

Brown County Fair Board

September 10th, 2025

The Brown County Fair Board meeting was held in the Competitive Exhibits building on the Brown County Fairgrounds on September 10th, 2025. President Dwight Guthmiller called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Duane Sutton.

Fair Board members present were Conald Burgard, Shelly Eisenbeisz, Dylan Frey, Joel Green, Dwight Guthmiller, Nichole Hacker, Jeff Kippley (via phone), Trevor Meints, Katie Moulsoff, Terry Nash, Rhonda Retzlaff, Mike Russell, Alley Shelton, Dan Stevens, and Joyce Voeller. Excused members were Aaron Dosch, Greg Markley, Brodie Mueller, Eric Pigors, Nancy Radke, Clint Sombke, Ryan Swenson, and Jayson Tollefson.

Also in attendance were Brown County staff members Rachel Kippley and McKenzie Bierman, along with County Commissioner Duane Sutton.

Visitors included 5 prospective Fair Board members: Kevin Heinrich, Payton Carda, Jeff Swingler, Nicole Hansen, and Samantha Hockenbrock. Also visiting was Mayor of the City of Aberdeen, Travis Schaunaman. The prospective board members were invited to share a bit about themselves and what they already like about the Fair, as well as speak to their reasons for considering joining.

Mayor Schaunaman presented the idea of the City of Aberdeen annexing the Fairgrounds.

The Mayor began the discussion by saying that there maybe has been a lack of trust between the County and City in the past, and he is continually working to improve that. With annexation, the City would not gain much outside of being able to invest in the Fairgrounds. The annexation would allow for the 3% local sales tax to be applied, and the city would be willing to provide these tax dollars back to the County to invest in improving the Fairgrounds. The County Commission has noted a few apprehensions to the City about this potential agreement: can the city legally allocate the funds from the sales tax back to the Fairgrounds and document it so future leaders will continue to do it. County is not interested in any sort of City oversight or City requirements on Fairgrounds for landscaping, green space, parking, etc. The County also wanted to maintain the serving of beer and liquor on the Grounds, and they wanted assurance that de-annexation could happen at any time if the relationship were to turn sour. In response to those points, the City has included in the document a requirement that all sales tax collected must be allocated back to the County for use on the Fairgrounds. The existing Fire and Police relationship would remain the same as it is now. The County would still maintain all roads and infrastructure. No off-sale liquor licenses would be created/distributed for them to enter into the City's market. The City would also not like video lottery to become part of the Fair, nor have any off-sale liquor. Mayor Schaunaman sat down with the City Attorney and drafted two documents: an annexation agreement and an ordinance, the combination of which addresses all of the County's concern. It will take some work from the County to get the sales tax numbers from vendors, so from a tax standpoint the vendors are all sublessees that would have to give their numbers to the Fair. The sales tax figures are received by the County a month and a half later, and the State will provide a broad number to compare to, just not individual

vendors' figures. With the de-annexation language, it is built on state requirements and those are built into the contract. The way it is written, de-annexation is immediate if the document is taken to court. Overall, the hope is for additional cash funds to be input toward Fairgrounds improvement from the tax collection that the City could provide.

Commissioner Sutton spoke on annexation from the County's point of view. He reiterated that this is not a new topic or request and noted that the City's documents do cross off all qualms of County Commissions past and present. He conveyed that he had personally spoken with Fair Board member Jeff Kippley, who has been outspoken against this proposal in the past, and Jeff has reviewed the documents and is on board with this plan. County Commission has not yet held any public meetings regarding this proposal, nor has the city passed an Ordinance recommending it either. He pointed out that the final document will be signed by the City, County, and Fair Board President so future leaders will see that all parties were on board at the time of the original agreement. The biggest purpose is to collect the sales tax on the Fairgrounds year-round, not just during the Fair, with this money remitted back to the County for Improvement. It's estimated that this new tax figure would be somewhere between \$120k-\$150k, but the State does not release individual numbers. This amount would really help toward some of the bigger infrastructure projects that we all know need to be done in the near future. There are some naysayers that believe the City only wants to annex the Fairgrounds as a stepping stone to annexing Rolling Meadows, but any tax revenue collected from that development would not meet the cost of providing them utilities. The Brown County States Attorney is also on board, and noted that the de-annexation language would work if that option were ever needed and the rest of the document is also good. Regarding the sales tax, Rachel sat in on a meeting with Duane and others with the Department of Revenue to learn the process of how these figures would be collected. Here at tonight's meeting to ask for the Board's blessing. The Mayor, City Manager, and City Attorney are all on board with the plan, but the plan has not been run by the full Commission or City Council yet. Private polling of the Commission suggests that approval is likely.

Conald asked if the city would consider donating additional City funds for large projects. Although not voted on yet, the Mayor said that it looks like some of the city's funds will be given to the Hockey Association, which is likely marking the first time that City funds are going to be used outside the City. He said that the City funds could probably happen if the right project were to come up. The City also lacks grant writing like the Fairgrounds does, and the County's HR department has been authorized to contract with a grant writing company.

Jeff S asked if the collection of a city sales tax would require that Fairground facilities get opened up to other events year-round. Rachel clarified that all activities that take place on Fairgrounds, no matter the season, will be subject to the tax if sales are made. Mayor Schaunaman said that the DOR seemed very cautious with their \$120k-\$150k figure, so it's possible that it could be higher.

Commissioner Sutton said that his personal goal is for this to be enacted by the 1st of the year 2026, but this is government, so it will be slow by the time all the required meetings and hearings have taken place. The Department of Revenue said that it will take around 90 days to get things set up in

their system to collect and track this new revenue source. The time of annexation isn't the biggest deal, but the sooner, the better. Commissioner Sutton also wanted to reiterate that this money will not go to the County's General Fund, it will be for the Fairgrounds Improvement Fund.

Mayor Schaunaman said that they've been meeting on this for a while as well as ways to improve the City/County relationship, and Commissioner Sutton pointed out the Fairgrounds pays 2x for water since it's outside city limits. He was unaware of it, so a resolution was made the next week to allow for City rates. There was a similar situation on the County road north of Dakota St in town, where the City and County were in a standoff over who should repair it. Eventually the City sent crews to patch it up so it's drivable, and an agreement was reached. The City benefits greatly off of the Fair each year, but he feels that the City has just been lucky that the County improves the Grounds without input from the City. Commissioner Sutton said that this is the best working relationship he's seen between City and County.

Trevor asked about getting a City bus service during the week of the Fair similar to how we use the City's Police and Fire, as we used to use RideLine. Mayor Schaunaman said that the City's DOT is very strict about how the City buses are used since there are Federal DOT dollars tied to them. He said he will dig in and see if anything can be done. Conald said the old bus relationship we had with Dietrichs fell through because their drivers were operating more like a taxi than bus. McKenzie said that one of the biggest responses on the post-Fair survey was a shuttle or bus route revival.

Commissioner Sutton said that they are here today for the Fair Board's blessing and approval of this measure. He did note that this is referable, so petitions can be circulated and put to a public vote if enough signatures are reached. President Guthmiller thanked them both for their time lining this up and presenting today and suggested that the Board discuss the matter later in New Business. Rachel offered the idea of pushing the vote to the October meeting so that new members are seated and old members are off, and Mike said that maybe a vote could be held via a GroupMe poll after the meeting too. Further discussion will happen later in the meeting.

Conald made a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting and week of the Fair, seconded by Trevor. Approved.

Dan moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Rhonda. Approved.

The communications folder was sent around for all to view.

Foundation Report: Commissioner Sutton thanked all Foundation members who helped serve liquor at the Rodeo and with the breakfast on Sunday morning during the Fair.

Commissioners' Report: Commissioner Sutton said that they are in the process of wrapping up road projects for the year, including Highway 5 West of Hecla, Highway 16 by Columbia is finished aside from the bridge, and Highway 27 West of Mansfield. Road projects should be busy again next year as the Highway budget has been increased next year as the County passed a new road and bridge levy. This levy is estimated to bring in \$2.7 million in additional income, with \$2 million coming to the county and \$700,000 to the City of Aberdeen. They recently attended a convention in

Pierre where they heard that the DMV is the biggest complaint around the state right now as they are beginning to use a new program with the Treasurer's Office for licensing vehicles. It is very slow right now and will likely get even worse before improvement happens.

4-H Report: No report.

Fair Manager and Fairgrounds Report: Rachel shared several staffing updates: Dan Schlosser will be retiring on September 30th, so his position is currently open and the application is available on the website until next Tuesday. There have been interviews already for the Administrative Assistant, and she did note that they are excited for the potential restructuring that can be done with a new hire in this position. There is also an Event Coordinator position open that is being interviewed for as well. There are many events taking place on the Fairgrounds this fall: Paw Sale in the Expo this Saturday and the event on September 27th, then the Expo is turned over to the Hockey Association on October 1st. There is a Beer Mile event on September 17th, Field to Fork on September 18th, and 3 more weddings in the Clubhouse this summer. There is also one final event at Akkerman Arena this coming Saturday. There are several items of note that are included in the Communications Folder. Those items include reports from Dispatch, Ambulance, and Nursing Station, the RFP for a Rodeo Stock Provider, and a Clubhouse overview. Including the Corporate Tent and VIP Tents, gross alcohol sales were \$102,696.75 with expenses of \$48,914.24 for a net profit of \$53,782. Some receipts are still coming in so this figure will likely decrease a little bit. An additional \$2,500 was given by the Corn Utilization Council to make upgrades to the corn trailer, FFA groups have been reached out to about helping to make those upgrades for us. Rachel did hold a recap with Mike Herman with the Boys & Girls Club, and they are interested in another 3-year proposal. They also mentioned being interested in offering other drinks like Carbliss or different beers. And between the Grandstand and Clubhouse, there is interest in finding a faster way of checking ID's – insurance companies are being checked with to ensure compliance with those policies. There are many contract renewals up this year, with the biggest one being the Rodeo RFP – some interested groups have already reached out about it. The fire alarm system still needs replacement but needs to be done at a good cost. The Heartland Convention is in Huron, SD from November 20-22, please contact the office if you're interested. Finally, all playbooks should have changes made and be turned in as soon as possible.

Fair and Park Assistant Manager's Report: McKenzie said to ask any questions that members may have about bills, as there are some bigger bills that have not come in yet and still have to be paid. She attended an Etix convention in Raleigh and learned a lot more about their platform. We use MailChimp for marketing right now, but Hive is directly integrated with Etix so there might be a way for use to utilize that instead. Etix's settlement came in and the numbers didn't quite jive with the County's figures so they are digging into that. Many Competitive Exhibits judges still have money outstanding as their contracts were approved late. Livestock money is all finished.

Buildings and Grounds: Trevor thanked all board members who helped the committee during the week with all of their jobs.

Camping: Dylan said that a recap meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

Carnival and Vendors: Conald asked about who is keeping track of the vendors that owed extra for electrical, as it had been Stacey. Unsure, but probably is in with all of her other things and they will look to find out where that is.

Competitive Exhibits: Shelly – No report.

Food and Catering: Nichole – No report.

Friends of Fair: Katie – No report.

Grandstand Entertainment: Mike said that the recap went well, lots of good ideas to implement for next year. There are a couple of offers already out for the 2026 Fair but have heard back on none of them yet. There is one bigger idea that was brought up: separating part of the pit that the Fair could charge more for ticket access to. This would require an area to be fenced off and someone would have to monitor the entrances to the area. Setting up benches is a bit of a pain, so it would probably be a standing area. Maybe more to come on this idea in future meetings. Rachel said that another idea is to keep the racetrack fence up and charge \$10 or so more for any pit ticket since there would be just two entrances that could be monitored.

Junior Fair Board: Shelly – No report.

Legacy: Conald said a recap meeting is schedule for next week.

Livestock: Dylan said that the week went very well aside from too much rain, especially the Sweet 16 this year. There are some changes to make for next year, but the biggest one is just having a more structured schedule for the Vets to sit at Gate B to check in animals since there are many coming for just 1 day now after the schedule was changed a few years ago.

Marketing: Brodie sent a survey out, and the results of the survey will be emailed out to everyone later.

Rodeo: Dan said that he's going to the Governor's Cup rodeo next week, he will see if there are any good ideas he can pick up there. Had a recap meeting earlier this week that went well.

Special Events: Trevor said they had a recap meeting recently that went well.

Old Business: None

New Business: The Gypsy Day parade is September 20th at 9 a.m., and the Board will have a float again this year. Rachel presented Dwight with a gift for this year of service as Board President, and her appreciation for all of the time and effort he put in out on the Grounds.

Officer elections were held. Nominees for 1st Vice President from the Nominating Committee were Dylan Frey and Katie Moulsoff. Terry made a motion for nominations to cease, seconded by Joel. Approved. Votes were tallied, 1st Vice President for the 2026 Brown County Fair Board is Dylan Frey. Nominees for 2nd Vice President from the Nominating Committee were Joel Green and Trevor Meints. Conald made a motion for nominations to cease, seconded by Shelly. Approved. Votes were tallied, and the 2nd Vice President for the 2026 Brown County Fair is Trevor Meints. Nominees

for Secretary from the Nominating Committee were Terry Nash and Alley Shelton. Terry declined his nomination. Trevor made a motion, seconded by Conald, to nominate Joel Green, but he declined the nomination as well. Conald made a motion for nominations to cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Alley Shelton, seconded by Dan. Approved.

There was more discussion regarding Fairgrounds annexation. Dan asked that since the County still has control of the Fairgrounds, would city ordinances still have to be followed. They would not, and that is spelled out in the annexation document. Conald and Shelly suggested having a special meeting so all current Fair Board members can have input, including those that are excused today but not including the potential new members for 2026 since the existing members understand the Grounds better. Terry said that he thought Commissioner Sutton and Mayor Schaunaman explained it all very well. Mike said that his concern was any changes in leadership in the future, but by having the City, County, and Fair Board sign the document, that is negated. Rachel said that all of her concerns are administrative in nature: when campers may to stay on the Grounds, the Fairgrounds just eats the tax that is required, meaning that camping rates will likely have to go up to accommodate the added City tax. Her other concern is over invoicing, because no one that uses the Fairgrounds currently is required to share their sales tax figures as it stands now. This would require renegotiation of all leases. She sees no issues with the long-term leases, but some of the Fair week vendors could be a problem to get that from. Mike asked if we already know what the City's 3% tax figure would be, and we do not because get any figures on income made on the Grounds right now. Rachel also said that some local businesses could tell their customers to purchase where the tax is lower, and Joel said that that already takes place at some businesses. Conald asked about the State Collector that used to come to the Fairgrounds on Sunday, and McKenzie said that they no longer do that and are required to send in their figures to the state once the event is done. Jeff said that he does support the annexation since he's such a big proponent of bringing additional revenue to the fair, and \$100k+ of revenue from the city tax is a significant amount. Shelly made a motion to vote on GroupMe on September 24th over the proposed annexation, seconded by Trevor. After discussion, the motion Failed. Shelly then made a motion to vote immediately and approve of the annexation agreement for the Fairgrounds, seconded by Alley. Motion carried unanimously.

Trevor said that the final tents will be taken down tomorrow at 6:00 p.m.

Mike moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m., seconded by Shelly.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 8th 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in the Brown County Courthouse Basement.

Dylan Frey, Secretary