Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc.
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2026

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, March 12, 2026.

Directors Present: Garrett Ham, President; Judy Patrick, Secretary; Mark Cowley, Treasurer; Jim Murphy, Director; Alan Levin, 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 and Laura Levin, Owner, Modern Studios.

Call to Order: Garrett Ham called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.

a. **Roll Call:** Mark Cowley, Treasurer and Marian LaLonde, Director, joined via internet conference.

b. **Call to the Public:** None

2. **Staff Reports:**

a. Executive Director

i. Goals and Update

Jon Baker reviewed the list of organizational goals and provided brief updates on the progress of each, including the expected completion dates.

He noted the continued reduction in Tucson Electric Power (TEP) bills, which supports the goal of keeping overhead and operating costs low. He also discussed the "Hot Topics" list (Goal #5), explaining that it may change over time and is used to track important issues that may affect the Fairground's future, including potential funding and legislative matters. Each topic will include supporting information and documentation.

Jon reported that he is working with Courtney Danloe to review and update job titles, job descriptions, and pay ranges for full-time positions, with the goal of completing this work by the end of the calendar year.

ii. Interim Events

Jon Baker shared updates on current activity at the Fairgrounds. He mentioned a small RV rally currently on site, Tabazona nuCamp, with approximately 70 teardrop-style campers. He reported that dates have been secured for 2028 for the Family RV Association (FRVA) 116th International Convention and RV Expo.

Jon mentioned that since January, the Fairgrounds have hosted two to three events most weekends. Activity is expected to slow slightly as preparations begin for the Pima County Fair in April.

iii. Projects

Jon Baker also provided updates on several facility projects currently underway at the Fairgrounds. He reported that asphalt is being poured on various areas as part of ongoing improvements.

He also noted a major IT project taking place between Ray Cammack Shows (RCS) and the Fairground's IT contractor, Rob Harrington Technologies. While the project is primarily intended to improve the carnival system, it will also benefit the Fairgrounds, as fiber will be permanently installed on the property for future use.

He added that the Thurber Hall storage project has been completed and will be used to store tables, chairs, and other equipment.

iv. Southeast Regional Park Update

Jon Baker provided an update on Project Blue, noting that the group has approached Pima County about securing land for a laydown yard and paying rent for its use. They also inquired about using space at the Fairgrounds; however, the area requested is currently used during the Pima County Fair, which presents a challenge. He noted there may be a possibility of them renting available RV sites after the Fair during the summer months.

Jon also shared that the velodrome project has been completed and is now hosting classes and training for local teams. The facility is expected to see increased use leading up to the Los Angeles Olympics, as it may serve as a training location. Across the road at the Pima Motorsports Park, the clay pigeon target site is being relocated as part of the Project Blue development.

During discussion, Joey Schwanz mentioned that the new well is nearly completed. Marvin Selke asked whether tying into the functional well is being reconsidered. Jon responded that the water district concept remains on the Hot Topics list. He noted that he has spoken with Jan Lesher, Pima County Administrator, and if the project gains further traction, the Fairgrounds would like to be part of the conversation. Given the Fairground's significant water usage, participation could potentially generate revenue that could be reinvested into improvements, rather than continuing to incur water expenses. Jon added that eventually connecting multiple wells could provide a backup system, ensuring water availability if one well were to go down.

b. C.F.O.

i. Financial Report

Courtney Danloe reviewed the financial report and noted that the Fairgrounds remain in a strong cash position. She explained that a recent draw on the line of credit was made to keep the bank relationship active. While the funds were not needed, the line of credit was not used last year, and management felt it was appropriate to utilize it. The balance is expected to be paid back immediately after the Fair.

She reported that expenses are currently over budget in some areas due to ongoing projects, including the IT project with Ray Cammack Shows (RCS). The Fairgrounds will cover the upfront costs, which will later be partially recovered by RCS.

She reviewed the balance sheet, noting fixed assets are down and liabilities are over budget, and explained that purchases have been slowed as much as possible.

Courtney also reported that Amilia Gruber has been doing well with collecting event deposits, performing better than last year. She noted that using Eventeny to collect vendor payments ahead of Fair dates has helped streamline operations and better prepare staff to focus on vendor arrival and event setup.

3. **Consent Agenda:**

Jim Murphy asked that item b. be pulled from the Consent Agenda for an individual decision.

a. Discussion and possible action regarding the minutes of the 1/29/2026 Annual Meeting.

Judy Patrick moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. **Consent Agenda:**

b. Discussion and possible action regarding retaining Regier Carr & Monroe as outside CPAs. Jim Murphy shared his concern that the Fairgrounds have worked with Regier, Carr & Monroe for many years and noted that some best practice guidelines suggest changing audit firms every three to five years.

Mark Cowley responded that while this was once commonly recommended, some studies have found that changing auditors too frequently can create challenges over time. He also noted that there are limited firms in Tucson with the experience and understanding necessary to perform audits for an organization such as the fairgrounds.

Garrett Ham stated that he did not necessarily feel the Fairgrounds needed to change audit firms but suggested that the audit services could be put out to bid to evaluate potential cost savings. The Board discussed the possibility of requesting proposals in November.

Courtney Danloe noted that the auditors are already scheduled to come to the Fairgrounds in April. She also shared that she completed a cost analysis of audit fees since 2018, showing an 18% increase overall, which is below the 28% increase in the cost of living during the same time frame.

Jim Murphy moved to approve the Consent Agenda item b. Alan Levin seconded the motion. The motion passed.

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.** Jon Baker shared that the policies presented were the same policies reviewed in January, with revisions made sense that time, including the addition of biosecurity measures to help mitigate the spread of pathogens.

The policies reviewed included the Whistleblower Policy, Risk Management Policy, Animal Welfare and Public Safety at the Pima County Fair Policy, and the Pima County Fair Code of Conduct.

The Board pulled the Whistleblower Policy for further discussion. Revisions were recommended to include a dedicated email address for staff to report concerns, particularly in situations where the concern involves the Director.

The Board agreed that the policy should direct staff to submit concerns to board@pimacountyfair.com.

Action on the policy was tabled and will be brought back for review on the June 25, 2026, Board meeting.

Judy Patrick moved to adopt the proposed revised and new policies as presented, except for the Whistleblower Policy. Jim Murphy seconded the motion. The motion passed.

b. **Discussion and possible action regarding the 2026 Pima County Fair.** Launa Rabago provided an overview of current promotions, concerts, and marketing efforts for the upcoming Fair. Jon Baker noted that the concert lineup has been finalized and distributed a sheet to each Board Member outlining the scheduled performers.

Launa reviewed the various marketing groups and promotional efforts currently underway. She mentioned that VIP seating will be available for the rodeo and highlighted that the cornhole tournament will take place both Saturdays during the Fair. She also shared that she is working with six University of Arizona influencers this year and expressed excitement about their participation and upcoming arrival.

5. **CLOSING MATTERS:**

a. Announcements: Marvin Selke reported that three individuals will be inducted into the Hall of Fame this year: Laura Levin, Jenni Ferris, and Brad Ferris. He noted that they are all very deserving individuals and will be recognized at the Board Reception.

b. Adjournment: Jim Murphy moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 a.m. Alan Levin seconded the motion. The motion carried. A meeting of the Pima County Fair Commission was not conducted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Patrick

Judy Patrick
SWFC Secretary