but there will be no activities that day. Mr. Harris stated that the fairgrounds has been very busy with people getting out, walking and kids riding their bikes, which causes them to continue to deal with vandalism. Mr. Harris noted that rentals have increased, but there are none scheduled after August 1, they don't have the manpower and as a way to keep a good relationship with the health department, but after the last 48 hours he doesn't know what to think and feel about the Health Department. What has transpired prior to today's meeting he feels is less than an accident, and frustrating at best. Mr. Harris stated that at least two times they sat down and met with Mr. Quade about going over their plan, and he had no interest in reviewing it. There had been several emails this week with Mr. Quade about the Governors orders, the facemask requirement only helps them out. Mr. Harris stated that Mr. Quade sent an email at 3:00 p.m. stating that he was not going to preemptively shut down the fair, at 9:00 p.m. that same day he sent an email with the resolution and press release about the request to only do a Junior Fair. Mr. Harris stated that he was not condemning the Health Department he is just very frustrated, that there appears to be some kind of communication problem. Mr. Harris stated that he cannot say enough about the Fair Board and everything they have done to work on this.

Mr. Lennon commended him and the Fair Board for all their efforts that they have been working on this since all of this started in March, that they have been working very carefully to meet the requirements. Commissioner Spidalieri stated that he was proud of them and for what they do, the Leadership in Geauga is looked upon in the State and the numerous people that care in the county, that want to do the right thing to stay safe. Commissioner Dvorak expressed that he appreciated all their hard work that a fair has a lot of moving parts, but the fair is an important part of the kid's life and it's important to keep it going. Mr. Harris added that the Junior Fair is more than bringing your animal to the fair, and talked about what fair means, sleeping in the barn with your animal, the friendships and bonds, sneaking into the arcade when you're not supposed too, it's falling in and out of love five times in five days, adding that he doesn't remember the names of the people he graduated with, but he can remember the names of the people he was in 4-H with. Mr. Harris expressed that they have better safety with a full fair then just doing a Junior Fair, and talked about the number of counties having full fairs versus just the Junior Fair, expressing that some counties have walked away and that due to financial situations they may not continue. Mr. Harris stated that they are conservative and are in a situation that they can move forward, they have spent about \$150,000.00 in cleaning supplies. There was a brief discussion on if they could sponsor them with some of the CARES Act funding. Mr. Lennon stated that they want to support their efforts, keep communication going and if there is something the Board can help them with over any obstacles along the way. Mr. Harris talked about their

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Treasurer Diana also working with Summit County Fair, noting that they had filed for the payroll protection plan, that they had applied for the Capital grant, that there had been an OFMA grant put into place of \$50,000.00 as a way to help offset costs for fairs, but any help is a positive help.

There was a brief discussion about the lease and the length of it and whether it needed to be done now or if there was still time remaining. Mr. Harris was going to send something to Mr. Morgan on the amendment and they would follow up.

The work session was moved to be closed by Commissioner Dvorak.

BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Dvorak, seconded by Commissioner Spidalieri to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Geauga County Board of Commissioners

Timothy C. Lennon

Ralph Spidalieri

James W. Dvorak

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

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