

MINUTES OF OCFEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 25, 2021

The following Minutes are a summary of Board action and proceedings. For a full transcript please click on the link below or visit the ocfair.com website.

https://s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/ocfair.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/11150701/21_02_February_Transcript.pdf

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by Director Aitken. Roll call was taken by Summer Angus.

4. DIRECTORS PRESENT (via Zoom):

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, Vice Chair La Belle, Director Cervantes, Director Ruiz, Director Bagneris, Director Aitken and Director Kovacevich.

DIRECTORS ABSENT/EXCUSED: Director Pham.

OTHERS PRESENT:

(Via Zoom): Michele Richards, OCFEC CEO; Ken Karns, OCFEC Chief Operating Officer; Joan Hamill, OCFEC Chief Business Development Officer; Jason Jacobsen, OCFEC Director of Planning & Presentation; Terry Moore, OCFEC Director of Communications; Summer Angus, OCFEC Executive Assistant; Josh Caplan, Office of the Attorney General; Patricia Garrido, transcriptionist; Theresa Sears; Reggie Mundekis; Jeff Letourneau; Bonnie Lee; Harvey Liss; Bethany Webb; Mike Gasca; Carla Montgomery; Peg Corley; Sandra Masino; Susan Meyer; Yvonne Su; Erin McCall; Chris; Joanna Weiss; Jim Maldonado; Glenda Galvan-Garcia; Jerilynn; Miliana Singh; Wendy Leece; Julia Dumiao; Stephanie Camacho-Van Dyke; Theresa Nguyen; Piper Benom Sherwood; Cindy Massaro; Kellie Anne Avakian; Jeanine Robbins; Mike Robbins; Bryan Terry; Todd Martin; Todd Avakian; Dr. Gabby Castaneda; Gabriella G.; Kane; Rose Ann Sharp; Charles Blek; Mary Blek; Ira Sharp; Julia Demlow; Amy Capelle; Wes Alcot; Heather Hernandez; Jeffery Horn; Gibran Stout

10. GOVERNANCE PROCESS

A. Discussion About the Display of Flags at OC Fair & Event Center and Vote on Next Steps

Action Item

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia announced that public comment on this item will be limited to two minutes due to the volume of speakers.

Director Ruiz, on behalf of the Community Affairs Committee stated the OCFEC Board of Directors adopted a resolution to fly the LGBTQ Pride flag on the fairgrounds year-round. He explained that the Board

and the committee had received a lot of public responses to keep flying the flag, to consider flying other flags that represent other groups or to consider doing other things to include other groups of people as well. He reported the committee decided to bring the issue back to the full Board for discussion and action whether to amend or affirm the flag resolution.

Director Kovacevich, on behalf of the Community Affairs Committee, reiterated the committee's recommendation to the Board to affirm, reaffirm or amend the resolution.

Director Aitken gave the background on how the Board came to adopt the original resolution. She reflected on what the rainbow flag means to her and shared her wish for the Board to reaffirm its commitment to flying the LGBTQ flag.

Jeff Letourneau, LGBTQ and AIDS activist, thanked the Board for having the courage to fly the Pride flag. He shared stories oppression and asserted need for the flag.

Bonnie Lee spoke in support of the fairgrounds continuing to fly the Pride flag.

Harvey Liss, Irvine resident, spoke in support of the continued flying of the Pride flag at the fairgrounds, stating it is an important symbol of welcome and inclusion, indicating to the LGBTQ community that they are welcomed and safe.

Bethany Webb spoke in support of the Pride flag being flown, stating it gives confidence and integrity to people that have been maligned throughout their life.

Mike Gasca spoke in support of continuing to keep the rainbow flag flying at the fairgrounds, stating it is a message that Orange County and the fairgrounds are welcoming places and embraces a community that often has been excluded and ostracized.

Carla Montgomery suggested the LGBTQ flag be moved down and a diverse memorial be created that represents all persecuted peoples in the country. She shared her concerns of the Board not willing to approve a Black History flag when diversity is the goal.

Peg Corley, Executive Director of the Orange County LGBTQ Center, spoke in support of the Board being steadfast in its resolution to fly the Pride flag, calling it a unifying symbol of diversity, inclusion and acceptance.

Sandra Masino, Costa Mesa resident, stated displaying a flag of one special interest group leaves the rest out, that people should stay as one, as Californians and Americans and not be divided.

Susan Meyer, Costa Mesa resident, spoke in support of flying the Pride flag and urged the Board to continue to fly the flag.

Yvonne Sue, Tustin resident, urged the Board to continue to fly the LGBTQ flag for people to recognize that they will be safe at the OC fairgrounds.

Reggie Mundekis spoke in support of the continued commitment of the Board to fly the rainbow flag. She questioned how the OC Fairgrounds is going to support the local Orange County business community by allowing local restaurants and businesses to participate in the annual OC Fair and year-round events.

Erin McCall spoke in support of the LGBTQ Pride flag, stating the flag is about visibility and unity, urging the Board to affirm keeping the flag.

Chris spoke in support of the Board amending their decision to fly the multicolored flag, asking the Board to change their position and remove the special interest flag.

Joanna Weiss, Women for American Values and Ethics President, urged the Board to reject the calls to take down the LGBTQ Pride flag and continue to show the OC Fair's commitment to inclusion.

Jim Maldonado shared his appreciation for the rainbow flag being raised at the fairgrounds and spoke in support of the continued flying of the flag.

Glenda Galvan-Garcia, Orange County resident, spoke in support of the Pride flag and urged the Board to continue to fly it.

Jerilynn questioned why the Board approved the flying of the Pride flag and denied the request to fly the flag in recognition of Black History month. She criticized that it shows exclusivity and preference to one group when the goal is to be inclusive. She suggested flying different flags for different interests or by flying flags that already represent all; the California flag, the United States flag and the OC Fairgrounds flag.

Miliana Singh, LGBTQ Center of OC and board member of OC Pride, stated flying the Pride flag is a symbol of inclusion and pays homage to those who fought hard for equality; and taking it down would be a disservice to all of the work the LGBTQ community has done.

Wendy Leece asked the Board to amend the resolution and start over, urging that all are one nation under the American flag, under the California flag and under the fairgrounds flag.

Julia Delmow spoke in support of the continuation to fly the Pride flag and echoed comments by Director Aitken of the flag being a vision of unity.

Stephanie Camacho-Van Dyke, Director of Advocacy in Education/LGBTQ Center OC, spoke in support of the Pride flag at the OC fairgrounds. She stated her organization has collected 300 signatures from community members who also support keeping the Pride flag at the fairgrounds.

Theresa Nguyen, Orange County resident, urged the Board to keep its ongoing support of the LGBTQ individuals in Orange County and consider an amendment to continue to evaluate/elevate inclusion and diverse voices in the county; to fly the Pride flag and consider flying all manner of flags that demonstrate diversity in the community.

Piper Benom-Sherwood spoke in support of keeping the Pride flag at the fairgrounds, stating the flag represents acceptance and inclusion and argued the flag does not exclude anyone.

Cindy Massaro criticized that the Board for denying the resolution put forth to fly the flag representing Black History but allowed full access to the Pride flag being flown year-round, not just during Pride Month. She questioned why others are not entitled to be represented at the OC fairgrounds when others have repeatedly requested their flags be flown, representing their interests.

Kellie Avakian questioned why other flags are not being allowed to be flown and criticized the Board for not approving the flag for Black History month.

Jeanine Robbins asserted the LGBTQ community is not a special interest or a special group. She asserted the Pride flag is a symbol of a social justice issue that affects all. She urged the Board to keep the flag as a sign of acceptance.

Mike Robbins spoke in support of flying the flag and urged the Board to continue flying of the Pride flag on the fairgrounds.

Bryan Terry, Marketing Director OC Pride, spoke in support of the Pride flag and urged the Board to continue to fly the flag at the fairgrounds.

Todd Martin argued that the flag is creating division and does not represent all people. He asked for equal representation in this matter

and would like opportunity for other flags, representative of other people, also be flown at the fairgrounds.

Todd Avakian spoke in support of only flying the United States flag, the California flag and the OC Fair flag.

Dr. Gabby Castaneda spoke in support of and firmly recommended to the Board to continue to fly the Pride flag at the fairgrounds.

Gabrielle G., Orange County resident, discussed inclusivity, the meaning of the colors of the Pride/rainbow flag and ways to have different groups represented in the flag.

Kane, Orange County resident and Board Member OC Pride, spoke in support of flying the Pride flag as well as adding other flags representing different groups.

Board discussion ensued regarding flying the Pride flag, items discussed:

- Appreciation to the public speakers
- Support expressed to continue to fly the flag
- The original resolution and the history behind it
- The Pride flag being a symbol of inclusion – a national accepted symbol of inclusion representative of all diverse groups of every culture
- Flying individual cultural flags being a different issue
- Go back and decide how to represent all communities
- Discussion to amend the resolution to fly the Pride flag during the month of June, Pride month, not year round
- Not going backward and remove something that unites people
- United States flag represent all peoples in the country
- Finding other mechanisms or ways to recognize other entities, have the Community Affairs Committee look into
- Community Affairs Committee continues to highlighting other cultures through presentations
 - Continuing to move forward
- Exploring if there is one unifying cultural flag that could be displayed

Director Kovacevich motioned to reaffirm the original resolution adopted by the Board.

Director Bagneris suggested an amendment to the motion to amend the resolution to fly the Pride flag during June, Pride month, as opposed to year round. No action took place. There was not a second to this amendment.

ACTION: Director Kovacevich motioned and Director Cervantes seconded to reaffirm the Board resolution to fly the Pride flag year

round. **MOTION CARRIED. AYES:** Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, Vice Chair La Belle, Director Cervantes, Director Ruiz, Director Aitken and Director Kovacevich. **NAYES:** Director Bagneris **ABSTENTIONS:** None.

5. CLOSED SESSION:

The meeting adjourned to closed session at 11:01 a.m. and reconvened at 1:04 p.m.

Matters to report out of closed session: None.

Director Bagneris left the meeting during closed session.

Item 6 was moved to end of the meeting

7. MINUTES:

A. Board meeting held January 28, 2021

Action Item

ACTION: Director Aitken motioned and Director Ruiz seconded to approve the minutes from the Board meeting held January 28, 2021.

MOTION CARRIED. AYES: Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, Director Cervantes, Director Ruiz, Director Aitken and Director Kovacevich. **NAYES: None. ABSTENTIONS: None.**

(Vice Chair La Belle was absent for the vote due to technical difficulties.)

8. MATTERS OF PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeanine Robbins criticized the staff and the Fair Board for allegedly having the inability or unwillingness to negotiate with Spectra regarding the Orange County Market Place (OCMP) contract. She questioned why the item has not been placed on the agenda. She criticized that OCFEC has done nothing to help the vendors of the OCMP.

9. CONSENT CALENDAR: (Policy 4.3.4)

A. Standard Agreements (New): SA-006-21SM; SA-008-21FV

i. **Standard Agreement Amendments:** SA-046-18PL (Amend. #4); SA-050-18PA (Amend. #3); SA-064-18PS (Amend. #2)

B. Rental Agreements: R-012-21; R-013-21; R-024-21; R-026-21; R-027-21; R-028-21

i. **Rental Agreement Amendments:** R-121-20 (Amend. #2); R-026-21 (Amend. #1)

C. Active Joint Powers Authority Agreements (New): 03221005

D. Correspondence:

Communications to the Board from members of public related to OCFEC business are identified below and included with the Board materials (available on the OCFEC website). Note that this agenda item includes only those communication(s) that were sent to the entire Board and CEO before the publication of this month's agenda. *The deadline for correspondence to be included on the March agenda is March 12, 2021.*

- i. 01/28/2021 Leah-Ann Kazolas: Equestrian Center

E. CDFA Correspondence:

Communications to the Board from the California Department of Food & Agriculture Division of Fairs & Expositions regarding relevant topics at Fairs and Expositions.

- A. None.

-End of Consent Calendar-

CEO Richards pulled items SA-006-21SM; SA-008-21FV from the consent calendar, reporting both contracts are the result of a competitive bid and are currently under protest and will be brought back at a later time pending a decision.

CEO Richards highlighted rental agreement R-028-21 for Crossroads of the West Gun Show.

Rose Ann Sharp spoke in opposition of gun shows. She questioned if gun shows meet the OCFEC mission statement and if gun shows are the consumer business that OCFEC wants to promote on state-owned property.

Charles Blek, Brady Orange County board member, spoke in opposition of gun shows and shared his concerns of alleged lax security at the event and easy availability of ghost gun kits. He spoke in support of Senate Bill 264 banning gun shows on all state-owned properties.

Mary Blek spoke in opposition of gun shows. She asserted the State should not be complicit in gun sales or homemade kits, that there are more appropriate venues for the purchase of firearms.

Ira Sharp, Never Again CA, spoke in support of ending gun shows at state-owned property. He questioned the security plan for the outdoor Crossroads of the West Gun Show planned for March. He spoke in opposition of the Board approving a contract when the dates and the facility charge fees are not finalized.

Julia Demlow urged the Board to vote no on the Crossroads of the West Gun Show contract. She discussed ghost gun sales and urged the Board to find other revenue-generating opportunities. She read a letter from students at Corona Del Mar High School opposing gun shows at OCFEC.

Piper Benom, Newport Beach resident, requested the Board not approve the gun show contract. She discussed increased gun violence and shared her concerns with ghost guns and DYI kits sales.

Julia Delmow read a statement on behalf of Joanna Weiss, WAVE President, urging the Board to reject the gun show contract with Crossroads of the West.

Bethany Webb shared her sister and friend were shot and killed during a mass shooting in Seal Beach in 2011. She discussed the increase of gun deaths in 2020.

Amy Capelle urged the Board not to approve the gun show contract with Crossroads of the West. She discussed record breaking gun related deaths in 2020, an increase in firearm sales and a rise in hate crimes in Orange County.

Board and staff discussion ensued regarding the Crossroads of the West gun show event planned at OCFEC, items discussed:

- Whether to move forward with the gun show under the OCFEC High Profile Event Policy
- Safety plans and safety measures in place
 - Enforcement of safety and mask wearing/pandemic type policies at the event
- The Board being able to see the security plan for the event
- The same protocols to purchase a firearm at a gun store apply to the gun show
- Firearm safety classes provided at the gun show
- Legal sales of firearms at the gun shows
- Enforcement of mask wearing
- Gun show security plans are submitted by the promoter to the Sheriff's Department for approval

ACTION: Director Cervantes motioned and Vice Chair La Belle seconded to review and approve the Consent Calendar. **MOTION CARRIED.** **AYES:** Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, Vice Chair La Belle, Director Cervantes, Director Ruiz, Director Bagneris, and Director Kovacevich. **NAYES:** Director Aitken. **ABSTENTIONS:** None.

10. GOVERNANCE PROCESS

B. Presentation Commemorating Black History Month

Information Item

Director Kovacevich and Director Ruiz on behalf of the Community Affairs Committee gave a presentation commemorating Black History Month.

A video was shown, submitted by Bobby McDonald, on behalf of the OC Black Chamber “OC Fair Board Black History Month Appreciation from the OC Black Chamber.”

Reggie Mundekis congratulated the Board for recognizing the diverse communities of Orange County with the presentation and the previous Hispanic Heritage Month presentation. She asserted commemorations like these can be an opportunity to build bridges into the diverse communities of Orange County, bringing new business and visitors to the OC fairgrounds and encouraged the Board to continue.

C. Review of OC Fair Planning Considerations and Vote on 2021 Dates

Action Item

CEO Richards made a presentation further updating the Board on plans and possible dates for the 2021 OC Fair since last month's presentation. She presented important considerations for Board discussion if the Board decides to push the fair dates into the fall, as:

August 25-September 19 dates have been secured for a “Plan B” fair. The Board should consider the following:

- Availability of key fair partners and contractors; the carnival is available
- The number of fair dates possible in the Summer vs. the Fall and the projected profitability of each
- Availability of off-site parking at OCC and Davis Elementary, as school will be back in session in the Fall
- Southern California theme parks expected to open in the Spring
- The County's need to use the property as a vaccination site
- The need to schedule the Jr. Livestock Auction to coincide with the end of the school year
- The potential loss of events already booked in September, representing \$845,000 in projected revenue, if these events cannot be rebooked
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- The potential loss of events already booked in September, representing \$845,000 in projected revenue, if these events cannot be rebooked

Reggie Mundekis discussed the use of the Pacific Amphitheatre and The Hangar and shared her concerns with the venues being proposed to operate at full capacity and not socially distanced. She also discussed sound limits and the sound monitoring agreement for fairtime and year-round events.

Wes Alcott urged the Board and staff to make sure the Jr. Livestock auction is planned for at the 2021 OC Fair for whatever dates are approved.

Heather Hernandez shared her concerns with moving the Jr. Livestock auction to coincide with the end of the school year, if the fair gets pushed to fall dates. She asserted that option will not work for the students, that the animals will not be ready for auction in May. She urged the Board to have the livestock auction during July as normal, with or without the fair, for the students.

Dr. Jeffery Horn agreed with the previous speaker, that the animals are prepped for the auction to be ready in July. He asserted the students that participate in the program rely on the auction to recoup some of the cost for feeding and caring for their animals. He also requested there be adequate space in the back areas (for social distancing) for parents and students and adequate sanitation stations for hand and dish washing.

Board and staff discussion ensued regarding the 2021 OC Fair, items discussed:

- Capacity levels in the Pacific Amphitheatre and The Hangar
- Face coverings
- Recommendations and requirements from the OC Health Care Agency
- Deadline of early to mid-April for the Board to make decision on dates for the 2021 OC Fair
- Disneyland and other theme parks announced re-opening in late spring
- Key partner commitments later in the fall
- Possibility of concerts in both summer and fall – ongoing conversations
- Safety protocols, masks, vaccinations and requirements
- Challenges with having a fall fair when neighboring schools are in session
- Enforcement of CDC guidelines on mask wearing

- Communications and marketing plan in the works to educate the public on “how to fair” – what will be required

No action by the Board. The item was tabled to the March meeting.

D. Committee / Ad Hoc Committee / Liaison Reports

Information Item

To assure compliance with the Bagley-Keene Act, Committee reports are only for the purpose of the Committee chair, Ad Hoc Committee members or Liaison to provide a verbal update. Should the Board want to discuss any Committee work item not already on the agenda; those would need to be agendized for a future Board meeting.

- i. Leadership Committee (Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, Committee Chair; Vice Chair La Belle)
- ii. Financial Monitoring and Audit Committee (Director Pham, Committee Chair; Director Bagneris)
- iii. Facilities Committee (Director Aitken, Committee Chair; Director Ruiz)
- iv. Governance Committee (Director Cervantes, Committee Chair; Chair Rubalcava-Garcia)
- v. Community Affairs Committee (Director Kovacevich, Committee Chair; Director Ruiz)
- vi. Centennial Farm Foundation Liaison (Director Cervantes)
- vii. Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation Liaison (Vice Chair La Belle, Director Cervantes)

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, on behalf of the Leadership Committee, reported:

- An update on the Equestrian Center (EQC) Study:
 - Doug Lofstrom provided the committee with an update on operating models, and his research
 - He has been working with trainers and Boarders
 - A survey is being developed for EQC users and the public
 - Schedule of the study – to be finished and presented to the committee and to the full Board in May

Director Kovacevich, on behalf of the Community Affairs Committee, reported:

- The committee met on February 16th to discuss next steps following the report to the Board from January
 - Recommendation the Board review and discuss the resolution regarding the Pride flag

Reggie Mundekis stated she is looking forward to seeing how the Community Affairs Committee comes together to bring more diversity of events and patrons to the fairgrounds, as well as gaining

participation by OC businesses and restaurants in the OC Fair and other events.

Gibran Stout asked for the timeline of the EQC survey and workshops.

6. CEO'S OPERATIONAL UPDATE

CEO Richards presented the January 2021 financial statements.

CEO Richards reported the following:

- Two sets of goats and a litter of piglets were born at Centennial Farm
- Virtual tour of the current Heroes Hall exhibit now available on the website
- Imaginology: dates April 19-25, 2021

11. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MATTERS OF INFORMATION

Board members thanked everyone for participating in the long meeting.

12. NEXT BOARD MEETING: FEBRUARY 25, 2021

13. ADJOURNMENT MOTION TO ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.


Natalie Rubalcava-Garcia, Chair
Michele Richards, Chief Executive Officer