

Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc.
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 25, 2026
Draft

The Meeting of the Board of Directors/Members of the Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc., a nonprofit corporation, was duly called and held at the Pima County Fairground's Green Room on Thursday, June 25, 2026.

Directors/Members 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 and Launa Rabago, SWFC Marketing Manager.

Others in Attendance: Joey Schwanz, Pima County's Operations Program Manager and Robert Harrington, Harrington Technologies.

Board President Garrett Ham, due to losing his voice, asked Board Secretary Judy Patrick to conduct the meeting.

- a. **Call to Order:** Judy Patrick called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.
- b. **Roll Call:** Garrett Ham, President, joined via internet conference; Mark Cowley, Treasurer, arrived at 9:33 a.m. Alan Levin, Director, was absent.
- c. **Call to the Public:** None

2. STAFF REPORTS:

a. Executive Director

i. Fair Feedback

Jon Baker deferred the Fair Feedback item to Launa Rabago. She provided a summary of the staff's Top 10 Best and Top 10 Areas for Improvement from the 2026 Pima County Fair. She highlighted several successes, including the addition of food vendors in the Kiddieland area, which helped increase traffic, and the addition of more ETIX kiosks, which improved line control. She also reviewed opportunities for improvement, including expanding rodeo seating and evaluating additional concert seating to accommodate growing attendance, along with other staff recommendations for future Fairs.

ii. Goals and Updates

Jon Baker reviewed several of the Board's established goals, including keeping overhead and operating expenses low to maximize the organization's bottom line. He highlighted the energy efficiency projects, including the facility-wide LED lighting retrofit, which has reduced annual TEP costs from approximately \$383,000 in FY 2023/2024 to \$282,000 in FY 2025/2026, resulting in annual savings of approximately \$100,000. He noted that additional lighting and thermostat improvements are still pending.

Jon also discussed safety at the 2026 Pima County Fair, noting that there were no fights during the Fair and that, according to the Sheriff's Department, it was the fewest fighting-related incidents they have experienced.

iii. Projects

Jon Baker provided an update on the new storage building located on the east side of Thurber Hall. He reported that the project was scheduled for its final inspection on the day of the meeting and, pending approval, was expected to receive its final permit.

iv. Southeast Regional Park Update

Jon Baker provided an update on the Southeast Regional Park project, including Project Blue. He noted that construction is progressing well. While there were some dust control issues that resulted in citations, there have been no impacts to the Fairgrounds related to the project.

Jon also shared that Pima County is constructing a new well across Harrison Road at the motorcycle park. He explained that he had previously explored connecting the Fairgrounds well to the County's well and plans to discuss the opportunity with Pima County again, noting the potential benefits of linking the two wells.

v. Interim Events

Jon Baker reported that it had been an interesting year for interim events. While the budget was based on contracted events from the previous year, several new interim events were booked during the fiscal year that were not included in the original budget.

b. C.F.O.

i. Financial Report

Courtney Danloe reported that the organization remains in a strong cash position. She noted that total assets were below budget but higher than the prior year, while liabilities remain current. She reviewed the Profit and Loss Statement, reporting that total revenues were approximately 6% below budget but about 8% higher than the prior year. Fair revenue was below budget but exceeded the prior year's results, making the 2026 fair the second-best Fair year. She noted that carnival revenue did not meet budget expectations. Horse event revenue exceeded budget due to additional events, including two high school rodeos and a horse health seminar. Interim event revenue finished approximately 27% over budget due to several unplanned events booked during the fiscal year. RV Park revenue was below budget, primarily due to it being an off year for RV rallies and increased fuel prices. Courtney also reported that overall expenses were below both budget and the prior year.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. Discussion and possible action regarding the minutes of the 3/12/2026 board meeting.
- b. Discussion and possible action regarding the Disclosure & Related Party Questionnaire for the current fiscal year.

Jim Murphy moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

6. 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 reported that staff worked with Pima County, Risk Management, and Haas & Wilkerson to review and update the organization's policies. He noted that the updates also align the policies with the Facility Use Terms, Conditions, Policies and rental agreements. The Board reviewed proposed revisions to the Restricted Funds, Budget and Financial Management, and Risk Management policies, as well as proposed new Information and Cybersecurity, Password Management and Security, and Whistleblower policies. Courtney Danloe noted that the Whistleblower Policy includes the reporting email address, board@pimacountyfair.com. Jon also explained that many of the policies formalize procedures that staff already follow. During discussion, the Board recommended a few revisions. Rob Harrington provided an overview of the cybersecurity improvements that have already been implemented and discussed additional measures, including enhanced password management through an encrypted password system.

Sheena Conner moved to approve the revised existing policies and the proposed new policies with the suggested changes. Jim Murphy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Garrett Ham requested that the Board Governance Policy be placed on the agenda for the next Board meeting for review and possible revision.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Discussion and possible action regarding the results of the recent Pima County Fair.

Courtney Danloe reviewed the 2026 Pima County Fair revenue results, reporting that overall revenue increased approximately 12.23% compared to the previous year. She noted continued growth in online sales, including admissions and parking, reflecting the ongoing shift away from cash transactions. Courtney also reported that the bar had its best year on record, while carnival revenue was down from the prior year. The Fair featured six sold-out concerts.

b. Discussion and possible action regarding proposed facility and service rates.

Jim Murphy moved to approve the facility and service rates. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

c. Discussion and possible action regarding proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Courtney Danloe reviewed the proposed budget and explained that it was developed using a four-year average to account for fluctuations between higher and lower revenue years. She discussed the major assumptions used in preparing the budget, including projected revenues, operating expenses, and salary increases to account for anticipated COLA adjustments. She noted that the proposed budget includes an increase in daily parking from \$8.00 to \$10.00 due to rising staffing and fuel costs, while admission prices will remain unchanged. The 11-day exhibitor pass is proposed to increase from \$25.00 to \$30.00, while entry fees and 4-H participation costs will remain consistent.

Courtney also highlighted improvements to the budgeting process with the help of John Osterhout, Maintenance Supervisor, by allocating overhead costs to the appropriate operating areas, such as horse events, the RV Park, and concerts, providing a more accurate representation of each program's costs.

Mark Cowley moved to approve the 2026/2027 budget. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

d. Discussion and possible action regarding SWFC's Strategic Plan.

Jon Baker reviewed the proposed Strategic Plan and the goals developed with staff for the upcoming fiscal year. Jon highlighted the interim events goal, noting that interim event revenue exceeded budget by approximately 27% during the current fiscal year due to several unplanned events that were booked. Based on those results, the strategic plan increases the interim events growth goal from 5% to 7%, noting that the increase is reasonable given this year's performance. Jon also noted that the Master Plan is tied to and supports the Strategic Plan.

e. Discussion and possible action regarding the annual consideration of Marvin Selke's Emeritus Board Member status.

Marvin Selke stated that he would like to continue serving as an Emeritus Board Member.

Garrett Ham moved to reappoint Marvin Selke as Emeritus Board Member for an additional one-year term. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

8. CLOSING MATTERS:

- a. Announcements:** Launa Rabago informed the Board of the passing of Julie Gallego of Viva Performing Arts. She shared that Julie had participated in the Pima County Fair for 26 years, bringing numerous dance groups to perform each year and contributing more than 800 participants annually. Launa recognized Julie's significant cultural impact on the Fair and her many years of dedication to the event.

b. Adjournment:

Mark Cowley moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:08 a.m. Sheena Conner seconded the motion. The motion carried. A meeting of the Pima County Fair Commission was not conducted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Patrick
SWFC Secretary