

Commissioners' Journal
August 15, 2017

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met for a work session with the Geauga County Agricultural Society on August 15, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at the Geauga County Fairgrounds, 14373 North Cheshire Street, 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 Vice President of the Board, Walter Claypool opened the meeting at 12:22 p.m.**

**The work session got started late due to the regular Commissioners meeting not ending until 11:46 a.m.*

Commissioner Spidalieri was absent from today's work session.

In attendance: Commissioner Claypool, Commissioner Lennon, County Administrator David Lair, Clerk Christine Blair, Fair Board President Sam Plants and Secretary Paul Harris.

Ms. Blair noted that during the morning session the Board approved the expenditure of \$20,000.00 with the request of any invoices being dated after today.

Mr. Harris explained that last week they received a call about offering helicopter rides during the fair. They answered no, and immediately asked who owned the property. They apologize for the phone calls that come to the Commissioners, adding that it seems nobody accepts 'no' these days.

Mr. Harris stated that they raised their liability insurance to 4 million this year, and they take it seriously, and are used as an example for other fairgrounds. Mr. Harris stated that with the funds from the Commissioners they continue to make improvements to the grounds and that is reflected in the premiums that they pay for liability, noting that previously it cost \$70,000.00 a year, and this past year it was down to \$32,000.00. Concerning the recent tragedy at the Ohio State Fair, it did not affect Summit and Lake County, however, every fair since has taken a hit on rides and attendance. Mr. Harris expressed that while tragic, it was still an accident. Mr. Harris stated that the ride company will be Bates Amusement, adding that prior to that they used Rides of America which is the same ride company that was at the State Fair. Mr. Harris explained that Rides of America has fairs around us any longer, and during the winter they operate at festivals in Mexico and southern states. Bates Amusement only goes from April to October, services everything and stores until Spring. Mr. Harris stated that rides will begin coming on Tuesday and Wednesday. State inspectors are in Thursday and before they can operate they have to be approved and a full report is turned in to the fair office. The ride operators have to inspect them again every morning during the fair. Mr. Plants talked about security at the Ashtabula County Fair, explaining that they had a missing girl, and as he was leaving, they stopped and checked every vehicle. Mr. Harris added that they use the text messaging alerts during the fair. You can try and plan for everything, but sometimes you just can't.

Mr. Harris noted that there have been some articles about the fair band, and having family members that were charter members it has been tough. Mr. Harris stated that the band was moving in a different direction. They have hired a new director, the band is smaller, but there will be a band at the fair and it will have new uniforms in 2018. They are back out in the community, having fun making music.

Mr. Harris stated that they have gotten all the repairs done from the vandalism from last year and that they are still working on collecting restitution.

Mr. Harris mentioned Legends Park and that there is a new addition which will be unveiled during the Fair.

Ms. Blair inquired about the Maintenance Department being able to get in to the Patterson Center on Thursday and Friday. Mr. Harris replied he was happy the gate people are doing

Commissioners' Journal
August 15, 2017

their job. There was a brief discussion about the cost of the fair, the expenses during the fair and the number of people who want to get into the fair for free.

Mr. Harris talked about the Fair Foundation, which currently has \$300,000.00 in it with a goal of having a million, to use for capital improvements, noting that it is invested with the Cleveland Foundation.

Mr. Harris talked about the issues with the contracts this year, and how everyone wants more money, giving the example of trash collection. Currently they are with Waste Management because they lost Universal. Mr. Lennon inquired about the other biggest expense, to which Mr. Harris responded the Sheriff's Office, the electrical bill and labor. There was a brief discussion about the food vendors, citing Hoover Fudge and the Bush Concession family, noting that their contract is number 006, and how long they have been coming to the fair. Mr. Lair brought up the question Mr. Spidalieri had inquired about in regards to expanding the grand stand to be able to bring in bigger acts. There was discussion about expanding buildings to allow for larger events. Mr. Harris noted that 2022 will be the 200th Anniversary. Mr. Harris said that the time of the year has a lot to do with when the fair is held. Many people now are fighting with back-to-school. Friday night football has always been an issue because you can never draw a crowd. There was discussion about when the schools start back and how they didn't go back till the day after Labor Day but now the majority of them are starting one to two weeks before. That is affecting a lot of things because the focus is on that and not on going to the fair.

The Board went on a tour of the grounds with Mr. Harris and Mr. Plants along with Director R.L. Phillips.

The Board returned from the Tour and talked about the upcoming Anniversary in 2022 with an announcement and kickoff of the year at the fair manager's convention. Also considered was the idea of adding an additional day, and maybe a special concert during the year. Mr. Harris stated that the most logical improvement would be an expansion to the Agriculture Building with a multi-purpose facility that can be used for weddings and large events, along with space for a museum. Mr. Harris talked about items donated to the Fair Board from individuals who have come across old memorabilia from years ago. Mr. Harris noted one building that used to be used as the luggage building for the interurban railway, noting that it still had the hinges. Mr. Harris talked about the rental use of the buildings during the rest of the year.

Mr. Harris mentioned the Vietnam Veterans presentation that will be taking place during the fair on Friday at Noon at the main grandstand.

BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Lennon to adjourn the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

Geauga County Board of Commissioners

Ralph Spidalieri

Walter M. Claypool

Timothy C. Lennon

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

Commissioners' Journal
August 15, 2017

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK