

## Fairgrounds Advisory Board Minutes



### JOINT FAIR ADVISORY AND FAIR FOUNDATION MEETING

Monday, January 5, 2026

**The meeting was called to order at 3:13pm with the following members in attendance:**

**Board Members Present:** Monique Brigham, Gery Cardenas, Hank Davies, Robert Desmarais, Dorothy Elsner, Kriste Keltz, Gin Learned

**Foundation Members Present:** Bekki Cox, Rick Donovan, Ayla Holboy, Liz Holtcamp, Sharrie Nelson, Wendy Ringhouse

**Staff Present:** Aric Gaither, Frances Negranza

**Guests:** Margaret Olsen, Nicole Jones

*A motion was made to approve the November 2025 minutes and seconded. The motion was approved and passed unanimously.*

#### **Discussion:**

Rick Donovan, the group facilitator, lead the meeting through group goals for the Fairgrounds.

Priorities for the next 5 months: Assist Fair Staff by providing any contacts or connections with new sponsors, creative fundraising efforts, identify potential grants for Fairgrounds and/or Foundation, creative solutions to redistribute costs and find budget-relieving solutions.

Longterm: Capital project matches and fundraising efforts.

General Awareness: the Fairgrounds does not receive support from the county general fund and must operate as a self-sustaining unit; identify ways to reach out to ALL county communities; help tell the story about the number and type of events, organizations and community groups who utilize the property; Share the community and economic impact of the Fairgrounds.

Budget: A portion of Fair budget supports county administration costs, not only are self-sustaining but revenue generated is put back into the county for county overhead costs and services provided to the Fairgrounds. Additionally, the Fair/Fairgrounds generates tax and other revenues for the county.

Communities identified to reach out to: Guemes Island, Anacortes, East County, Oak Harbor, Cultural Communities

How boards can help: Marketing and speaking opportunities. Staff has limited time and resources, but can create a presentation and talking points for a 'speaker series' that a board or foundation member can then do outreach in a community. Include economic impact information.

Other recommendations to staff: "Did you know..." series on social media. Create or obtain more video to tell fairgrounds story, 4-H member stories, etc.

**Adjourn at 7:00pm**