



Fairgrounds Advisory Board Minutes

Monday, February 23, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm with the following Fairgrounds Advisory Board members in attendance:

Board Members Present: Monique Brigham, Gery Cardenas, Hank Davies, Robert Desmarais, Dorothy Elsner, Gin Learned. *Not Present:* Kristen Keltz

Staff Members and Representatives: Aric Gaither, Frances Negranza

A motion was made to approve the January 2026 minutes and seconded. The motion was approved and passed unanimously.

Board Discussion:

Bylaws

Bylaw amendments are out for approval to the county.

Board Help and Assistance During Fair

Key staff member will be on medical leave during Fair. Asking the Fair board to help with tasks leading up to and during the Fair.

Foundation

Staff gave brief update of the Fairgrounds Foundation - Received a grant for cat and poultry cages, plan to fund beautification of grounds, applied for fundraising opportunities in the county, will take ticket donation requests, and brick campaign.

Sponsors

Fair Staff gave update on sponsors. Open to new leads and connections.

Event Calendar

Staff went over event calendar, and is excited to host a new Renaissance Fair in June and welcome back the Skagit Valley Highland Games. There are 10 new rentals this year. It's a balance to find the best fit for the Fairgrounds due to resources and staff. While the main revenue source at the Fairgrounds is the Fair, the facility is used for events year-round and value to the community is more than just the revenue that is brought in.

Entertainment

Fair staff went over entertainment line-up for this year: Hypnotist, Magician, Juggler, Circus, Raptor Show, Pedal Tractor Pulls, Cutest Show on Earth, the Magic Bean, Latin Stage entertainment and Main Stage musical entertainment.

Let's Wing it Tour

Implementing a social media campaign of three stuffed chickens named Henrietta, Sonic and Daisy that are touring the county. Most recently attended the Chicken Parade in Edison with our Parks Director Brian Adams. Will be available to continue the tour all the way up until Fair.



WSDA Grants

214k approved from WSDA which does need to come with a match. Projects will include paving, electrical upgrades, pens, safety signs and barriers. PA upgrades by Pavilion and horse arena.

Budget

Shared 2025 end of year budget allocations. Some projected costs came in less than expected but unsure how it will look in 2026.

Staffing

Staffing at upcoming Fair will be challenging. One staff member will be on leave, Parks staff cuts at the end of last year will affect some of the Fair support for this year, such as parking and general event services and maintenance. Doing more, with less and this is the year to find creative solutions. Parks Director will be retiring April 3 and expect there will be an adjustment/educational/ period when new Director fills the role.

Succession Planning

Lots of dependency on staff to run the Fair and Fairgrounds. Re-establishing the Fair Advisory board was one of the efforts in ensuring the longevity of the Fairgrounds, and what does it look like when there is staff changeover.

Adjourn at 6:31pm