

## **OCFEC Board Meeting March 28, 2024**

**Nick Kovacevich** Good morning everyone ,we are going to start the meeting first with a call to order so all matters notice on this agenda in any category may be considered for action as listed any item not so noticed may not be considered items listed on this agenda may be considered in any order at the discretion of the chairperson. Agenda Item number two the mission of OCFEC is creating equitable community access to agriculture, entertainment, cultural and educational experiences. And now I will have I would have ask our new Michelle, if you'd lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance, please. Thank you.

**Everyone** I pledge allegiance to the flag, of United States of America. And to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you.

**Summer Angus** Let's flip the camera screens because people think it's...

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, next item number four. We will do our Roll Call. Summer, Could you please assist.

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Here.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera  
Bagneris** Here.

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** Here.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** Here.

**Summer Angus** Director Rubalcava-Garcia?

**Summer Angus** Director Ruiz?

**Summer Angus** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Here.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson?

**Dimitria Jackson** Here.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you summer. Item number five minutes. We have the minutes from the February 22. board meeting, that we're looking for a motion to approve.

**Barbera Bagneris** Director Bagneris and move them approved.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, we have a motion, two motions like motion in a second.

**Barbera Bagneris** I second.

**Nick Kovacevich** All right. Thank you. Summer.

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera Bagneris** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** abstain.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** abstain.

**Summer Angus** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yes.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson.

**Dimitria Jackson** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, great. And I just want to let everyone know that before we jump into matters of public comment, agenda item number six, we're going to quickly move up agenda item 9A, and this is the Women's History Month proclamation. And I would like to turn this over to our esteemed Community Affairs Committee, of which we have Director Jackson in representation please.

**Dimitria Jackson** Thank you.

**Dimitria Jackson** Good morning, everyone. Can you hear me? Okay. On behalf of the Community Affairs Committee, including my other chair, Director Rubalcava Garcia, myself, I'd like to introduce you to Vicki Shepp. Vicki Shepp is the CEO of Girl Scouts of Orange County. She's a trailblazer, a lifelong Girl Scout, and enduring champion of girls and women's causes. Vicki is strongly focused on ensuring Transformative Leadership development experiences for nearly 15,000 girls across Orange County, with an annual budget of approximately \$12 million, 150 staff members including seasonal staff back excuse me, and nearly 10,000 adult members and active volunteers representing every OC zip code. Vicki leads her team and helping girls develop the vital skills they need to live their best lives. She is on a quest to ensure that all girls have access to the Life Changing opportunities Girl Scouts provides. Lead by example, she is a guiding she's guiding a vibrant, forward looking leadership development organization. Nearly 25,000 Girls and adults who believe that every girl could change the world.

**Dimitria Jackson** I this proclamation for Vicki Shep from our board, and I'm going to read it to you. Whereas the 32nd District agricultural Association's mission is to create equitable community access to agriculture, entertainment, cultural educational experiences, and whereas the district's vision is Orange County's Town Square, the safe place where the community gathers and finds value. And whereas the district recognizes the importance of honoring the month of March as Women's History Month, and whereas the district recognizes a pioneering women who were influential in the development and advancement of women in all fields

and professions who have positively impacted the rights of women in our community, and whereas a district celebrates the contributions of many women have demonstrated successful leadership throughout the organization, including in senior roles and on its board of directors. And whereas the Board of Directors of the 32nd District agricultural association is committed to uplifting and empowering women and girls and supporting equal opportunities so that all can succeed and prosper. And now therefore, the Board of Directors of the 32nd District agricultural Association proclaims the month of March as Women's History Month. During this month, we will continue to recognize all of the contributions and accomplishments Women past and present for the purpose of encouraging all women to achieve their full potential. So in honor of Women's History Month 2020 for the 32nd District agricultural Association honors Vicki Sharpe, who has the CEO of Girl Scouts of Orange County is making an impact every day in the lives of girls and young women.

**Dimitria Jackson** Okay, just leave us for reading

**Dimitria Jackson** We'd love to get photos let me know you put yourself here with me today too. We like to get photos with the staff and with the board if we have time. Is that okay? We don't have the plaques. Thank you.

**Michele Richards** We'd also like to introduce the chair of the board of Directors for Girl Scouts, Orange County, Christine Schunemann and the chief operating officer Christina Salcedo.

**Dimitria Jackson** The board, let's take some photos thank you.

**Vicki Shepp** Thank you so much for checking out the Girl Scouts environment.

**Aileen Anderson** Thank you so much.

**Barbera Bagneris** ...You got photoshop at around it

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, thank you. Moving on. We were going to move to item number six matters of public comment. Public comments a lot on issues not on the current agenda. However, no debate by the Board shall be permitted on such public comments and no action shall be taken on such public comment items at this time as law requires formal public notice prior to any action on an agenda item. Speakers are requested to fill out and

submit a comment card to the meeting Secretary prior to the start of the meeting are limited to three minutes. comments will be accepted. On all other agenda items at the time of each agenda item is listed on the agenda. Speakers wishing to address the board on items on the agenda requested to fill out and submit a comment card to the meeting Secretary prior to the start of the meeting and identify the agenda items on which you desire to address the board. Speakers are again limited to three minutes. We do have a couple general matters of comment first, we'll call to the stand, Glen Johnson.

**Glen Johnson**

Thank you very much. I didn't know I was being called to the stand but that's okay. My name is Glen Johnson. I'm the President of the Centennial Farm Foundation. And the reason I'm here today is to announce that we are holding our third annual sporting clays and BBQ fundraiser. This will take place April 26. At Raahauge Shooting enterprise in Corona, it starts at noon, and goes until about five o'clock. Last year at this one day event, we raised \$38,000 in support of the centennial farm. Our purpose in the foundation is to raise money to support all of the farm activities. As many of you know, the farm will host around 100,000 students a year and they will come through and learn about agriculture and food and nutrition, good eating habits and things like that. So I do have brochures here for the event. If you're not into sporting clays, that's okay, you can come to the barbecue. It's an all you can eat barbecue. We follow that with a live auction and a silent auction. We have lots of really interesting things there that you can bid on. The other announcement I'd like to make is I think the last time I was here I talked about we were going to revise our website for this Centennial Farm Foundation. We have done that we've hired a new agency to work with us on that. So if you go to Centennial farm foundation osi.org You can see what we're doing there to promote the activities of the foundation. So we got a new website that just went live about a month or so ago. Oh, we also are using the same agency to do community outreach and social media outreach. So that's gone live as well. And I think that's maybe everything other than I do want to say a big, big thank you to Michelle to Joan, Evie and Allan, they give us fantastic support at the foundation and without their help and assistance, we couldn't do what we do. So I'd like to hope well like to see you all at the at the fundraiser in barbecue. It starts off with a box lunch, then we do the sporting clays event. Then we do the barbecue and the silent auction and the live auction. April 26, starts at noon. Raahauge's. Thank you very much.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. All right. Next, we have Reggie Mundekis.

**Reggie Mundekis** Good morning. I'm Reggie Mundekis and thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning. So I live in the city of Orange and I would like to welcome communications lab, a public relations firm from the city of orange. One of the owners of communications lab is Mayor Pro Tem Ariana Barrios, at the December 2023 meeting, communications lab was also here to help manage that meeting. Regarding some issues on the agenda. That meeting was also noted for its Shall we just leave it at challenging meeting decorum at the most charitable. So I'm going to ask communications lab to please give us a meeting today, which is more in keeping with light and effective meeting decorum. And I would also like to point out that in the city of orange, if you acted the way that some of the people acted out that December 2023 meeting, you would have been asked to leave the meeting perhaps under police escort, so complying with security personnel when they asked you to please not block the exit, among other issues. So we're all adults here. We've been to public meetings before we know how to behave ourselves. So let's just be kind to each other while we disagree. And move through the meetings so we can all get a decision, you know, get our decisions made and then move on today, and have a great Easter. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. Okay, great. That concludes our general public comment, period. Oh, now we'll now move to Agenda Item number seven, which is consent calendar. All matters listed under the Consent Calendar operational matters about which the board has governing policies, implementation of which is delegated to the CEO, they will be enacted in one motion, there will be no discussion of these items prior to the time the Board of Directors votes on the motion unless members of the Board staff or public request specific items to be discussed separately and or removed from the section. Any member of the public who wishes to address Consent Calendar items, should notify the chair of the board at the time requested and be recognized by invitation the chair to address the board. We don't have any public comments here. Does the board have any items that they wish to discuss?

**Michele Richards** I do staff has one item to pull. Right. It's under the rental agreement section. R 079- 24. That's for an event that is scheduled to take place in June. But the contract paperwork was not complete by the time of the agenda posting so we're pulling that and we'll bring it back next month.

**Nick Kovacevich** Fair enough, Okay.

**Doug Le Belle** Move the consent calendar.

**Barbera**  
**Bagneris** Director Bagneris. I second.

**Nick Kovacevich** All right motion and a second, Summer?

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera**  
**Bagneris** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yes.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson?

**Dimitria Jackson** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, great. Now we'll move to Agenda Item number eight, which is CEOs, operational announcements and updates. CEO Richards.

**Michele**  
**Richards** All right. First and foremost, I would like to publicly introduce our incoming Chief Business Development Officer Michelle Capps. Michelle. Michelle comes to us with a storied career in marketing and sales. Most recently, she was representing her own consulting practice. Prior to that. She was the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Palace entertainment, which owned many amusement areas, including boomers, you might remember boomers locally, and prior to that she had a 27 year

career with Knott's Berry Farm. As the Director of Sales and Marketing and Michelle will be quick to tell you, she started at Knott's Berry Farm as a ride operator and worked her way up. So she comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience in sales, marketing, PR communications, advertising sponsorships, so she's been a great addition to our team. So welcome, Michelle. Thank you. And we will have time later to recognize Joan, so. So March has really been a very busy month for events at the OC fair and Events Center, new and returning events. We welcome back the California bridal and wedding expo and the Pacific Coast sport fishing show. And we added two brand new events to the OC fair and Event Center the Impala magazine car show, which is pictured on the above photo and hope fest. Oh see, and the fun continues through the end of the month, which upcoming with upcoming events and John will tell us all about that later in the meeting. Sales for our everyday passport annual pass to the fair kicked off March 1. And sales continue to climb for our super fair fans who want to get into the fair every day, Any day they choose. Those that would like an everyday passport should go to OC fair.com soon as quantities are limited for these special passes. And everyday passports are not the only hot ticket in town. The 2024 Toyota summer concert series in the Pacific amphitheater has generated over \$3 million in ticket revenue to date, with some shows nearing sellouts already. Whether you're a revolution, Bonnie Raitt, UB 40, Big Time Rush, Cake, Cooling & The Gang or stray cats fan, you can get your tickets now. And there's plenty of good entertainment also planned in the hangar and the action sports arena. And you can find all that information on our website. And we're very happy to report that the 2024 OC Pride festival is coming to the OC fair and Event Center in October so they've changed their dates. Previously. This event was held every June in the city of Santa Ana, but it will now be held here at the OC fair and Events Center and we're very happy to welcome them.

The organizers are in discussions with the city of Costa Mesa regarding the parade as well but the plan is that the parade will end here and continue with the Festival on October 5. On March 8, Joan Hamel and I, Director Rubalcava Garcia, and others joined together for the Women in Leadership Conference in honor of Women's History Month. One of the keynote speakers was the Governor's appointments Secretary Catherine Rivera Hernandez. She's pictured there in the white jacket in the center and it was really great to meet her I've spoken with her on the phone and her deputy appointments Secretary but I had never met her in person so it

was wonderful. Last week, our agriculture programs director Evie Yong attended a board meeting of the California Dairy Council, where she received an award for Centennial Farms let's eat healthy program. And Evie is pictured in the center there with members of the Dairy Council board and other Dairy Council partners and they've been a great partner of ours at Centennial farm. Last Tuesday was the annual Ag Day at the State Capitol in Sacramento Centennial farm, along with Western Fairs Association had a booth along with lots of other ag producers and members of our staff also attended our booth was visited by California Agriculture Secretary Karen Ross, and you'll see her there in the center in the tan slacks. And next to her on our right is California treasurer, Fiona Ma, who's a huge fan of fairs and the OC fair in particular, so it was great to have them visit our booth. And while moving some filing cabinets in anticipation of our office moves, a member of our staff found this rare souvenir pin from the 1948 Orange County Fair. That was the last year before the fair move to Costa Mesa. It was just four days long, and it was held in Anaheim at the very end of October to coincide with Anaheim's annual Halloween parade. The theme was youth. So we did a little math. So a 14 year old youth in 1948, who may have participated in the four h competitions during that 1948 OC fair is now nine years old. So that was definitely a rare find. And needless to say, we will return the pen to our archives for safekeeping. And just a quick follow up note that the April board meeting, we very well may be sitting in a construction zone. So, the meeting is being moved across the street to the city of Costa Mesa. That room is already wired like this one to be able to livestream, the meeting and audio and video equipment. The Community Room is at the back end of the city offices, and we'll provide everyone with directions. But this this is our last meeting for a while and in this room. And then John will come back later, as I said with more information about events. As promised, every month I want to give the board an update on where we're at with our community Equine Center. notices were emailed to equestrian center tenants on February 26 and march 15. That new rental agreements would be going out to cover the time period between April 15 When the current rental rates expire and June 14, and that rates and facility use would be changing. We just received confirmation. In fact, it's no longer tentative. But we will be holding our first horse show at the Equine Center, which will take place June 15 and 16th. So more information about that. We're wrapping up the school year with our ranch after school program this month and the students and adult coordinators for that program will be moving from the their current location at Centennial farm

to the community Equine Center to start off the new year after the fair. And our equestrian center supervisor Teresa Dayton is currently as we speak in the gala training program to become certified to provide equine assisted therapy programs. A gala stands for the Equine Assisted growth and learning Association. And she'll be working in conjunction with a lead therapist from the North Orange County Veterans Center to provide equine therapy for veterans and their families. And we're entering into an MOU to provide hands on learning for college veterinary Tech students. So that will begin soon at the equine center as well. And other programs are being planned, including public tour programs, school and community walkthrough exhibits and more. So we'll continue to have monthly updates for the board. And that concludes my report.

**Nick Kovacevich** All right. Thank you. Were to see both kinds of veterans.

**Michele Richards** We have to make that decision. Right, right, right

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay. Great. So now we'll move to item number nine, which is governance process. And we've already given out our Women's History Month proclamation, Item 9A so we'll move directly to Item 9B, which is a review of the new equestrian center rental rates and a vote on whether or not to approve. And I will first turn this over for presentation and then we have some public comment for the vote. Thank you.

**Michele Richards** All right. So I want to start off by reminding everyone of the board's vision for a new community equine center that includes public educational and support programs, operated and managed by the OC Fair and Event Center staff. It's a vision that opens up the facility to wide participation by the Orange County community who may not otherwise have access to horses. The programs the team is working on already, as I mentioned before, including posting horse shows free to the public, locating the ranch after school program to the community Equine Center, working with the North Orange County Veterans Center on certified equine therapy with veterans and their families and providing hands on learning opportunities to veterinary Tech students. Staff will continue to build additional programs including developing a hands on tour experience, free to the public, designing equine and agriculture education exhibits for school and public tours, and expanding accredited Equine Assisted activities through path certified equine therapists. That this vision also includes continued boarding and training of privately owned

horses and you'll see from the presentation to follow that there is room for both Have at the new center. So a reminder about our previous discussion that the plan is to establish two different programs at the current Equestrian Center. The four barns on the east side will be used sorry, the five barns on the west side will be used for boarding and training of privately owned horses. And the four barns on the east side will be used for horse shows open to the public, those equine education programs for students in the community and equine therapy activities that we talked about staff in the Facilities Committee, it's feel it's important to separate the activities to ensure the safety of the privately owned horses and control public access to those barns. The current occupancy at the center is about 100 horses, and we would be able to accommodate that same amount as we ramp up the community programming. We were directed by the board to ensure that we address the gift of public funds issue with our boarding rates to make sure that the district's expenses are covered. The following analysis was shared with the Facilities Committee, and is based on the current occupancy and capacity moving forward of 100 horses. So let me walk you through this table. We first looked at what our actual expenses are to understand what we needed to do to close the gap between the district's costs and what our boarding rates are. So starting with feeding and stall cleaning, we broke those rates down by a cost per month per horse. And that's based on current contractor invoices. That's \$465, shavings \$248 per month that's based on current contractor invoices, manure removal \$102 That's based on our most recent monthly invoice of \$10,200 trash removal, \$5.20 per month per horse. And you can see that's based on the usage, we would split that cost between the two programs, the boarding and training, and then the public programs flyspray \$11.25. That's based on a nine month average invoice of \$11.25 per month. Street sweeping \$865 based on \$400 per sweep once per week. Again, that would be split with the district between the boarding and training activity and the community programs. Electrical usage \$18.33 Based on current rates divided by the number of horses water usage, \$1,665 Based on current water usage for the Equestrian Center divided by the number of horses, and then the OC Fair and Events Center staff that runs the office there, we would allocate 70% of the supervisors wages and 80% of the part time office coordinator as most of their time is and would be spent on the boarding and training activity. So when we look at that list of expenses, it totals \$995.70 per horse per month.

**Michele**

Borders and trainers would have access to arena one which is the arena in

**Richards**

the lower left hand corner, that's the largest arena, they would have access to that 100% of the time and that arena is dragged and watered twice daily. The other two arenas that you see arena two in the lower right hand side, and arena four will be covered 100% by the OC Fair and Events Center and will be dedicated to public programs, those arenas would be dragged and watered once per day. However, borders and trainers can use those areas when they are not in use for the public programs. When all other arenas and turnout pens are not being used for public programs, borders and trainers will have access but will only be charged 50% for maintenance and those areas would be dragged and watered twice per day. So when we look at the costs for arena maintenance, and we do that same breakdown, arena number one designated for exclusive use by borders and trainers. The costs the district's costs for that is \$74.40 per horse per month splitting arena three and The round pens and the turnout splitting between the two programs 2325 per month and \$69.75 per month. And then we would credit back the boarding and training side \$60.38 per month per horse for the portion of the annual arena footing, that would be credited to those areas. So that's an additional \$107.02. So when we add those two together the operations costs added to the daily arena maintenance, the direct cost to the district is \$1,102.72. And that's based on per month per course based on the current occupancy. Now, there are other operating expenses that are not factored into the cost of to the borders which the district will cover. And those include the annual arena footing replacement, which is 74,000 per year, bank fees for credit card charges, security for the area, janitorial and landscaping and tree maintenance. Now, we also looked at market research and in your packet there's there's a more extensive list of other area equestrian centers and what what their current charges are. The two most notable is San Juan Capistrano Equestrian Center, they had a rate increase as of March 1, they went from \$624 to \$910 for a 12 by 12 stall, and they're currently charging \$1,340 for a Double Stall that represented a 46% increase that was effective March 1. The Huntington Central Park Equestrian Center, which is city owned and operated has a current rate of \$861 for the 12 by 12 stall, it was \$785 in 21', and 22'. And they do anticipate an additional increase this year as well. So there's lots of information in the packet, as well as a detailed proposed rate card for our equestrian center.

**Michele  
Richards**

But just to just to reiterate what was shared with the Facilities Committee and how the rates work out. If you look on the left hand column, you'll see a single box stall 12 by 12, and a Double Stall. Currently, as of April 1

of last year, we were charging \$644 for a single. \$1,023 for a double. We're proposing to do a three phase phase in our three step phase in of the rates to get to a place where we're covering the district's costs. So starting with a 45% increase on June 15th, followed by a 10% increase on October 1, and then finally a 10% increase on January 1. In the far right hand column, you'll see the district's expenses for the single stall and then the Double Stall. So that phased in approach would cover the district's costs with a little bit of margin built in to handle any ongoing maintenance or other issues that might come up at the the Equestrian Center. We did look at doing a single increase one one increase from \$644 to \$1,130. But the facilities committee and staff both agreed that to ease the transition, it would be better to do a phased in approaches as you see here. In addition, there are other fees for boarders and trainers there would be a 10% rate increase on the 15th of June October 1 and January 1 For tack rooms and offices trailer parking lockers and district own storage units. And then I know there's been a concern expressed by the board about the usage of the facility for the trainer businesses. So we would assess a \$400 per month facility usage fee for trainers that conduct lessons camps or other activities at the at the center. So that concludes our our research and our report. We're happy to take any questions that the board might have.

**Nick Kovacevich** If the, sorry if the board's okay with it, we could do public comment and then circle back to discussion. Okay, great. So we'll start with public comment, I believe you have 12 cards. So we'll start with Reggie Mundekis

**Reggie Mundekis** Hi, good morning. I'm Reggie Mundekis, thank you for the opportunity to address you on this item. We live in Orange County, which, quite frankly, our economy is larger than the economy of many countries. And in Orange County, its economic survival, the fittest. If you can make money, you stay here and you can stay in business. And if you can break even you stay in business. Over the years, we've seen equestrian facilities go out of business. While you may ask, because they can't make money or break even. The problem is, is that there is such downward pressure on prices, equestrian centers, that they're that the revenue streams are kept artificially low, gets to the point where the owners can't even break even, they end up going to the hole and they sell the place. And they get out of the equestrian business. Today, we're acknowledging the actual costs of the equestrian business. And we're also eliminating any issues regarding

gifts of public funds. These are difficult to deal with, but we're dealing with them. We're also creating equitable community programming and actually using public property for the public. And I'll tell you a little story about my brother in law. Harrell, he lives in Iowa. He was a farmer. He's recently retired when he was farming. He sold hay, because it was something you could make money with. So he talked to everybody around him when he was selling hay, he got needs. So hay to farmers, they never dickered on the price. They just told him where to you know how much he needed and when to show up. When the Fort Madison Livestock Show and Rodeo was in town he sold to them. They paid the price and told him when he needs to deliver and asked him if he could come sooner. When he sold to border border trainers, which he called show horse people, he always wanted to discount. And after a while he just won't even call them tell me hey for sale because they wanted such a low price. It just wasn't worth it to do business with them. So I like to thank the board, like to thank staff who put together this very detailed report. I appreciate it because there's a lot of work that went into that report. So and thank you for working on this item.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Thank you Next we have Alice Haug.

**Alice Haug**

Hi, good morning. My name is Alice Haug. I'm going to speak on behalf of one of the trainers, of which I'm also a client of on Diano on the amaz equestrian. So she had sent me Hi, good morning. My name is Lisa Rathfelder. And I came to board my horses here earlier this year after I heard that the board and staff had committed to improve public program programming to encourage equestrian activities at the fairgrounds in the Equestrian Center. The horses have trained the horses that are in my training program. And my training program focuses on the safety for school aged children. And I'm all in favor of improving public program programming. I'm just not sure whether the strategy of nearly doubling the rental rates on our stalls is going to get improved public programming won't that just drive all of us out who provide training to clients and provide lessons to the kids in the community? are the ones that will stay have to utilize their own time with the ones that can afford the board increase to cover the cost at which would now be considered the highest rates in Southern California? Then exactly what will the horses be what horses are going to be used for public programming and who's going to be paying for that? Can we dial this back a little and direct staff to maybe work with the equestrian community us that have been there now in in

finding a better solution. There are more than a dozen equestrian centers throughout Southern California but this is the only one that seems to be losing a million dollars a year. Perhaps the operations and management of the Equestrian Center is not what it should be in perhaps we should start looking for professional that knows how to run these type of facilities. I hope you will consider working with us to find a solution and keep the equestrian centers to keep their questions at the Equestrian Center. So now as for me, I have a horse there and you guys are forcing us to make a decision between selling our animals or feeding them. Like that even taken into consideration what the cost is to upkeep these animals. We have to feed them, vitamins, minerals, supplements shoeing, vet care. These are costs that we have to cover. So a lot of these people that have their horses at this facility that are using them for public programming for kids that are getting what getting lessons and such, are going to have to decide, are they sending their horses off to the meat factory, because they can't afford to take care of them anymore. Because of this. You bring up the Sycamore trail, San Juan equestrian facility, which is where we came from. They are not even this expensive. So we really asked you guys to reconsider this massive hike that you guys want to put on us. Thank you very much.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. Next we have Lisa Sabo.

**Lisa Sabo** Hi, welcome. Thank you for taking our public comment. Many of you know that I run a riding school at the Equestrian Center. And a yes vote today would close my riding school. And I'm going to be real brief. But yesterday I wasn't going to talk today. And then I just thought I just have to tell you what happened yesterday. We had a saddle fitter in fitting a saddle for horse for the back. And she traveled all over California. She was there yesterday afternoon. And she said I have never seen anything like this. I mean, we have great instructors, great horses, great ponies, and she was there at four in the afternoon. And it was just hands on all in on the field, at least people filling the horses. She was I've never seen anything like this. She goes and she heard everyone talking about the rate increase and bottom line ... if this could increase goes through, I'm closing my riding school. And and she said how can someone vote that someone that has seen this vote to close this. And I stood there for a moment and I thought they've never seen this. None of you. Even Michelle, you've never been in there in the afternoon and seen my riding school and seen the hands on. We are all in we're spectators having

educational activities where people sit in the stands and watch is not what we do. That's a spectator sport. I tell my riding kids, I'm an impact player. I don't let them sit in the stands. We get down on the field. Okay, we get down on the field, you need to look at your costs. Why is Huntington Beach running for so many years in the profit. These other places are running in a profit. And and I am Newport Mesa Riding Center. This is where I began by Nick Berardino coming out of the sale encouraged me to start a pony club again and get it going. And that's what I've done. Please look at the costs. You can lower the costs, run an RFP, get an operator in the equestrian center that knows what they're doing. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you Next we have Melissa Krawczyk.

**Melissa Krawczyk** Hi, thank you for hearing my comment. I'm Melissa Krawczyk and my daughter. my daughter rides with Andy and Melissa Equestrian. And also we moved up here when they did because she started doing the pandemic riding horses, it was one of the few activities that was outside and safe because I have health problems that caused me to not be able to be around people during COVID. And she's been training for four years now. And it's finally doing what she's dreamed of since she was little which is starting to jump horses and it's taken a very long time you takes a long time to really be able to handle large, intelligent, but very big animals. You know, they do a lot into safety and horse care. And one of the things they do every time they're here is they groom the horses, they check them over to make sure there's no injuries that take care of their feet, they take care of their hair, they clean all of the equipment and the saddles, they learn how to fit everything properly. They learn all the techniques for safe riding. I am a member of the community we have one income right now. I'm very underemployed. And so I we work really hard to get our daughter to have even a couple of days of riding a week. And it's not because the lessons are hugely, hugely expensive, you know it here. It's just horses are so expensive to take care of. And I think as I've mentioned, increasing these rates. I mean, that means that people like my daughter, we're not going to be able to sorry, we're not going to be able to afford to have her do the one thing that she loves. And we were hoping already this year to increase time that she could ride but now we're gonna be struggling just to even keep her doing. You know what she can and hear you say that you want equitable community act says, but it's not equitable. If people can't afford, we can't afford to have a horse. So we need the

people who own horses to take good care of them versus veterinary care and all this stuff. It's not just the boarding, it's not just the box, the place they live in, it's all of the other work. And if you raise the rates this much, and they close the training programs, and the kids are stuck. Kids that can't even start will never start even with the program and the public programming you're talking about, which does sound wonderful. But horses are wonderful features and there's so few chances to access and if you drive out the trainers, then yeah, you might have kids coming for, you know, short sessions or maybe more spectator but kids who want to ride my daughter wants to be in the Olympics. Now is she gonna make it I don't know. But she won't be if training centers are forced to close because they can't afford. They can't afford the increases if you could just wait on this and please look for other options to try to make it more possible for the people who put their horses for kids like mine. That would be great. Please don't vote yes on this today. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Thank you. Next, we have Gil Salazar.

**Gil Salazar**

Hello, I'm with mustard seed grants, we're nonprofit, we're going to be starting here in April. And I'm an equestrian. And I'm also a Girl Scout troop leader, believe it or not, I have ambassadors right now. And we started with since we were daisies. I'm have friends with the LA Sheriff's Department, they're willing to bring kids over here from Compton, and learn about horses and experience all of that. But you know, and I've just seen what showed on the screen here. And it makes me a little sad. Because you know, it's hard to do that if you don't have healthy horses. And we need to help the horses to expose them to kids like my daughter and other kids from the community. But I haven't been able to see the transformations that happens in the healing power of the horse, that I spend my day with horses. And that's what it does for me. And I implore you to look at other options, maybe you could add some more stalls and go from 100 to 125 horses and maybe that will alleviate some of the costs in that way. Anyway, I'm happy to see all of the new community services that you're going to provide and I'm willing to help and I'm here for you. And I would love to support and help you in any way.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Thank you Next we have Leigh-Ann Kazolas.

**Leigh-Anne Kazolas**

Thank you. When the district contracted Lopez works a street sweeping company to maintain the riding arenas feed the horses and clean the stalls. The public told you that the prices you agreed to pay were beyond

outrageous. But the board was comfortable with staffs recommendation turning an entity that are in the district around \$100,000 a year for over a decade into one that would lose more than a million dollars a year it would give staff time to learn. But after 15 months, why is it that staff still can't get the numbers to work like all the other equestrian centers in the state. So just one example currently the district pays around \$1,200 a day to Lopez works for arena maintenance. A job that takes two hours an hour in the morning in our midday, so \$600 an hour. In the morning, a Lopez employee arrives drives the water truck and disperses the water for one hour and leaves. While the water truck does its thing. One of the senior guys, Gabby or Ruben they've been there forever. They're great. They drive around a tractor and a harrow and they smooth the arena surface and they return to their other duties like still clean. For that one hour of work. The contractors paid \$600 Gaby Rubin see about 5% of that it's part of their daily wages. \$30 an hour so so the contractor gets \$570, GABBY Rubin get 300. That process is repeated midday. So over the course of the year for two hours of work, Gabby Ruben see 5% of sorry, for two hours of work a day the contractor gets up to \$400,000 Gabby and Raven see about 21,000 for that task, does that even seem close to right? Gaping if you factor in contractor expenses and equipment. For further comparison, Lopez works as another on streets on site street sweeping and cleaning contract with the district. For that contract. The district pays Lopez works only \$85 an hour for the water truck and driver that when that same company provides the same service at the Equestrian Center, that hourly rate increases 600% And here's the real deal. The expensive contract and middleman isn't even necessary. Gabby and Reuben used to do that job every day for the former contractor. And just like every other equestrian facility, the senior guys do the job. It's a \$60 a day expense, not a \$1,200 day expense. And you also own a water truck and tractor bring that part of it in house dropped the cost. The proposed boarding rates hikes subsidize this bloated and irresponsible contract prices that far exceed the real world costs. Think of the money If you saved running this place properly, you could add on to all those great programs you mentioned, the Lopez contract needs to be terminated immediately. Please issue an RFP for a new operator that will run the facility responsibly, and then work with staff on adding in all this public programming. There's no reason that this equestrian center becomes the most expensive in the state. That move would go in direct violation of the property's mission and the board's vision for more public access, not less. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you, next we have Brian Cummings.

**Brian Cummings** Hello, I'm Brian Cummings. I'm a faculty member at the University of California, Irvine. And the board told the public and equestrians in November 2022, that they were prepared to operate a deficit as they learned the business. So what's changed? Your staff provided a table of the boarding rates at some local facilities, but many options all cheaper than the OC fairgrounds, were left off the chart. So I've handed you have a more updated chart that includes the cost of feed and shavings. So this is a 65% rate increase and will be the most expensive Equestrian Center in Orange County. And we're a public facility with not as good at facilities as the private ones with covered arenas, and much greater turnout. So in December, you said you're committed to improving public programming at the Equestrian Center, we trusted that was true. You said you wanted to work with stakeholders, we believed you. And Michelle, that presentation was fabulous. I mean, I'm excited to hear about some of these programs. What I don't understand what I see is missing. Where's the cost for the horses, because when you jack up the rates to \$1,000 a month, most of these people as you're here are going to leave, the rich will stay. And you will have no lesson verses. So is there a secret plan to buy horses that the fairgrounds owns? Who's going to train those horses? So what you're getting from the trainers right now is they're training horses six days a week, a horse has to be ridden or exercised six times a week, have you budgeted in the cost of taking those horses out of their stalls and going out into the turnout every day? I don't see any of those numbers for the public side. So what horses veterans gonna ride, what horses are the foster kids going to ride, there will be no horses to ride unless there's a secret plan to buy those horses. I haven't seen it. So when a business is in a deficit, normally it looks at both sides of the equation. How can it cut costs and raise revenue? All your staff has done is figured out how to raise revenue. And nothing about cutting costs. \$600 an hour to drive a truck I said two years ago, I'll do that job. I said I'll clean the stalls for the \$1,000 a day. So I'm not opposed to paying the fair market price. I think Michelle's plan is great. With the one flaw of there's been no effort to cut the cost of too reasonable. So Orange County Fairgrounds is gonna have the highest costs of anything, and then attempt to pass that irresponsible costing to the rest of us. That sounds like fiscal mismanagement to me. So we've connected your staff with multiple stable managers who run programs at a profit and can detail how the Orange County Fairgrounds can be profitable. And why isn't their input been sought? Joy Gould was

supposed to be here today. She can't she runs Whittier Narrows for \$400 a stall for a month at a profit. But we're \$1000 It makes no sense. So don't approve this item. The fairgrounds would be subjected themselves to a financial audit for mismanagement and failure to work with stakeholders as the staff was direct do and where are you going to get the horses to do the other half of the things we're so excited about? There's no plan for horse.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Thank you. Thank you. Next we have Aileen Anderson.

**Aileen Anderson**

So I'm just quickly providing a copy of a letter that I first submitted to this board in November of 2022 when this issue first came up, because it sets some of the basis for my comments. In December when the revised RFP was pulled and this board said that it was committed to expanding public programming at the Equestrian Center. Shifting to a new model after working with stakeholders we hoped that that was true. I certainly am enthusiastic about the public programming that was discussed today. But by increasing the cost of boarding by actually what's an aggregate 71% voting for this agenda item 9B will make this equestrian center the most expensive if any public or private facility in Southern California make no mistake. As you can see in the chart that was just distributed. If you look at a full set of equestrian centers, public and private and look at those numbers, which were not presented to you by the board, it clearly shows this will be the most expensive Equestrian Center in Orange County. This move will not decrease the cost for kids and adults taking lessons under the existing programs. My daughter, myself have taken lessons under lesson programs here since she was in sixth grade. She's a graduating senior in high school now, that's going to be impossible to sustain. It's going to increase it and it will certainly not enable free or low cost programming that includes horses or equine activities, as you just heard what horses are you going to use when you have no trainers here. How does this come to be the case? It's because as you heard from Michelle, it's based on current invoicing, and that current Invoicing is based on a deeply flawed contract that was established with Lopez works. That vastly overpriced Lopez worked contract established in 2022 was a mistake then, and it remains one now. Moreover, the premises of that contract have been used across the board by staff in developing in house management models that were doomed to fail because they relied on fiscally irresponsible staffing and cost modeling. As you've heard from that Lopez works plan. It is no surprise, it shouldn't be a surprise to

anyone in this room that paying \$1,000 an hour to feed horses and \$600 an hour to drag arenas will drive a deficit. In fact, as you can see, in this letter that I first submitted, I projected almost this exact deficit two years ago, a vote to enshrine this manufactured deficit and under Agenda Item 9B will hamstring any potential to expand low cost public programming, and it will shutter existing programs at the Orange County Fairgrounds Equestrian Center. As a result, I urge you to continue this item and require staff to actually hold and engage with public forums. But beyond this irrecoverable consequence, there's a deeper issue. fairgrounds staff have refused to investigate industry standard pricing on local models at other equestrian centers. Why would that be? Option one because in the end, it would allow bulldozing the Equestrian Center with plausible deniability, option two because this represents inadequate oversight of all the contracting that happens at this fairgrounds for all the activities in this regard and beyond the issue of industry standards for equestrian centers. A comparison as you heard between the Lopez works contracts for different parts of this fairgrounds identifies massive internal discrepancies and charges \$85 On one...

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank You.

**Aileen Anderson** ...mismanagement, or

**Nick Kovacevich** Sorry, we're gonna move on. The time's up sorry. Next we'll have Noelle Anderson.

**Michele Richards** Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for having me today. My name is Noelle. I am a member of the public and I do not own a horse. I ride weekly at the Equestrian Center on a lesson horse a shared lesson horse in a lesson program. I'm here to speak in opposition of these price hikes. It would make the equestrian center the most expensive facility as you heard from previous folks, but I really just want to call the fact this would be more expensive encoded AKAZA and Nellie Gail, those are like country clubs. You guys like we can't be the most expensive Equestrian Center in Orange County as a public facility. The increase in boarding costs, it's going to affect people like me, members of the public who ride lesson horses shared horses. I've already had to cut down from two lessons a week to one and all I'm asking for is is the ability for one lesson a week. That's I don't know. I just feel like that's not I'm not asking for the world. Um, I'd like to see the board review the existing contract with Lopez works. I think there's immediate cost savings we can identify and

implement like right now. I really would like to see an RFP release to find a qualified operator for the Equestrian Center. This would allow the facility to turn a profit as it historically has. And most importantly, I really would like to see the board immediately moved to formalize the vendor relationships with these on site trainers. They're providing a public benefit they're giving us their lesson horses and letting people like me, you know, pretend for an hour a week that that's my horse for that one hour and it are people like me, it means the world. I've written over a dozen lesson horses out of the hundreds of horses that you guys have. There's so many that are serving a public use for people like me for kids. I would just like to see those vendor relationships formalized and we can work as a community to accomplish this shared vision because Michelle this presentation is amazing. These two Things you want to do with the facility is amazing. And I'm standing here as a member of the public who wants to be a part of it. So, like I said the RFP to help stabilize the cost is really key for for public use. So anyway, thank you for your time.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. Next we have Denise Xagorarakis.

**Denise Xagorarakis** Hi, my name is Denise Xagorarakis. I'm a member of the public. I also live in Mesa Del Mar, I have five kids, three of which to ride currently, and one wants to start riding, he's only five. So we're waiting till he's a little bit more mature. I do own a horse that my children do not they ride less than horses. And I wanted to come here today to reiterate some points that were made to the board via Carolyn Beaver who cannot be here today. She made a testimony back in 2022 in November, regarding the looks worked contract, and some of the points that were in her statement. And I distributed to you again today for your convenience, but obviously it's in your archives as well. But this just changes direction under the board strategic plan states that the business model for the Equestrian Center will balance the requirement to operate as a public benefit venue with the need to be financially sound. The contract with Lopez Works is not financially sound. So the borders and the public have been in opposition of this contract for 15 months, that it needs to be reassessed. She also stated that the Lopez Works contract will cause the 32nd DAA to lose 1.4 million a year compared to the existing provider. This was foreseen and raking up the Heights High Rate breaking up the rates. So that we have to cover at the public. This mismanagement, is you. Anyway, the third, the third point that was made was the board needs to exercise its responsibility for governance. To reject the contract in its

current form. This was stated back in 2022. The bid needs to be revised to ensure that its requirements reflect the current industry standards of operation by experienced personnel and competitive costs. So, you know, we implore as a group as the public that the board find em binds solution to this problem when it comes to this mismanagement of of the funds used to operate this facility. So you went from an annual net profit of approximately \$100,000 a year to a loss of over a million dollars of year a year. And now that's trying to be passed off to the public. The problem is not that they equestrians are paying too little, it's that you have an operator that is charging too much. So please raising the costs, put the contract out to bid and protect the Equestrian Center.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. Next we have Joanna Schielein.

**Joanna Schielein** Hello, my name is Joanna Schielein and I manage equine veterinary services and Orange County. And I also helped to start and currently run the Newport Mesa Pony Club and riding center. And I've been a border at the Equestrian Center for almost 20 years now. And I'll tell you the majority of the borders we work full time, some second and third jobs just like me to be able to afford our horses and some can't afford horses at all. In order to make horses more accessible to children and adults that can't afford their own horses. We started the Newport Mesa Pony Club and Riding Center. The United States Pony Club is one of the only organizations that's internationally recognized and has a standardized level of instruction and testing from the introductory level all the way up to the top level at the a level which is equivalent to the first year in veterinary medical school. And many of our local practicing vets are Pony Club graduates. And over half of the equestrian is competing in the Olympics have a foundation in pony club. I'm proud to say that here at the Orange County Fairgrounds. Our Newport Mesa Pony Club and Riding Center is one of the largest riding centers in the nation. And 75% of our members do not own a horse. Through our riding center. We were able to provide lesson horses to our members And we currently board them at the Equestrian Center. But these are older school horses that require special veterinary care and upkeep. So our programs really barely able to break even and sometimes operates in the negative. But we do it because it's been amazing to watch the magic and transformation of what Pony Club has taught and help so many of our members, some of which have gone on to go to medical school and become veterinarians. I appreciate that the fairgrounds wants to make horses more accessible to the public, but we

already have wonderful programs available and in place. I teach monthly horsemanship classes on a veterinary level. And I welcome the Fair Board all the members to come and take part and see what I teach and the education that we provide to kids and adults. We teach confidence public speaking, teamwork, community and so much more. By voting for the 65% increase in our boarding rates, you're narrowing public accessibility, and will force the permanent closure of our Pony Club and riding center as we're barely able to afford the and keep the lesson horses we currently have. By voting to raise the prices you'll be making horses only accessible to the wealthy, which I know is the opposite of your intention. Please help keep horses accessible to our community help support the current programs that currently exist and are successful. If that means finding a new operator or working with your current borders and equestrians to help revise the operating costs.

**Summer Angus** Thank you Joanna those time Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you Next we have Macki Hamblin.

**Macki Hamblin** Good morning my name is Mackey Hamblin, I appreciate the board is giving us this time to speak and hear everyone that's made comment today. I am a trainer on the facility. And I'm partnered with mustard seed who works with at risk youth. We're very excited to be able to provide that at the Equestrian Center. I am I handed out a letter from Mary, who runs the Huntington Central Park business Equestrian Center, which is the same that we saw in the presentation from Michelle. So she is a proud women owned business. She's run in Huntington Beach equestrian center for over 38 years. She's the owner and operator in the lesson in the letter that I have handed out and she has validated that she has given and worked with Theresa Sears on numbers for running a fair and profitable equestrian center. Now we have one of the public Equestrian Center in 2001, there was 3,700 public stalls available. Right now Orange County only has 784. And we are lucky enough to have 25% of those to be able to provide the public. So please employ read this letter from Mary that shows that we can make this profitable and gives you a model that she's willing to help with and share. I do also ask yourself, why? If Mary has confirmed a working and profit a model isn't this part of the discussion today? My other question would be who is truly affected by this 9B item? It would make the OC Equestrian Center the most expensive Equestrian Center in Orange County. I've asked the please push the discussion on this

nine V or vote against it. And then please please run an RFP from a qualified operator such as someone like Mary who can make this work for our community and offer all of the help and guidance that she has available. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you Next we have Teresa Sears.

**Theresa Sears** Okay, I come here today to bring good news. I was asked by staff and board members to help re-vision the Equestrian Center. So I met with Michelle after Christmas she asked me to speak specifically help with boarding operations and the trainer's we decided that we needed to reimagine, rearrange and renovate the facility. I coined it the three R's. It became apparent to me after listening to board members that they support the Equestrian Center wanted to break even, but needed visibility. So I took my assignment seriously, so I could provide that visibility. I've handed you my research. I reached out to other public stables did site visits gathered current prices for various equine services. I've owned horses for 40 years. 33 of them have been hands on at my own barn. So this is right up my alley. I met in February with Michelle, Joan, Doug Colostrum. Doug emphasized to me just the basics, feeding cleaning water safe turnouts and arenas, the picture became very clear to me, we were talking about two distinct operations like boarding facility and equine programs for the public, both must both must function together in a synergistic fashion. While you may have separate operations, the stables and public programs are dependent on each other for success. We do need experienced trainers and their horses. A sustainable foundation is critical. And that starts with an accurate budget. I personally did this assessment. And now I know that there is absolutely no need to raise board fees. You have my budget and the rates for other public facilities are is is one of the highest. As it stands today. Current board is \$644. The monthly or horse expense is \$565. There is no gift of public funds. Annual income is right at a million expenses at \$680. If managed correctly, the current income more than covers expenses leaving about a \$300,000 profit. Those profits can be used to repair the barns the renovation Forsen two experienced equestrian operators reviewed my work one thought my numbers were good. The other said my expenses were too high. I'm right on target. I'm here to help you understand horses, stable management and industry standards. We must spend our money wisely and demand we get value. I believe you need an experienced operator to run this facility. I urge you to put out an RFP that accurately defines the needed position. It must be

clear. Without I'm confident you'll get applications. I will help that selecting an experienced operator from the horse world is key. I would say give Lopez a 30 day notice. I will never agree to disagree on wasting precious funds. Never. There is a better way.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you, Teresa. Yes. Next we have Gibran Stout.

**Barbera**  
**Bagneris** Good morning, I wasn't going to speak. I just flew in from Boston last night. I'm a little tired. But there's a few things I have to point out. And one of the things Reggie said is how hard it is for business to do business here in Southern California. And she's absolutely right. And many of you run businesses. When you run your business, you have mortgage payments, you have property taxes, you have sales tax, and you all pay income tax, all of those things the fairgrounds does not have. Okay, so that's one reason businesses struggle here. So she's absolutely right on that point. The prices that are being charged, are right on target. I know what you were provided was missing a couple of comparables that show what they show. I think it's important to realize that on top of the 65% increase we're talking about today is the 10% increase from June. That's 75% increase. We've begged you not spend a million and a half dollars in the hole. We begged you. It can be done. There's ways in all of these presentations. I've not seen one that talked about cutting costs. Not one, not one scenario, not one. You brought it up in your first meeting and you were dismissed. Why are we not talking that in December, you voted and approved. That staff was working with the board, the public and stakeholders to come up with the new model. Well, I'm a stakeholder and a member of the public and I'm still waiting for those conversations. I can only ask why. Why are all these conversations held behind closed doors? Why? Why are we not allowed to participate? Why are we not allowed to bring forth information so you can make a fully informed decision with all the facts on both sides? Look at both sides, and then make up your own mind. You guys are all smart people. You're smart business people. This is a hasty and unwise choice. And I think it needs to be vetted further, there needs to be more discussion on where the middle is, because you used to make \$113,000 a year, and now it's a million and a half loss. That's millions of dollars that could have gone into public programming for local kids that you've wasted on an unqualified operator who is gouging you. That's fiscal mismanagement and fiscal malfeasance. Please fix this now.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. Next we have Lauryn Mascarenas. On zoom.

**Lauryn  
Mascarenas** Hey, everybody. I'm joining you here today on Zoom, just confirming that you can hear my audio. Yes, yes. Thank you so much. My name is Lauren. I'm a committed member of our community deeply involved in organizations like the Junior League of Orange County, California, and orange wood. Additionally, I'm a rider here at the Orange County Fairgrounds through one of our training programs here. I don't personally own a horse, I rely heavily on the school's lesson horses to be able to ride and participate at the OC fairgrounds. As I've been here over the past couple of years, and I've been here for that long. Each time there has been a price increase at the facility, it's directly impacted the ability to pursue my passions. You know, as we look at some of these numbers today, you know, I urge the board to thoroughly review the current contracts and identify areas that we can have cost savings, you know, reassess our procurement process and ensure we're working with vendors who are understanding our needs, are offering competitive pricing, and are supporting women owned businesses. I think, as an institution and thinking about the OC Fair Board, you know, it's vital that we align our actions and our values with, you know, community and inclusivity. And, you know, highlighting that the trainer's here are representing women owned businesses here in Orange County. So by raising our rates, we are in direct conflict with our commitment to supporting the community and women owned enterprises as well. You know, this has the potential this facility to be a world class destination supporting these public programmings. You know, it can offer people like me a chance to be able to ride and be a part of this, and it's a really crucial part of our community. So, you know, really asked to, for the board to look at this, as someone who couldn't afford horses as a child, you know, I understand the transformational power of this sport. And I would like to see you guys get more involved as a board and show up. You know, it would have been great to see you all at, you know, the last community Horse Show, and know that we had, you know, your direct support there as well. So, you know, I thank you for your time, and hope that you reconsider, you know, really looking at our procurement process, and how we're sourcing these vendors so that we can get better competitive pricing, support the women in business in this community, and continue to offer these opportunities to people like myself, thank you for your time.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. And then that brings us to our last public comment, via.

Zoom, we have Jody Enget.

**Summer Angus** Jodi, you're muted.

**Jody Enget** Oh, can you hear me?

**Summer Angus** Yes, we can hear you now. Thank you.

**Jody Enget** Thank you. Hello, my name is Jody Enget, and I'm the Executive Director of Mustard Seed Ranch a Colorado or California nonprofit. Mustard Seed Ranch provides mental health services incorporating horses to youth and young adults that have experienced auto home placement and trauma. We've been operating in a variety of locations in Orange County since 2007. Some agencies we work for all of Christ's Academy, Phoenix House and project kinship, they bring us their youth. Our operating model is that we don't own a facility or horses. Is we lease horses at facilities as close to urban areas as possible. Because transportation and time are an issue to our clients. We try to ease those issues by being in multiple locations in as urban as possible and as urban as possible. cost is an issue. We do not charge our clients. Our program is 100% free to our clients and we are 100% donor funded. So being able to lease horses at a reasonable fee is essential to our sustainability. California has the highest rate of foster care youth in the United States, they average 60,000 youth in foster care per year 4000 of those youth aged out of foster care every year with no support systems in place, and less than 60% of foster care youth graduate from high school in California. This demographic and youth needs support and accessible services. And every day there is more data to suggest that services incorporating horses is effective for this population. We need to keep horses in urban areas, we need to keep them accessible and affordable for our young community. We rent horses from Mackay, a connected community connected equine. And we need her to stay in business at the fairgrounds so that we have access to her horses and can continue to serve youth in your area. Please consider this in your upcoming decision. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. And that concludes the public comment on this item. I would now open it up to the board if there's any discussion.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Start. Let's start it. That's okay.

**Newton Pham** Go ahead.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Thanks. I hear you guys, I do I have been to the Equestrian Center a couple times three times on my if you include my first visit. So I used to ride horses as a kid, and I love them. So know that I want this place to succeed. So just want to start with that. And I did hear a couple new things in public comments today that that I want to ask some questions of just to make sure that I'm on the same page with everybody. It is a complex and nuanced issue. And one of the challenges of being a state run facility is that we have prevailing wages that we have to pay, and we have California contracting rules. I have done enough work with Caltrans in my days as an engineer that I know these rules of working with California and having contracts with California are not easy. So, you know, you suggest dropping the contract or or changing the contract? It's not just that easy to do. But again, the last comment or she talked about, you know, leasing horses and and meeting to have those horses available so that they can do their public programming. What would be the plan to make sure that we have sufficient horses for all the programming you'd have planned?

**Michele Richards** Yeah so, we're still working on that. But the longer range plan is to lease horses to be able to provide the programs that we're building right now. From from anyone who leases horses.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** So you wouldn't be I mean, cause she specifically asked that, you know, the existing horses that are here that she's leasing from what would it be preferred? I mean, is that ...that?

**Michele Richards** That could be a possibility, absolutely.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Okay. And then like when the Vet Tech students come in, what horses would they be learning on?

**Michele Richards** It to would be leased horses.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Another comment that I thought was very thoughtful was there had to do with the cost of maintaining the rings and what Lopez works with charging versus what, you know, maybe could be carved out of the existing contracts and brought in house. Is there a possibility of using our people and our equipment as the fare and it is easier to carve something out of a contract than it is to cancel a contract, so maybe we can help? A

bit?

**Michele  
Richards**

Yeah, and we had looked at that in one of the the financial models prior to your being seated on the board. We looked at the model where we brought those services in house. But you talked about state, state employment and you know benefits and pers and everything that gets added on to a state employees wages made it cost prohibitive.

**Tanya Bilezikjian**

So if we were, if we did it instead of, instead of Lopez, it would cost more?

**Michele  
Richards**

Yes, that's what the model showed.

**Tanya Bilezikjian**

I haven't seen those numbers. So I can Yeah.

**Michele  
Richards**

And I'm happy to share those with you, Director Bilezikjian. And I know that was before you were seated on the board.

**Tanya Bilezikjian**

Okay, my last, my last item that I jotted down would be, you know, for the trainers that are here that are already running public programming, would there be an ability to look again at the rates and put a value on what they're offering to the public, and perhaps offset some of what we're asking them to pay since there is public benefit?

**Michele  
Richards**

I think that would be up to the board.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Yeah, well, I think we're in the model that we envision, right? We're going to take that burden off of the private businesses, and we're going to shoulder the burden of the public programming. So I think that's where some of the confusion is, because people are saying, well, we can't offer the public programming at these higher rates. And it's like, Well, the good news is you don't have to because we have a new model where we're going to cover the public programming. Right. So I think that that might be where some of the confusion is.

**Tanya Bilezikjian**

Okay, yeah, I guess I just have a fundamental difference with the word burden. I, you know, with my company, we do pro bono work. We do all kinds of industry volunteer work, and I don't find it a burden. I find it rewarding.

**Nick Kovacevich** Yeah, I think it was just the the confusion that we had, in when we hashed this issue out, you know, in December, it was, you know, there's clearly public benefit being provided by private businesses, but we don't really have direct visibility into that. So we can't, as a board, you know, fully understand the public benefit of using the facility. So our answer to that was, let's create a model where we have that visibility, and that transparency so that we can actually be in control of the public programming the public benefit, right. And that's how we got to this bifurcated model.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yeah, yeah. And I do I understand that completely. I, I just I think that there, there are a lot of ways to have benefit. But those are my questions.

**Nick Kovacevich** I had a question to the Lopez works contract, how did was that an RFP that we ran to get that contract?

**Michele Richards** It was a IFP, Melissa. Yeah, an invitation for bid. So and we're there lower price bidders that we turned away? It was the only bid that was...

**Nick Kovacevich** And it was open to anybody to bid?

**Michele Richards** Yes.

**Nick Kovacevich** And we only got one bid?

**Michele Richards** Correct.  
Okay.

**Nick Kovacevich**

**Dimitria Jackson** I have a question as well. The current Equestrian Center, I know we're based in on 100 horses. Do we have room to expand that? In the private side? Do we have room for more souls?

**Michele Richards** So on the private side, there are five barns, 20 stalls per barn approximately.

**Dimitria Jackson** And I understand that the new fee structure is based per horse by dividing the total amount by a horse? If so the numbers go down Is it a set fee, But if they have we only have 80 horses there will the price go up or is it going to be just a set price for those boarders?

**Michele** The the price would be consistent for the term of the rental agreement.

**Richards**

Okay, so generally the rental agreements are a year. Yeah.

**Dimitria Jackson**

Okay, so price wouldn't change your midterm if there's that, okay. Correct. doesn't ask the same thing if it went up, but we don't have the stays. You're saying so.

**Newton Pham**

Yeah, I mean, I'm trying to reconcile everything I heard in everything I'm seeing. You know, I guess from my standpoint, you know, the Equestrian Center is great to have, not a must, must have in terms of, you know, having it the way it used to be with and from what I hear, you know, it's very passionate people. But sometimes for me, like when you have so much passion, you view it as the center of your universe. And you view it as mission critical activity. And we're the difference in my mind is it's a gray to have versus mission critical. And so when you have you know, statements and things saying, hey, you know, you're passing the costs on to the public, you know, I it's tough for me to reconcile that sort of mentality because in my mind, I'm thinking, not necessarily passing the price on to the public and passing it or passing on to tenants and private businesses, but also have public benefits in their programming. Passing it on to the public to me is running at a deficit, because then you're literally passing it on to public. But I, but I look at these prices and the comps. And there's a huge disparity between, you know, what the comps in our in our actual Community Charge versus what we're proposing to charge. So it's, it's tough for me to, to bridge that gap. So you're gonna want to understand a little bit of why that is. So maybe, you know, maybe it's, it's been explained. And, you know, I have I think I use an excuse twice a week, I've new father brain, my son does not sleep, he wakes up every hour right now. But yeah, so maybe, maybe helped me help me understand this a little bit.

**Michele  
Richards**

Yeah, I think there, there were two, two different cost comparison sheets, I believe that were circulated. There's also one in the packet that was provided to the board that was based on research that staff did, and I'm noticing that the numbers are different. I think it goes back to something that Director Bilezikjian said to that this is the only state owned facility in Orange County, and that there are a lot of requirements in doing business with the state. prevailing rate contracting rules that don't necessarily apply to a city owned facility. The city facilities, outsource the operation of the the Equestrian Center to an independent operator using the the same model that we had, we had

before as well. And then, of course, the private facilities are owned and operated by those private owners.

**Newton Pham**

Okay, and, you know, maybe maybe I missed this too make the last board meeting, maybe I just don't remember. But you know, from what I recall, we were trying to get competing bids, and did nothing ever materialized from that or, you know, some more cost effective operators, things like that, you know, folks putting in?

**Michele  
Richards**

Yeah, there was a plan to issue an RFP, but the board tabled that in favor of, of the staff continuing to operate.

**Nick Kovacevich**

We were going to issue an RFP for to go back to the old model, luding the model that right? For example, the city of Huntington Beach, I believe runs that model, where you just have somebody operate it. And the reason we chose to move away from that model is again, because then, under that model, we really don't have direct oversight into the public programming. So I think the key here was being able to control the public programming to be able to ensure like, and those are the people that like you don't hear from them, right is like the kids that are going to be riding for free right on our dime. They're not here talking, right? Because they haven't started. But that's all coming right. And so it's tough change is tough. We have a particular issue to deal with this gift of public funds issue that sort of requires us to pass along the costs, the costs are higher, for various reasons I would wish that the IFP, RFP was more with there's more action on that, you know, get drive that cost down? Is the answer to do another one and hope that there's more action? I don't know. Right? Is why all of a sudden, would there be 10 times the bidders when we just did one? You know, not too long ago, right? So I think that's, from my perspective, right? There's the reality of the situation, if we're going to have a gift of public funds issue, we have to be honest about the costs and pass that along to the tenants. And if we want to be in control of our own public programming, this is the model that we approved that that I feel very good about. And we're here where we are right.

**Doug Le Belle**

Couple comments if I could Chair Kovacevich.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Please.

**Doug Le Belle**

Back in December, we had a very lengthy meeting. And the board made a very clear decision. And our job as a board is to determine what and we

very clearly determined what we wanted to do and you've said it very well. Back in December, then it's staffs job to determine how you get there. And I've just got to say that Michelle and her staff have done an absolute outstanding job in going through the process to get us where we're trying to get her earlier comments were great. I'd like to add this that that I, I am the oldest member, in many ways and the longest time member of the board. And you know, I fully support the boarding, I fully support the training that is occurring there. And I'm complimentary of everything that's been done by by Lisa and others to do that. And Michelle has very clearly articulated in her presentation that we want to continue that. And we're in an evolutionary state in terms of the kinds of public programming and it's going to change, it's going to end as the Chair has very clearly said, you know, we'll assume those public programming responsibilities, and we may provide free lessons and what have you, just as we do with Centennial Farms and Heroes Hall and others, I think it's important to note that every month, in the last 14 years that I've been on the board, we approve a consent calendar that has significant rental agreements and other agreements. And if you are a vendor during the fair, or the smallest canopy area, in the most remote location, you pay whatever fair market rent is for that, and it goes up from there. If you're a food vendor, if you're the year round vendor, if you're the carnival provider, not only do you do that, but you pay us a percentage of your gross. And obviously, we are the ones we being Michelle and her staff that create the marketplace for the million people that attend each year at the fair. What's important when you run a business, and you do have a lot of costs, I understand that. But one of those costs is the cost of renting the property that you're utilizing. And I think Michelle has come up from my perspective and staff with a very fair beginning point for the trainers to pay on a monthly basis, we're reserving an entire area for the boarding and training. And to just expand on what Michelle said the state has whether we like it or not, we have to follow the public bidding requirements and all the requirements that are imposed upon us as an entity. When we issue a proposal, we went through that process, it was very clearly done. Everything that we had to meet was in there, we got one better would have been nice if we'd had two or three. And it would have been some some comparison that we can look at. So those are my thoughts. And we I think we provided very clear direction to Michelle, and she suttled that direction. And she would be get us to a point where we know what our costs are. And yes, it may be higher than some private entities that are providing certain facilities. But by the same token, we do

need to get to the point where we've covered our cost. So, those are my comments and I'm prepared to make a motion or to move forward with the staff recommendation as presented.

**Barbera**  
**Bagneris**

Second.

**Newton Pham**

Just real quick if you don't mind?

**Nick Kovacevich**

Up to you, Barbara, your second...

**Barbera**  
**Bagneris**

Second but you can go ahead and have discussion on it on the motion.

**Newton Pham**

I mean, okay, I just want to understand a little more clearly there was mention of bifurcated model we which we're proposing that we showed previously and have talked about you know at length and I think the... but anyway, is there you mentioned visibility and all the other stuff is there a way to just bifurcate the management of that particular area and what we meant versus what we sort of have or our programming or the public you know private area you know and then bid that part out or is it just has to be all on one? Just or maybe I'm just not you don't understand...

**Nick Kovacevich**

I don't think it's gonna be efficient to have two...

**Michele**  
**Richards**

Oh, sorry, I'm not understanding the question. Are you talking about also outsourcing the public...?

**Newton Pham**

Just like carve out you know...

**Nick Kovacevich**

You say something about the maintenance contract right? Yeah, like splitting up the maintenance between two segments.

**Michele**  
**Richards**

I mean, it's one property it's and when we split the costs out the boarding and training activities would you know, we we have that One arena that would be fully dedicated to the boarders and trainers will pick up the costs of those other two arenas. And then but still allow boarders and trainers to use those facilities when we're not using them for public programming. So it was, I don't know. I mean, two separate contracts site.

**Newton Pham**

Well, I mean, we just one contract, but just very limited scope. For the more private side of things, it's kind of...

**Nick Kovacevich** Oh, like limited down to what the what the bare necessities of what they would request to be done.

**Newton Pham** By the private side of things.

**Michele Richards** Well, is that what it then would mean, is that the other two arenas, arena, two and arena four that the district would pick up 100% of those costs, even though they would be available to the borders and trainers to use?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yeah, it was actually a, I had question about that, too, because in your presentation, it did say 100% of the costs.

**Michele Richards** Right.

**Nick Kovacevich** So is it?

**Michele Richards** I'm talking about the sorry, the common areas? Yeah. Yeah, the common round pens, and the turnouts, I could go back to that.

**Newton Pham** Then we could do like an overhead allocation for the common areas, and then parse that out. Yeah. Something. Yeah. Maybe I'm oversimplifying it. I don't know, just trying to rationalize.

**Michele Richards** So you're suggesting taking more of the cost that the district would sorry that the equestrian boarders and trainers and putting it on the district side? Mean?

**Nick Kovacevich** I think what he's saying is correct me if im wrong, but I think what you're saying is, perhaps if there was an RFP, and there was like, Hey, this is like, the requirements that the district needs for this, the areas that, you know, we're gonna be managing, and, hey, let's talk to the private borders and like come up with, you know, a more narrow requirements set for them to reduce costs. And then could that RFP then yield the cost saving results that, you know, people are looking for.

**Michele Richards** But kind of goes back to what Director Bilezikjian was saying too about being able to, you know, maybe bring that in house, I just know, the in house model is more expensive, but you're suggesting sort of outsourcing that as well, or using a contractor for that? I mean, we can certainly look at those numbers. It, you know, it's what the board directs us. I mean, we, you know, we were given the assignment to look at the costs, the direct

costs to the district. And, and we divided it out the way we did, but...

**Nick Kovacevich** And you did exactly what you're you were tasked with and that the numbers are the numbers. Right. But I think, you know, the good thing is, I think we have time, right, but how long would it take to do an RFP?

**Michele Richards** I mean, it's, it's..

**Barbera Bagneris** Are we speaking to the motion right now? In favor...?

**Nick Kovacevich** We're just discussing before we vote, I think,

**Barbera Bagneris** Okay, but we're either speaking for it or against it. So is this a for or against conversation? Against the motion? I just want to make sure.

**Newton Pham** I would have put where I'm at I would put against the motion.

**Nick Kovacevich** Yeah, I think I think I think we're against motion. We're speaking against the motion. I like the idea of voting down the motion and proposing something...

**Barbera Bagneris** I just wanted to make sure we were on task to this motion.

**Nick Kovacevich** Yeah. So I mean, how long would it take to do it?

**Michele Richards** Well, I mean, thorough RFPs take months, you know, to develop to properly notice to, you know, get out on the street to do.

**Nick Kovacevich** So it wouldn't be possible to hit the June 15.

**Michele Richards** Unlikely Yeah, yeah.

**Doug Le Belle** Just a follow up question. And I did pick up on Michelle's comments that 100% of the time, would be allocated to the boarders and trainers for that one area. And I would assume that there would be some flexibility there. If six months down the road, we decided that we're going to have a five day for show and they needed the entire property, that there would be the ability to make an adjustment in terms of what that fee would be, and I think it was you can go back to the chart, but I think it was only what \$70

or something like that, but you could make an adjustment to that one particular fee. Should that be the case? I for one would be you know, we've been down this road quite a while and we made a very clear policy decision in December, based upon the many hours have comments that we were going to move forward with exactly what Michelle and the staff had done since then. Now, if we want to tweak the numbers, as we go through this process, I think we have the ability to tweak the numbers. But I would be totally against going through this process. Again, we made a very clear decision that we weren't going to do the RFP in December, we pulled that off the table. And we directed Michelle and the staff to move forward in a different direction. Over the last four months, she's done that. So I don't know what's changed since then. Other than there are certain individuals that probably don't like the numbers, but the numbers are, what the numbers are. And I think we should proceed ahead with the recommendation from Staff and the Facilities Committee, as presented to us. And if we decide, you know, three, four or five months down the road as we evolve into the public programming, to do something different, to do a proposal for trainers to do a proposal to lease horses, etc, etc. We always have that ability to do it.

**Nick Kovacevich** So yeah, Doug, I agree with you or Director La Belle. I agree with you. We're definitely not going back and relitigating the decision that we made. And this falls in line with the decision that we made that we do have to pass on the costs. I think, to your point, right. Should the district you know, on an ongoing basis, look to reduce our costs? And if we're able to do that, can we pass along savings? Absolutely. Right. So I think we're on the same page. But, you know, again, with any timeline if we were to invoke, I mean, we're still going to miss the June 15 deadline. And so I think, again, in the spirit of moving forward, I'm in agreement with you. And I think this is the path that needs to be approved. And we always have the opportunity to reevaluate costs and pass along savings.

**Barbera** I call the previous question.  
**Bagneris**

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, we've got a motion in a second.

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera** Yes.

**Bagneris**

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** Still not 100% So I'm just gonna say no.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** Yes.

**Doug Le Belle** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** No.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson?

**Dimitria Jackson** I abstain. I'm going to abstain.

**Newton Pham** Can I then make another motion.

**Nick Kovacevich** The motion fails?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** We don't know yet.

**Nick Kovacevich** Three to two but we have to have a...

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Where are we? What is number?

**Josh Kaplan** Typically, if you have a quorum of the board and a board with nine Members, a quorum is five. So five board members are present. A vote of three would pass a motion. A tie, like a vote of three to three, the motion would fail. The vote here is three to two with one board member abstaining. So that motion would pass.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, motion passes. Okay. Thank you. We'll now move on to item number 9C, which is the review of the construction bid for administration building expansion project and a vote on whether or not to approve additional funds if needed. I'll turn this item over to CEO Richards.

**Michele Richards** Okay. This should be an easy one. It was an action item when the agenda was posted because we had not yet opened the bids. Those were opened on March 20. CCA received four bids. All were within the approved

budget. So CCA has issued a notice of intent to award the bid to Barnhart Reese construction for the administration building expansion project at a bid of \$20,762,008 where the \$8 comes in, we don't know so that's that's where I started but the the bid came in within the approved budget so there was no need for additional vote for the from the board so we can move on to the next item.

**Doug Le Belle** That was trying to get my uh, Newton was helping me. Give me that number again please.

**Michele Richards** Yes. \$20,762,008. And that was Barnhart. Barnhart. Reese. Yep. Yeah. So I think the end of the protest period is April 2. Yes. So no protests. So far, we're not expecting any very happy that the bids were the four bids were very close to each other, which is a salute to the LPA. team and our team for putting together such such good bid documents.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** One thing I can ask a question, before we move on, How close were they to the engineers estimate?

**Ken Karns** Yeah, so a little history, when we started the budget, we had a construction budget of about 17 million. And if you recall, the scope of work for the existing renovation of the existing building added. So with that, we are we are we are right on. Yeah, yes.

**Michele Richards** Yeah. It's been very good.

**Doug Le Belle** Job, I would assume that when we get to the protest period, there will be some sort of celebration where the chair can toss some dirt and that kind of thing.

**Michele Richards** Yeah, the game plan. Yes, it is. In fact, thank you for the reminder, Director . Were trying to plan that on the same date as the April board meeting while you all are here. So we'll give you shovels and hard hats. And we'll take lots of photos to break ground on the new expansion.

**Doug Le Belle** And I just like to add my compliments to you and to Ken, who I know has worked very, very hard with this team, in terms of moving us forward. So my appreciation to all of your efforts and to the Facilities Committee for for their work as well

**Nick Kovacevich** That's it. That's it. Okay. No vote. Yeah, sorry. Thank you for the review.

Next item 9D is the review of amendments to Board Governance Policy three Dotto three, which is the board member code of conduct and 3.06, which is the board member orientation and training to reflect changes to the California Food and Ag code regarding mandatory training and to vote on whether or not to approve, and I'll turn this back to CEO Richards and this one, we will have a vote.

**Michele  
Richards**

**Michele Richards**

We will. Um so this is a bit of a housekeeping item. The Governance Committee met and on staffs recommendation is proposing updating two of our current governance policies to reflect a change in government code. So Assembly Bill 623 amended the California Food and Agriculture code by adding that board members cannot officially be seated on the board until they complete all of their mandatory training and directors Jackson and Bilezikjian. And will attest to that because you all did a monumental job of finishing your training in order to be here for your first board meeting. But the state law also requires that seated board members complete all mandatory training within 90 days of when the last training expired and are subject to removal if they don't comply with those requirements. Yes. And so two of our board policies contain language regarding mandatory board training policy 3.03 and 3.06. So the amendment that you're voting on today would be to add this language. The California Food and Agriculture code section 3956 requires that newly appointed board members may not start serving until all required training is completed. In addition, seated directors must complete all mandatory training within 90 days of expiration, and are subject to removal if they do not comply with these agreements. So the staff and the Governance Committee are recommending the update to those two board policies. And I don't know if committee members have any additional comments.

**Barbera  
Bagneris**

Director Bagneris and I move recommendations.

**Dimitria Jackson** I second.

**Nick Kovacevich** Summer.

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera** Yes.

**Bagneris**

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yes.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson?

**Dimitria Jackson** Yes

**Summer Angus** Thank You.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, great. Next we have item number 9E. This is a presentation of draft plan for upcoming strategic planning process and a vote on next steps. Again, I'll turn us over to CEO Richards.

**Michele Richards** All right. So most of our board members will remember that starting in late 2021. And continuing at the beginning of 2022. Amidst the pandemic, the board completed a process to develop the current three year strategic plan, that plan is set to expire at the end of the year. So it's time for us to start looking at our next strategic planning process. Just as a reminder to board members, there were three sessions that were held one on September 9, October 12, and December 7 of 2021. You all will remember being in the hangar building six feet apart for that process. And then there was one wrap up session during the January 2022. board meeting, it was approximately seven hours that was devoted to that process. Now, we kind of started from the ground level, you might remember the board developed a new mission statement, a new vision statement, we developed values and statements. So the resulting draft plan included the creation of those statements, confirmation of our organizational values. And then we broke the business down into five

different segments, the annual affair, year round events, educational assets, like Heroes Hall and Centennial farm, there were special focus on the Equestrian Center, and then community support. The resulting Master Site Plan was added later. So after the the board drafted the plan, we put that out to the public for review. We posted it on the website, we sent it to several key stakeholders in the community and asked for feedback. And it was all very positive. So that the current three year plan was presented and approved by the Board in March of 2022. So we were already a few months into this, the strategic plan, period. So it's time for us to start developing a new plan. So I've got some questions for the board to consider. And that will help us begin planning the planning process. The last process, we did not use an outside facilitator, I facilitated the that process with the Board. So the question would be do we want to do that again? Or do we want to hire an outside facilitator? Since so much groundwork has already been done on the last strategic plan? We're estimating that we can probably do this in about three to four hours rather than seven hours. Would the board prefer to devote an hour out of regularly scheduled board meetings over the course of maybe three months? Or do we want to schedule one or two dedicated sessions for strategic planning. Our senior leadership team, our team of directors has already done some pre work that we think will be helpful for the board. As we kind of tee up this new process, the team is recommending that the new strategic plan be focused on key growth strategies for the OC Fair and Event Center. And I think we've talked about this, in a board meeting before that right now with our, our model, our controlled attendance model of the fair. There's not a whole lot of room to to grow that that event unless we keep raising admission prices over and over again. So the key is to look at other revenue streams that will help with our growth strategy. So we'd like the strategic plan to to focus on that if we can. And then of course, we're recommending the same process where the board drafts the plan, we put it out to the public for for feedback, incorporate any feedback into the final plan, and then send it out to the community so posted on our website, share it with community partners, elected officials, business leaders and partners throughout our industry in the community. So I'll stop at that point. And just looking for some board direction, on format and timing and kind of how we proceed.

**Dimitria Jackson** A couple of questions. I wasn't here before. Are you comfortable facilitating? I've worked with outside facilitators for strategic planning before. So I want to know if your comfort level might have just been you

know, financially we had to and if we're going to consider a third party to do that, is it we have that in our budget? And and also more importantly, are you comfortable doing that as opposed to having somebody else do it?

**Michele Richards** So I am very comfortable doing it, I actually have done this work in a previous career. So I'm very comfortable. I think the bigger question is, is the board comfortable with me doing it? And to answer your question about an outside facilitator, we did not budget for that.

**Dimitria Jackson** So that's the first one. The second one I have you say carve out time for our meetings, it will be after our, full meeting and just spend like an extra hour each time or at my preference, without hearing from everyone else may have different feedback would probably set up in one extra meeting at some point in time. And maybe it's take the 3,4 hours, and we just work on the strategic plan dedicated?

**Michele Richards** Yeah

**Doug Le Belle** I am very comfortable with Michelle conducting it. I think last time Natalie was the chair and between Natalie, Michelle and Nick. Now, Nick, and Michelle, I think that would be a be the way to go. I am fully supportive of the discussion of where do we go in terms of revenue streams, obviously, as we try to implement the remainder of our master plan, that's going to be very important. And I probably have more time than anybody else. So I'm, my sock drawer is all organized. So whatever you guys want to do, i'm good with it, so..

**Barbera Bagneris** Yeah, I too am very comfortable with, with Michelle doing it in house I've attended a lot of them, I'm probably second oldest on the board. And I think it was it was more thorough, decisive play at the clarity of it, I just felt it was so much better than what we got from paying somebody from the outside do something we could do on the inside. So I'm very, very comfortable having in house support for it, and how we break it up. You know, if it's three or four hours, let's see the December meeting was about five. So, you know, I would, I would take that time to do this. If we want to split it. I don't have a problem with that either. I do work, have a day job. But it's easy to kind of split between this computer and that computer and still get the the basics of what I need.

**Nick Kovacevich** So you're in favor of a separate meeting.

**Barbera** I don't mind a separate Yeah.

**Bagneris**

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay. And I'm in favor, I agree with the Vice Chair Bagneris as well. I just want to let the board know, we do have a public comment on this matter. So before we do a vote. We do want to hear that public comment, but we can continue the discussion until we're ready for that. But I'm in favor of having Michelle do it. And using a separate time, I do think we did such a good job under then Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, that I like that the staff has already kind of factored in a lot of that base work being completed and focusing, you know, sort of on some growth areas. So I think that all sounds really good to me. Any other directors have come on it?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** What's the timing for the strategic planning meetings?

**Michele Richards** If we do one dedicated session, I think we can wait until after the fair, because we well, there were limitations due to the pandemic. We started the process in September, and didn't complete it until that January board meeting. But I think if we start after the fair or maybe even an October, we can wrap it up by the end of the year. And that'll give us time to, you know, plan. How we'll, we'll roll this out to in our case.

**Dimitria Jackson** I'm good with a separate meeting

**Nick Kovacevich** Right. Any other comments from directors? Okay, we'll move to public comment before...

**Barbera** We need a vote.

**Bagneris**

**Nick Kovacevich** Before we make a motion.

**Barbera** Oh, sorry.

**Bagneris**

**Nick Kovacevich** Yeah, we'll do the public comment. We do have Reggie Mundekis.

**Reggie Mundekis** That's okay. Um, Reggie Munekis thank you for letting me comment on this item. I've been here going to these meetings. We're just gonna leave it at for many years. I'm like part of the furniture at this point all of us. And I've been through many strategic planning processes both here and other

bodies. And I have to say the last time we did it with staff facilitating, it was the best strategic planning processes I've been through both here and other cities. It was smooth, it was focused. If you were honest, we're kind of like an odd animal here at the OC fairgrounds. explaining to people what goes on here and why it's done a certain way takes time. So if you hire somebody, they have to get up to speed about what we are what happens here. You have staff do it. It just went a lot. But smoother because they already know what can happen, what doesn't have your why it doesn't happen here, and what could happen here. So I'm very comfortable staff doing this. I like the idea of looking for new revenue streams, we're maxed out on the fare unless we decide to add a day a week. And that's a whole different discussion. So looking at new revenue streams, building up a year round events, business, looking for new types of year round events. That's what we need to be doing to stay current keep our revenues up and stay relevant, humanity's. So thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Thank you, Reggie.

**Doug Le Belle**

If I might Nick, just one additional comment. Based upon what Reggie said, I've shared this with Michelle. I think I was the only one on the board at the time. But the first couple of years I was here, we had an excellent car auction, the Barrett Jackson, it was fantastic. It was exactly like, yeah, you'll see it on TV. And I was here both years. And I recollection there were a couple of issues that led them to not want to come back having nothing to do with us. But I think that that's a good example of something that potentially we ought to look at. And I would be very comfortable. I think their headquarters are in Scottsdale. I would be very comfortable with the chair and the CEO, making a little journey to Scottsdale and see if you could kind of, you know, light the fire again, and see what might be available in terms of not this year. I think they're booked for the rest of the year, but maybe getting them back or something like that, and back would be an outstanding potential revenue generated. So I just make that comment.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Right. As long as it's not in the dead of summer sounds like... Okay, does anyone have amotion on this? Or further discussion?

**Tanya Bilezikjian**

I'll make a motion for this

**Nick Kovacevich**

Tanya. Yeah. Okay. Next steps, I guess for to prove the next steps of the Michelle leading yes, we need to..

**Michele Richards** Yeah, yes. Oh,

**Nick Kovacevich** We gotta get consent request.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** The it's not up there. But yeah, have Michelle lead it and do it as separate meetings. And then everything else?

**Nick Kovacevich** Great, I'll second that motion

**Barbera Bagneris** Thought I was the second

**Nick Kovacevich** Can't get em' all.

**Summer Angus** Roll Call Vote?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera Bagneris** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yes.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson.

**Dimitria Jackson** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, great. I look forward to that. Given you know how successful we were three years ago, so now I'll be getting the credit for the next three years if we can do it again, guys. All right. So next item is I believe we're still on nine, 9F which is simple a vote on whether or not to approve language for Asian American Pacific Islander, AAPI Heritage Month, and Arab American History Month proclamations. So I'll turn it over to CEO Richards to lead and expand upon the Community Affairs Committees idea here that we were gonna vote on. So go ahead.

**Michele Richards** We'll turn it over

**Dimitria Jackson** Sure. On behalf of the Community Affairs Committee, we did meet and as you know, every month there is a more dedicated to a group. You know, this was Women's History Month. And as you mentioned, we have the Arab American Heritage Month coming up. It's also the same time as the Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month and we're trying to be consistent with our proclamation. So we provided the proclamation. We just wanted to have everyone take a look at it and get your approval. So we can present those we have to identify the recipients of those proclamations for next month, but we wanted to make sure that everyone was okay with the language as written. Did I leave anything out?

**Michele Richards** No, that's good. So the Proclamations were included in your in your packet. We've kind of approached this as a bit of a template. So you know, maybe I just a suggestion, it might be a good idea to approve them on template. Right. And then we can customize it depending on the good idea.

**Dimitria Jackson** It's a good idea.

**Michele Richards** I wish I had thought about that before we...

**Dimitria Jackson** Next month. Make a new motion?

**Nick Kovacevich** All right. Oh, Well, we have a motion.

**Dimitria Jackson** I move that we approve the Proclamations as written for Arab American Heritage Month and the Asian American Pacific Islander month.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Second.

**Nick Kovacevich** All right, Summer.

**Summer Angus** Chair Kovacevich?

**Nick Kovacevich** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Vice Chair Bagneris?

**Barbera** Yes.

**Bagneris**

**Summer Angus** Director Pham?

**Newton Pham** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director La Belle?

**Doug Le Belle** Yes.

**Summer Angus** Director Bilezikjian?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yes.

**Summer Angus** And Director Jackson?

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Yes. Thank you.

**Barbera** Director Kovacevich. Let me just say having served on the community affairs committee we have leveled up to doing on that committee

**Bagneris**

**Nick Kovacevich** You know, I was on the committee once too so I didn't want to put myself down but you are speaking the truth. You're speaking the truth.

**Barbera** I want to thank the committee for all their work because this is definitely the in line with how I think we envisioned it when we first even started it, so thank you.

**Dimitria Jackson** Well, thank you all for putting everything in place making our life easier you set the groundwork so we just just building on what you started.

**Nick Kovacevich** Yeah, thank you I go...

**Dimitria Jackson** We stand on your shoulders there.

**Nick Kovacevich** We're gonna move down to Item 9G which is a preview of Imaginology

and I will turn this over to our beloved Joan Hammond for the presentation.

**Joan Hamill**

Morning It's still morning. And April is just a few days away and with it is imagine ology upcoming OCFVCs other self produced event. Move the slide ahead sorry about that. April 13 and 14th and as always, this is an all ages event and admission is free. On behalf of the OCFEC Board of Directors it is our organizations give back to the community community thanks you hours this year are 10am to 4pm each day Saturday and Sunday and so much learning and of course fun over those two days. And I'll before I get into this, I'll say yes, the Boy Scouts are returning and they'll be selling hamburgers and brought So count on that. Their huge favorite. Kids, families and friends can get ready to build their own car races. Get active at heroes Hall for blisters bootcamp, build a terrarium at Centennial Farm learn about blacksmithing enjoy hands on science activities experience a virtual flight simulator and so much more. In addition, there will be numerous feature exhibits throughout the event with free activities, participation from four H and FFA who will be exhibiting and competing for ribbons and awards. Community entertainment featuring very talented youth up and comers will be throughout the weekend. And the ever popular chess tournament will be back Saturday, where the competition is fierce. Farm and ag science related activities and hands on learning at Centennial farm is offered throughout the weekend. And as I just referenced the youth obstacle course for clusters boot camp at Heroes Hall will be on the lawn nearby. And there'll be other activities at heroes Hall as well. This event is really about youth and families coming together to learn and do get active. The event is designed to be highly interactive with many events outdoors out in the sunshine. So let's take a look at some of the fun that's in store for upcoming Imaginology.

**Joan Hamill**

These slides to refresh your memory. Okay, it's painting and having fun. These are four H'ers checking out the ribbons they anticipate to be winning and taking home. folklorico dancers young folkloric to go dancers. That's the obstacle course at Heroes Hall. The youth chess tournament tournament that I mentioned and like I said, It's fierce and intense. And the parents have to stand down. No, I don't think they want the parents participate and kids are so good. Livestock exhibitors with their goats. Okay, and that's an entry in our youth school projects competition and performers ready to go on the stage to entertain the

crowds.

**Joan Hamill**

Wild science is making a return this year it was we had last had Wild science and 2019 and it's hands on fun with captivating steam displays and activities and there are four daily science related demos taking place on stage. So it's part of the fun there. Okay, and there's an enter to win. It's an imaginology weekend getaway that includes a two night hotel stay to show tickets at Segerstrom Center for the night. dinner for two at Costa Mesa sconzo restaurant and best of all two days to play and learn at Imagine ology, the deadline to enter is coming up. It's on April 9 by 9 am. And we have so far 500 entries on participation.

**Joan Hamill**

And I'm so delighted to share that there's a fantastic event taking place alongside imaginology and ties in with it perfectly. It's the Hydrogen Grand Prix Pro, the H2 GP Pro and sponsored by Toyota's hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicle, the Mirai. The Grand Prix Pro is the ultimate Global Initiative, offering students the chance to experience the thrill of 1/10 scale hydrogen powered, RC racing that's radio controlled. But it's not just about speed. It's about sustainability, innovation and teamwork. The Grand Prix takes place in the Los Alamitos building, and it offers free admission and imaginology attendees will be able to view the competition throughout the weekend and the Grand Prix participants and their attendees in turn be able to enjoy imagine ology. So it's two incredible incredible steam events taking place the same weekend and this is an example of an exceptional synergistic tie and with events and programming we are delighted to have this the group was here last year for a one day they wanted to participate in imagined algae so they're here for both days of imaginology. We love our sponsors. We have four returning sponsors, the Academy of problem solving, and that's math and language arts tutoring, raising canes chicken fingers restaurant is back and a supporting the very popular scavenger hunt activity. And that's a huge imaginology favorite. Raising Canes has generously provided the prizes, which is one kid's meal certificate to participants aged 12 and under who successfully complete the scavenger hunt, while supplies last. Aqua tots swim school American Ninja Warrior Adventure Park and this is also an interactive obstacle. Hands on fun event. And we have four new sponsors Leaf Filter, which is also a fair sponsor, Camp Galileo, the H2 G2 Pro as I just mentioned, and farm fresh home food service. So to recap, imagine ology 2024 with free admission takes place at the OC Fair and Event Center, April 13, and 14th. All ages are welcome 10am to 4pm both days.

And it's where innovation plus play plus experimentation equals learning and a whole lot of fun. So for more information, please check out our website the future exhibitors will be listed all the entertainers will be listed. The commercial exhibits the concessionaires will be all listed on our website leading up to the event. So we look forward to everyone out imagine ology kids, their friends, grandparents, neighbors, you name it, and are happy to answer any questions the Board may have.

**Dimitria Jackson** That sounds amazing. I think you should do commercials

**Michele Richards** Last, right, it's a beehive of activity. Great event

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, great. Thank you so much shown. And now we'll move to the final item in agenda item nine, which is H. And that is the committee reports. I know we already kind of covered some of this stuff. So may go quick. But we'll start with the leadership committee. I'm happy to report that there's not much to report. So we have the kind of report, isn't it? Yeah. I'll give you the hardware next. The Committee met on on the 13th March 14, and to plan this meeting. And the next meeting we have is on April 10. Next we have the financial monitoring audit committee. Chair committee. Chair Pham or committee member Bilezikjian.

**Michele Richards** You can have oh

**Newton Pham** No, I can go. Okay. Yeah. So we met Wednesday of last week. Went over the financials, capex and, you know, projections versus budgeted versus actual we're still exceeding the budget. So yeah. revenue for the month came in at 1.355 million and specifically favorable budget by 102,000. And then due to the increased interest rates in the investment account that we that not a lot of people foresaw we actually are favorable by 611,000. Total expenses are 2.3 million, which is also favorable to budget by 460,000. And this is mainly due to the number of unfilled vacancies and the timing of budgeted expenditures will expect to normalize throughout the year. Year to date expenses are 4.56 million and still favorable to budget by 845,000. So all that in total leads to net proceeds being favorable by 1.45 million, call it cash cash investments. You know, we've begun using cash for the administration building and build out for that which is expected and planned. And so we're at 56, still healthy and robust 56.7 million cash in the cash in the bank. So yeah, that's it for her

for

**Nick Kovacevich** All right, thank you. And then next, we'll move to the Facilities Committee. Chair, committee Chair Ruiz Director Ruiz is not here so director Bilezikjian.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** On it. So we met on March 6, and a lot of what we talked about has already been covered here today. But give you some of the highlights that we haven't covered. So capex. We're in the middle of 2024 capex projects. 2023, done and gone. Master Site Plan, phase one, and we talked about that, the groundbreaking ceremony coming up at the next board meeting, and then they will get going. I love that you guys found that pin leaves me wondering how long that furniture has been sitting there, though? Scary, huh?

**Michele Richards** Yeah, that's why you should move every once in a while

**Tanya Bilezikjian** And Master Site plan, phase two letter of understanding is, has been executed. And so working on the RFP for the architecture engineering firm, very excited to see the scope of work on that packout dressing rooms, working on scope and budget again for this one, and came in well about budget. So it looks like me to trim a little bit equestrian center covered today. And then we'll be meeting again on April 3.

**Nick Kovacevich** Wonderful, thank you. And then now we have the Governance Committee. And unfortunately, I was unable to attend. I left the heavy lifting to Director La Belle if you'd like to give the report.

**Doug Le Belle** Certainly. Thank you. Chair. We discussed the earlier item in terms of the amendment to the policy. Two other items, Board will recall back when we considered the budget. November, we talked a little bit about provision that currently is in state code that precludes us from operating our own marketplace. events should was choose to do that. That was put in place by the previous marketplace vendor. We talked about doing something to modify that to where if the board has any objective in the future of doing something like that we have at least the ability to do it. So we're going to work with counsel to get that addressed. And I think Michelle has the ability under the budget to to work specifically on that item. The other was we've talked in the past about a modification to our rental policy that would enable the Centennial Farms and Heroes all to get

a reduced rate for specific activities that are directly related to those two functions. And Michelle is going to work with Josh to develop a policy that would enable us to do that should we choose to and then that'll come back to the the Governance Committee and the full board at some future date. So that would be my my comments. Thank you.

**Nick Kovacevich** Director Le Belle. It seems you got a lot done in my absence. So I'll reflect upon that. Okay, great. And then finishing up with the Community Affairs Committee. I know we covered a lot, but yes, anything else?

**Dimitria Jackson** Yes, we have. And we did meet via series of email, communications, even selecting Ms. CEO, Vicki Shepp to be the recipient of proclamation and the proclamations that you approved for April. So thank you for approving those and our next meeting is to be determined.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, that concludes

**Michele Richards** Cnd I have it for just a second or so we want to recognize women's history month on behalf of the Community Affairs Committee and also March 31 which will be celebrated April 1, Monday, April 1 is Cesar Chavez Day where we, especially with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, we honor his work on behalf of farm workers. But this information is really interesting that we are celebrating the substantial contributions of women in agriculture, including marketing, land use crop production, record keeping, financial management and engagement and policy. And women are centrally connected to agriculture every step of the way. These statistics are really impressive that California's 45,244 women, ag producers, these are women who are growing our food raising our food, they account for 11 and a half million acres of production farmland, and \$22.2 billion in agriculture sales. So yay, when? Right? Yes. And then just a nod to Cesar Chavez, and also his partner. Were done. Who doesn't often get a lot of the credit, but did much of the work on behalf of farmworkers. So we will celebrate him on our day off April 1. So

**Dimitria Jackson** Yes, thank you for recognizing Dolores Huerta. We actually wanted her to be here today as well to to receive our proclamation. So she was in consideration as well.

**Nick Kovacevich** So great stuff. Okay. Thank you guys. That moves us to Agenda Item Number 10, which is closed session and I believe it should be a brief

closed session and then we can finish up when we get out.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Okay, we're returning out of closed session. We met with counsel and we have nothing further to report. Moving on to Agenda Item number 11. We have an opportunity to look ahead at some of our upcoming events.

**Joan Hamill**

I can say good afternoon now flipped over. Lots of events coming up. The one there's one going on right now. It's the Apartment Association of Orange County. This is happening today and tonight rental property owners, resident managers, realtors, property management companies will have the opportunity to network with over 100 vendors offering various products and services specific to their industry, all under one roof. And the gun show is back this weekend, Saturday and Sunday. And then on April 4, Fight Club OC returns to the hangar. That's Thursday. The most fun you can have in Orange County on a Thursday night to quote right, pro boxing and MMA hybrid show. And then we have orange county pet and reptile expos back and it's bigger than ever. And that's the weekend of April 6 and seventh. This time it features more animal experts, breeders, pet rescues as well as the all new terrarium building workshop. Speedway takes place and that's the spring classic on April 13. hanging in here, April 13. That's a Saturday of imaginology. So you can come for imagine ology and stay for speedway. And then April 18, through the 21st is the garden brothers nuclear circus. And there are no animal acts featured in this circus, and it's referred to as nuclear due to the live action stats. And then also that weekend, April 19, to the 21st is the OC Japan Fair. And this is where we celebrate one of the largest Japanese cultural festivals in Southern California, and attendees can enjoy the experience of tasting shopping and learning about Japanese culture. There will also be a cosplay show to the tuna cutting show performances by popular Japanese artists and comedians, traditional instrument, instrument performances, gains Kimoto models meet and greet, and so much more. And then the OC Orange County Wine Fest is April 20 through 21st. And that's in the hangar there's three sessions total, two on Saturday and one on Sunday. And then we have our farmers market every Thursday, still taking place out in La dee. And we have upcoming classes at Centennial Farm. The first is April 6, and it's homegrown tomatoes, but found out recently that this class is sold out really have to sign up early for these classes. They're very, very popular. The same day April 6 is integrating organic practices into your garden. So that's from one to three, the earlier one was 930 to noon and then 123 with the organic practices about amending your soil so

you get a real bumper crop of fruits and vegetables. And then on May 11, we have blooms for mom a Mother's Day floral arrangement workshop and I would imagine these two classes could sell out quickly so if there's any interest Do not hesitate. Centennial farm continues daily, lots of activity, a beehive of activity with our junior farmer and discovery day school tours in the morning and then open to the public in the afternoon. And on the in the afternoons and on the weekends. And then at Heroes Hall. The valor and virtue exhibit will be coming to a close on March 31. So this is the last weekend. And as a reminder, this exhibit focuses on all 18 Jewish American Medal of Honor recipient recipients to date from the Civil War to the war in Afghanistan. Central to the exhibit is a story of title a Reuben a Holocaust survivor who became a hero fighting in the US Army in Korea. Yeah, before settling in Orange County, this like I said this ends on March 31. And then of course on permit splay is the Santa Ana army airbase exhibit on the second floor of aerosol. Outside is the Medal of Honor courtyard, the walk of honor, the a forum Skyhawk and Serenity Walk. Speaking of Heroes Hall, there's a new exhibit that will be coming. And it's set to open April 24. And this is titled The Vietnam War through the art and photography of Edie bow and and just a little bit about this exhibit. This features the painting photography and memorabilia of the late Edie Bowen, and it will explore the US military's use of combat artists during the Vietnam War. And staff had the honor of meeting meeting at a couple of years ago when his artwork was entered into a group show featured at heroes Hall. He beat sorry, there's a lot of feedback. He became a friend of the museum and staff of the museum and the staff and he was thrilled, as were we that his artwork and story would be featured as a one person show exhibit one person exhibit at heroes Hall. staff had been working with Edie for a couple of years on the exhibit, he was creating a lot more artwork. But sadly, Mr. Bowen passed away on December 26. We're working with the family. And of course, the family wants to forge ahead with the exhibit to present this very, very special exhibit. So looking forward to that exhibit and paying tribute to this wonderful individual who served in the Vietnam War. And that is all I have to report for now. There continues to be quite a lot going on at seafaring Events Center, as always, and I'd like to remind everyone to please visit OCFair.com For more information about these upcoming events. And that's all I have unless there's any questions.

**Michele  
Richards**

Please join me in congratulating Joan on her retirement, her last board meeting. She's provided 31 years of service to this organization and her

her talent, her skills are everywhere on this fairgrounds. And I know that she'll be back to help us with some special projects and but there will never be another job at the OC fair and Events Center. So congratulations Joan.

**Joan Hamill** It's been my honor and privilege to have been here and I've loved it. So thank you. Thank you, everyone. Thank you.

**Michele Richards** Can you advance the slide one more time? And let's wish a Happy March birthday to Director Jackson March 3 right? Okay, back to you.

**Barbera Bagneris** I think we should have cake and ice cream and everybody. Oh, okay.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** Ah, vegan, vegan vegan. Great.

**Nick Kovacevich** Okay, great. next board meeting will be April 25. So see you guys next month. And we'll close by going around the room. We'll start with the birthday. Girl, Director Jackson, please.

**Dimitria Jackson** Thanks for the birthday wishes. I appreciate it. It was a fun birthday. I did thoroughly enjoy it. I was celebrating with family and friends minus the children in Cabo. So it was awesome. Yeah, I just thank you all. I mean, it's Happy Women's History Month, I know we're doing at the end of the month, but to all the women who will give so much of their time, energy to making everything flows so smoothly here at the OC fair. And my fellow female board members and staff, Happy Women's History Month. And thank you.

**Tanya Bilezikjian** ...Imaginology, It was one of the reasons that I was very, very interested in joining this board. And so I will be there. Very, very excited for that. And I'm just gonna let the nerd out. So be aware. I don't know what's gonna be great. But thank you for your leadership. And looking forward to the next meeting. Both of you, sorry.

**Nick Kovacevich** Thank you. I was gonna take credit regardless. Go ahead, Director Pham.

**Newton Pham** Thanks, Joan. And congratulations on your retirement event. You've done a great job ever since I've been here, at least so that's kind of it for me. Happy Easter everyone. See you next month. I actually won't be or next month. But anyway.

**Doug Le Belle**

Yes, my congratulations to Joan, you have been a tremendous person to work with over the years. And good luck in your retirement, hope you're doing all kinds of things you want to do. Congratulations to Michelle, we now have a Michelle one and a Michelle two , we have to remember that. Michelle two and I have something in common. We both have worked for Knott's Berry Farm in the past, Michelle? Well, my 10 year was years before that, matter of fact, decades before. My first job was, I worked for my father who was the manager of the foreign market in Mission trail Cantina. And he hired me and a friend of mine who just happened to be the grandson of Walter and Cordelia, not, my dad worked for obviously, his father. And it was a great experience, you know, I'm like, all 14 or 15 or 16 way back then. But in terms of Women's History Month, Cordelia not, was very much a partner with her husband, Walter, and I'm sure we've all been to the chicken dinner restaurant, numerous times over the years. So, again, congratulations to Michelle, and thanks to staff for the excellent job you did, in putting everything together, thanks to our chair and vice chair. And with that, happy Easter.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Thank you, Director La Belle.

**Barbera  
Bagneris**

John, I'm gonna miss you. And appreciate all that you've done, I know you'd be for you in this role, and you are just a joy and a delight. And we're going to miss you to come visit, you know, dropping on a board meeting, you know, get get the feel again, you know, thanking the staff and everyone. I admire each of my board members, the directors, you guys are very thoughtful in what you say. And I really appreciate your insights into all the issues that we have to deal with. And wishing you a happy Good Friday, happy Easter, and look forward to what's to come. I remember before imaginology was imaginology. And when we first changed the name I'm going to myself "imaginology?" about and now it's just like, yes, imagine. So I'm always thankful for the creativity that we have on our staff, but at this particular facility, and thank RJ who sits over there and just diligently gets every word, and we appreciate him as well. With that I pass it on.

**Nick Kovacevich**

Great. Yeah, thank you all for showing up here. And, you know, handling business as we do here at the Fair Board. So I feel like it was another productive meeting. Obviously, we do have a lot of focus around the change that's occurring at the Equestrian Center. So appreciate all the hard work the staff continues to do to deliver on the new vision and try to

incorporate as much of the public feedback as possible, obviously clear takeaway today was, you know, looking for ways to reduce costs, hopefully the Facilities Committee and the and the staff can continue to pursue those goals. And, you know, again, I think from a board perspective, I feel great about what we've set into motion and we look forward to you guys continuing to get that vision to come to life. So thank you. And I will say farewell to Joan, thank you so much for everything. And, you know, sharing these great events with us. As always a treat. So I'm excited for some of the stuff on the calendar myself. And you know, hopefully I can attend as many as possible. So it'll be good to hang out with some of the fellow directors and of course, our staff and get to know Michelle, number two, I believe Doug is calling and says hope you guys all have a great weekend, have a great Easter weekend and have the opportunity to to reflect on you know, our blessings and family and friends and the things that are are most important. So that's all I have. Thank you. Meeting adjourned.