

Minutes: Meeting of the Metropolitan Government Board of Fair Commissioners

Date: December 14, 2021 8:00 a.m.

On the above referenced date, the December meeting for the Board of Fair Commissioners was held in Expo 2 at the Fairgrounds. Those in attendance were Chairman Jason Bergeron, Commissioner Caleb Hemmer, and Commissioner Sheri Weiner. Also, present were Fairgrounds Executive Director Laura Womack, Finance and Administrative Manager Satrice Allen and Event Services Fair Manager Scott Jones. Metro Attorney's Alex Dickerson and Tom Cross were in attendance. Ed Henley with Pillars Development was present, as well as Ron Gobbell and Tim Debus with Gobbell Hays Partners (GHP). Mary Cavarra with Nashville Soccer Club (and the Ownership Group) was also in attendance. Atilio Murga with Metro Arts was present, as well as Bill Phillips with the Mayor's Office. And Councilman Colby Sledge and Councilman Russ Bradford were in attendance also.

Chairman Bergeron called the meeting to order. He announced that Erin McAnally had resigned from the Fair Board and he thanked her for her service to the city and the Fair Board. He then moved to the approval of the October 12th meeting minutes. Commissioner Weiner made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Hemmer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the minutes were passed. He then moved to the October 20th special meeting minutes. Commissioner Hemmer made a motion to approve, and Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the special meeting minutes were passed. Chairman Bergeron read the legal notice and then moved to Public Comment Time.

There were no public comments. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Financial Report.

Ms. Allen gave a brief financial report. She added that the numbers presented that day did include the Community Development Block Grant which was for the reimbursement of depreciation and property insurance for the months that the Fairgrounds was used as a homeless shelter. Commissioner Hemmer asked how bookings were compared to last year and Ms. Allen stated that they were on course for what was booked in 2019. She added that the Flea Market was down 75%-80% from 2019 and that they were working on getting dealer participation back up. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Executive Director's Report.

Director Womack reported that the Lamar Advertising contract (the billboards on the property) had expired and that this would need to be addressed soon. There were some questions and suggestions. Director Womack stated that there was much to consider with so much going on within the property and asked the Board to be thinking about it. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Event Updates item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated also that the Flea Market was down for several different reasons but that they had the opportunity to recruit new vendors and that staff was reaching out to rebuild the market. She reported that customer traffic and parking were good and that they just needed more vendors-some of the vendors were rebuilding themselves-and it might take a little time. She finished her report by stating that January/February/March were very busy and there were many events booked. She then gave the floor to Scott Jones concerning the Fair.

Mr. Jones reported that they had decided on "The Nashville Fair" as the name and he was in the process of securing a website provider, a carnival provider, social media, purchases to produce the event, etc. He stated that he would like to get with each Board Member soon to go over ideas and get their input. He added that they would be drafting an RFP very soon and that carnival providers would be interested in coming here but that the number one issue would be the layout. Chairman Bergeron then moved to Old Business and the Fairgrounds Improvement Project, Stadium, Mixed Use, and Infrastructure Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Henley gave an update on each project at the Fairgrounds. Mr. Debus gave an update about Phase 2 of Fair Park, procurement for a Construction Manager, and the maintenance building. Mr. Gobbell gave an update about the Infrastructure Project and bridge. Ms. Cavarra gave an update on the Stadium Project and the Soccer Team and reported that the stadium was accident free so far and was also ahead of schedule and that the first game was scheduled for May 1st. She added that they were working on a parking plan for the stadium and would present that to the Board soon. She gave an update on the Mixed Use Project and added that this project was on schedule. She then went over the power points presentation. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Bristol Motor Speedway Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Phillips stated that they should have something to present to the Board soon concerning the Nashville/Bristol proposal and that it was carefully being reviewed. He added that there would be a detailed public process as well. He then reported that there should be two (top-notch) nominees presented soon for the two vacant board positions and that their goal was to bring them before the Metro Council at the first January meeting. Commissioner Weiner asked about a timeline for the consultant's report concerning the speedway deal and Metro Attorney Tom Cross stated that they should have something (a draft) by the end of the year or the first of the new year.

Chairman Bergeron stated, at this point, that he and Commissioner McAnally had sat down and reviewed the work that she had done (and her concerns) and added that both of their priorities matched up well. He stated that he had also sat down with Julie Bennett with Bristol Motor Speedway and that it was a positive meeting, and he was anxious to get into the details of the agreement and the financing. He then moved to the Community Impact/Speedway Policy Discussion and Consideration item on the agenda.

Chairman Bergeron reported that he had met with Bob Sargent and that he also had a demonstration with cars and different mufflers and set ups and that the differences in the noise from these setups were significant. He added that two drivers even came down to help demonstrate and he thanked Bob and the drivers for meeting with him. He stressed again that a public process and accuracy were a must and he quickly went over some slides that he put together for The Board. Some of his concerns were fewer racing days, reduction in track rentals below 25, noise mitigation, and a clarification of what the Bristol project was/was not. Chairman Bergeron then moved to New Business and the Election of Officers item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that with the resignation of Chair McAnally, according to the bylaws, there needed to be an election of a Chair and Vice-Chair. Commissioner Weiner asked if they could defer and suspend the rules until the other two new Board Members were confirmed next month and then vote. Mr. Dickerson stated that there was no mechanism to suspend the rules but that they could either do an amendment or vote for a limited term that day and then have another election once the other two members were on board. There was a brief discussion and Commissioner Weiner made a motion stating, *"I move for the Chair's term to be for now through the meeting following the appointment of the two new Fair Board members by the Metro Council"*. Commissioner Hemmer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the election for temporary Board Chair.

Commissioner Hemmer then made a motion stating, *"I make a motion to nominate Commissioner Bergeron as Chair of the Fair Board subject to the parameters already approved by the Board"*. Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the election for temporary Board Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Hemmer made a motion stating, *"I make the motion to nominate Commissioner Weiner as Vice-Chair of the Fair Board pending the meeting after we have five Fair Board Members"*. Chairman Bergeron seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion was passed. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Designation of Alternate Signing Authority item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that she would be travelling over the holidays and would not have the ability to connect so she needed to give David Lewis the authority to sign any contracts in her absence. Chairman Bergeron made a motion stating, *“I move to approve David Lewis to perform the signatory responsibilities of Executive Director Womack from the period beginning December 27th, 2021 and ending January 4th, 2022”*. Commissioner Weiner seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion was passed. Chairman Bergeron moved to the Staffing Update item on the agenda.

Director Womack reported that they currently had three vacancies-two Maintenance positions and the other Event Services position which had been offered to someone (they were still working through some details). She stated that they were working on filling all of these and, with all of the difficulties going on now with recruiting everywhere, they had requested a salary study from Finance to make sure they were keeping up with industry standards. She added that the Event Services position that had been offered should be filled very soon. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Mid-Year Budget Update item on the agenda.

Director Womack stated that it was time to do end of the year projections. She reported that they should not have to exceed their spending authority since it had already been increased so this would be helpful for the expenses for fair costs. Ms. Allen added that she had requested a separate budget (from the operating budget) for the fair and Metro Finance agreed. Director Womack went over some details of their projected needs for the coming year, mostly for the fair, and the best model(s) to accomplish what they wanted. There were several questions and a discussion about this issue and also about what they wanted the fair to be. Chairman Bergeron then moved to the Public Art Update item on the agenda.

Mr. Murga reported that they were making great progress and that they were in the community engagement phase of the process now. He stated that the local artist had been selected and that her piece would consist of language and poetry and words which would reflect the city of Nashville and its diversity and inclusion, history, purpose and past. He added that the project should start about the first of February. Commissioner Hemmer asked if the Fair Board could review the words that were selected before the project started and Mr. Murga stated that he would be glad to share the submissions with the Director Womack (and the Board).

Commissioner Hemmer wanted to confirm that Chairman Bergeron would be continuing the work that Commissioner McAnally had been doing concerning the racing items and negotiating on behalf of the Board as their representative. Chairman Bergeron stated that that was his understanding and that he had met with Commissioner McAnally and Director Womack and Bristol and many others so that he could continue with that work and that there would be no gaps in the progress. Commissioner Hemmer stated that it would be good to have more information concerning the proposal before the January meeting if at all possible.

Commissioner Weiner then made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hemmer seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting was dismissed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chairman, Jason Bergeron

Executive Director, Laura Womack