Southwestern Fair Commission, Inc.
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 20, 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, August 20, 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; Launa Rabago, SWFC Marketing Manager and Amilia Gruber, SWFC Vendor Coordinator.

Others in Attendance: Joey Schwanz, Pima County's Operations Program Manager.

1. **Opening Matters**
   - **a.** **Call to Order:** Garrett Ham called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. followed by the pledge of allegiance.
   - **b.** **Roll Call:** Sheena Conner, Director, joined via internet conference. Alan Levin, Director, was absent.
   - c. **Call to the Public:** None

2. **STAFF REPORTS:**
   - **a. Executive Director**
     - **i. Governor's Fund**
       Jon Baker reported that the Governor's Fund recently held a meeting and confirmed that the funding will remain in place at approximately $344,000.
     - **ii. Projects**
       Jon Baker provided an update on several upcoming facility projects. The new storage building planned behind Old Pueblo Hall will provide additional storage for tables and chairs. Three quotes were obtained, and the preferred bid was selected. John Osterhout has begun working through the permitting process and the project is moving forward.

       Jon also discussed two additional needs identified in the Master Plan, expanding and improving the concert stage area and addressing aging infrastructure in the Thurber RV Park. Jon has contacted three architects and will review both projects with each firm before receiving proposals.

       The goal is to select an architect around the January or March Board meeting, after which design work can begin, and proposed plans can be presented to the Board for review.

iii. **Goal and Updates**
Jon Baker provided a brief update on current goals, noting that much of the recent focus has been on policy development, which would be discussed further under a later agenda item. Additional goals currently being addressed include project tracking and continued cost reductions.

iv. **Interim Events** Jon Baker reported that Julia Casillas and Launa Rabago are working on the upcoming calendar of events. With the new rates approved, contracts can now move forward. The calendar is expected to be busy, with several new events being added along with many returning events.

v. **Southeast Regional Park Update**
Jon Baker provided a brief update regarding neighboring Project Blue. He noted that the project has recently received increased public and media attention, including the presence of protesters in the area. Some individuals have also been observed parking on Fairground's property. Jon noted that construction progress on the project is becoming increasingly visible from the roadway.

b. C.F.O.

i. **Financial Report**
Courtney Danloe provided the financial report and noted that the annual audit fieldwork had recently been completed with no findings. She reported that GASB Statement No. 101 has been implemented and the organization is in compliance with the updated reporting requirements.

Courtney briefly reviewed the July financials, with a greater focus on the June financials. Funds held in the money market continue to generate interest income. Accounts receivable remains current, and deposits received include payments for future events scheduled in 2028 and 2029.

Courtney also discussed deferred revenue related to subleases, noting continued improvement over time. Overall, financial performance was favorable compared to the previous year's Fair.

3. CONSENT AGENDA:

a. **Discussion and possible action regarding the minutes of the 6/25/2026 Board meeting.**

Mark Cowley moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Judy Patrick seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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 provided an update on policy development, noting that approximately 23 policies are currently being reviewed and updated, along with the Employee Handbook. Courtney explained that the policy approval process has been revised. Moving forward, policies will be updated and sent to legal counsel for review prior to being presented to the Board for consideration and approval. This process will also include the Board Governance Policy.

5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

   a. **Discussion and possible action regarding proposed revisions to the Board Governance Policy.** Garrett Ham noted that the Board Governance Policy had previously been discussed under Old Business, Item A.

   b. **Discussion and possible action regarding the attendance by some staff and Board members at the 2026 IAFE convention in Louisville, Kentucky, November 29-December 3, 2026.** Jon Baker reported that Courtney Danloe will attend this year's IAFE Convention in Louisville, Kentucky as she continues her IAFE Institute of Fair Management (IFM) courses. Due to the cost of travel, Jon noted that additional staff attendance is not planned this year. With the convention returning to Las Vegas next year, attendance may be more financially feasible for staff and Board members

      Garrett Ham commented on the value of Board members attending the convention and noted that interested Board members may contact Courtney or Jon for additional information regarding attendance and reimbursement.

   c. **Discussion and possible action regarding the process for renewal or replacement of Board seat(s) expiring on 12/31.** Garrett Ham noted that the terms for two Board members, Jim Murphy and Alan Levin, are up for renewal. Both have indicated that they would like to continue serving on the Board.

   d. **Discussion and possible action regarding the renewal and/or change of employee associated health insurance policies.** Courtney Danloe provided an update on employee health insurance, noting that insurance carriers experienced significant rate increases across the board. Blue Cross Blue Shield initially reflected an approximately 27% increase. After reviewing the organization's needs and employee demographics, a level-funded plan was identified that resulted in an approximately 11% increase, and the organization transitioned to the level-funded plan. Courtney also reported that employees have been transitioned to the Navigator benefits software, which provides employees with access to their health and life insurance information and allows them to manage and update their individual profiles.

      Judy Patrick moved to approve the health insurance plan. Jim Murphy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

   e. **Discussion and possible action regarding the proposed 401K plan year change.** Courtney Danloe discussed the proposed change to the 401(k) plan year from the fiscal year to the calendar year. She explained that the change would better align the plan with Paychex and tax reporting requirements, while also helping streamline administration and reduce the potential for human error. As part of the transition, there would be a 4-month delay in contributions from September through December, with contributions resuming January 1 under the new calendar-year schedule. Moving forward, the 401(k) plan would operate on January through December calendar year.

      Mark Cowley moved to approve the change to the 401(k) plan year from the fiscal year to the calendar year. Judy Patrick seconded the motion. The motion carried.

f. **Discussion and possible action regarding the decision on contributions to employee 401k profit sharing and bonuses.** Courtney Danloe presented three scenarios to the Board for consideration, providing examples of profit-sharing and bonus percentages approved in prior years.

Garrett Ham suggested a 14% allocation, noting that the Board has a responsibility to balance employee profit sharing with the financial needs of the Fairgrounds. He emphasized the importance of maintaining a reasonable allocation while continuing to reinvest in and maintain the facility.

Jim Murphy moved to approve the 14% profit-sharing allocation. Mark Cowley seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Judy Patrick moved to approve the distribution of the profit-sharing allocation, with 40% designated for the 401(k) plan and 60% designated for cash bonuses. Jim Murphy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

g. **Discussion and possible action regarding Executive Director's performance and bonus. The agenda item relates to employees' salary, compensation and benefits and may be discussed in the executive session pursuant to A.R.S. Sec. 38-431-.03 (A) (1).**
Jon Baker excused himself from the Executive Session and gave permission to the Board to speak of him. Judy Patrick moved to go into Executive Session.
Jim Murphy seconded the motion. The Board went into Executive Session at 10:32 a.m.
The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:55 a.m.
Jim Murphy moved to approve what was discussed in Executive Session.
Mark Cowley seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. **CLOSING MATTERS:**
   a. **Announcements:** None

   b. **Adjournment:**
   Garrett Ham moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:02 a.m. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. A meeting of the Pima County Fair Commission was not conducted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Patrick
SWFC Secretary