

Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc.
Annual Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2026
Draft

The Meeting of the Board of Directors/Members of the Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc. (SWFC), a nonprofit corporation, was duly called and held at the Pima County Fairground's Green Room on Thursday, January 29, 2026.

Directors Present: Garrett Ham, President; Judy Patrick, Secretary; Mark Cowley, Treasurer; Jim Murphy, Director; Marian LaLonde, Director; Sheena Conner, Director and Marvin Selke, Emeritus Member.

Staff Present: Jon Baker, SWFC Executive Director; Julia Casillas, SWFC Operations Manager; Courtney Danloe, SWFC Chief Financial Officer; Launa Rabago, SWFC Marketing Manager; Amilia Gruber, SWFC Vendor Coordinator.

Others in Attendance: Joey Schwanz, Pima County's Operations Program Manager; Shelly McGriff, Tucson Speedway; Tim Rominger, Tucson Speedway; John Lashley, Tucson Speedway; Tom Reeve, Tucson Kart Speedway and Jeremy Huebner, Tucson Kart Speedway.

Call to Order: Garrett Ham called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

- a. **Roll Call:** Mark Cowley, Treasurer; Jim Murphy, Director, joined via internet conference; Alan Levin, Director, was absent.
- b. **Call to the Public:** None

2. STAFF REPORTS:

a. **Executive Director**

i. **Goals and Update**

Jon Baker shared that he is actively working with staff on revising and updating the policy manual. He noted it is an ongoing project that will continue year after year until it is completed. While this goal remains on the list, significant progress has already been made on the other goals.

Jon also emphasized the importance of keeping overhead costs low. He reported that the LED project has been highly beneficial, with continued decreases in monthly TEP expenses.

Additionally, he discussed the goal of maximizing use of conference rooms and facilities. Julia Casillas and Launa Rabago have been instrumental in bringing in new events as well as repeat events that utilize these spaces.

ii. Pima County Fair 2026

Jon Baker mentioned that the Pima County Fair is less than three months away. He shared that January is one of the busiest months for interim events on the grounds. He highlighted that the High School Rodeo held in January was successful, with 400 stalls rented, and that an additional High School Rodeo has been contracted for February. Launa Rabago discussed a basic Word document she created outlining Fair pricing. The Board Reception date was finalized for April 19, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Jon also noted that there will be a strong focus on community outreach efforts this year.

iii. Interim Events

Jon Baker noted that this is an especially busy time of year for interim events at the Fairgrounds. He mentioned several upcoming events, including Jurassic Quest, Gem & Jam, Vail Pride, the High School Rodeo, the Quilt Show, and Team Penning, all scheduled to take place over the next few months. He shared that while activity is expected to taper off in May, the Fairgrounds are currently experiencing a steady flow of events and remain very active.

iv. Projects

Jon Baker reported that the approved storage project at the end of Thurber Hall is in the final stages of the County permitting process. While the process has presented some challenges, Joey Schwanz has been very helpful in assisting throughout.

v. Southeast Regional Park Update

Jon Baker provided an update on the Regional Park planning efforts. He shared a map with the Board identifying the locations of the new velodrome and Project Blue. He noted that Project Blue recently purchased 290 acres from the County and that the relocation of the trap and skeet areas is currently underway. Jon also shared that he has participated in a Zoom meeting with Project Blue representatives and is coordinating an in-person meeting to address ongoing concerns. Key discussion points include coordinating Fair traffic flow, maintaining access to the grounds, and planning for large interim events throughout the year during the construction period. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that Project Blue fully understands the level of activity at the Fairgrounds, including RV park operations, while construction is taking place.

b. C.F.O.

i. Financial Report

Courtney Danloe presented the financial report and noted that the organization remains in a strong position. She reviewed fixed assets in comparison to the budget and reported that both Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable are current, with all balances under 60 days. Courtney also reviewed the income statement, highlighting effective cost containment. She shared that utility expenses and salaries are lower than the prior year and are tracking below budgeted projections.

3. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. Discussion and possible action regarding the minutes of the 10/30/2025 Regular Meeting.** Judy Patrick moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Discussion and possible action regarding proposed projects by Tucson Speedway.**

Jon Baker provided background on the lease agreements for the Tucson Speedway and Tucson Dragway, noting that both operate under four-year terms approved by the Pima County Board of Supervisors and renewed at the end of each cycle. He explained that any proposed projects must first be presented to the Southwestern Fair Commission Board for conceptual approval. Once approved by SWFC, the lessee works with the appropriate County department to determine whether additional County review or approval is required.

John Lashley introduced members of his staff and shared that he is in his 14th year managing Tucson Speedway. He presented the first proposed project, which involves creating a quarter-mile track configuration within the existing larger track. This project would require moving dirt within the infield and paving the smaller track surface. He explained that the track is intended for youth racing divisions, including Bandoleros and Legend cars for ages 6–12, as the smaller layout would better support skill development and side-by-side racing.

Judy Patrick moved to approve the proposed improvements to the existing track. The motion passed unanimously.

Jeremy Huebner of Tucson Kart Speedway discussed a second project involving the downsizing and reconfiguration of the existing dirt track he currently manages to approximately 1/6 mile. He shared that he has been working with John Lashley on this concept, which would strengthen the facility and address declining memberships by creating a more functional track design.

He explained that the long-term vision is to combine Tucson Speedway and Tucson Kart Speedway into one unified operation with two smaller tracks on the property. Under this approach, the Tucson Kart Speedway lease would eventually be dissolved, with Tucson Speedway assuming responsibility for funding and operating the combined facility. This would require an amendment to the Tucson Speedway management agreement to incorporate the Kart Club's operations.

Judy Patrick moved to approve the concept of the future Tucson Kart Speedway project. Sheena Conners seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Break in 10:46 a.m.

Break out 10:50 a.m.

4. **OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. **Discussion and possible action regarding revisions to the Employee Handbook, including the additions of the new policies and updates to the overall policy manual.** Courtney Danloe shared that the Employee Handbook and new policies are part of an ongoing project to update and revise the overall policy manual to ensure all policies remain current. She noted that this is a continuing effort. The four policies presented for review were: Whistleblower, Risk Management, Animal Welfare and Public Safety at the Pima County Fair, and the Pima County Fair Code of Conduct. The Board recommended revisions to each of the policies presented. Action on these policies will be tabled, policies updated accordingly, and brought back for review at the March 12, 2026, Board meeting.

5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- b. **Discussion and possible action regarding the renewal and change of general liability and associated insurance policies.** Courtney Danloe reviewed the proposed renewal of the general liability and associated insurance policies. She noted a cost increase that had been presented to the Insurance Committee, including a recommendation to increase the umbrella coverage from \$4 million to \$5 million. The Committee agreed with the recommendation.

Marian LaLonde moved to approve the decision made by the Insurance Committee. Judy Patrick seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- a. **Discussion and possible action regarding the allocation of additional funds for asphalt projects.** Jon Baker discussed the need to allocate additional funds in the budget for asphalt repairs and new asphalt work in the amount of \$80,000.

Sheena Conners moved to allocate an additional \$80,000 for new and existing asphalt repairs. Mark Cowley seconded the motion. The motion passed.

- b. **Discussion and possible action regarding performance, goals and wage review of the Executive Director. This agenda item relates to employee compensation and benefits and may be discussed in executive session pursuant to A.R.S. Sec. 38-431.03 (A)(1).** Marian LaLonde made a motion to go into executive session. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The Board went into executive session at 11:28 a.m. Judy Patrick moved to go out of executive session. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The Board came out of executive session 12:08 p.m.

Sheena Conner moved to approve Jon Baker's salary increase that was discussed in executive session. Marian LaLonde seconded the motion. The motion passed.

6. **ANNUAL AGENDA:**

- a. **Discussion and possible action regarding electing new officers of the Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc.** Sheena Conner moved to reelect the current officers of the Southwestern Fair Commission nominating Garrett Ham to be President, Judy Patrick to be Secretary, and Mark Cowley to be Treasurer. All were elected by unanimous vote.

7. CLOSING MATTERS:

- a. **Announcements:** Garrett Ham announced that Launa Rabago has successfully completed the Institute of Fair Management (IFM) program through the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE). The Board congratulated Launa on this achievement.

- b. **Adjournment:** Judy Patrick moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:11 p.m. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried. A meeting of the Pima County Fair Commission was conducted following the SWFC meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Patrick
SWFC Secretary