



# SD STATE FAIR COMMISSION MINUTES

Tuesday, January 17, 2023 • 1 PM CT  
Nordby Exhibit Hall, SD State Fairgrounds



**Call to Order:** Chairman Faron Wahl called the meeting to order. The roll call was called, and a quorum was present.

Members present: Faron Wahl, Dusty Anderson, Gary Sharp, Scott Cordts, Jo Beal, Sherman Gose, Amanda Stade, Erin Yost, Jamie White, and Justin Bell.

Others present: Brian Faris, Peggy Besch, Candi Briley, and Robin Baarts.

1. **Approve Agenda – Additions/Changes:** Yost made a motion; seconded by Gose to approve the agenda as written; motion carried by roll-call vote.
2. **Approval of October 18, 2022, Minutes:** Motion was made by Sharp; seconded by White, to approve October 18, 2022, minutes; motion carried by roll-call vote.
3. **Public Comment Period:** There were no public comments.
4. **Election of Officers (Chair and Vice Chair):** Anderson nominated Wahl as Chair; seconded by Yost. Anderson made a motion for nominations to cease; Cordts seconded; motion carried by roll-call vote (Wahl abstained). Gose nominated White as Vice Chair; seconded by Beal. Bell made a motion for nominations to cease; seconded by Sharp; motion carried by roll-call vote (White abstained).
5. **Goals**
  - a. Increase daily attendance by 5% year over year: Experienced a 6% increase in attendance in 2022.
  - b. Define and secure financial resources to support ongoing staffing needs: Work in progress.
  - c. Maximize gate efficiencies to support increased fairgoer attendance: Discussed in item 8.a below.
  - d. Triple non-fair revenue (longer term goal): Need the DEX to aid in this effort.
  - e. Build and strengthen new strategic partnerships: Experienced a 20% increase in sponsorships last year that included support in programming.
6. **DEX Update:** Besch provided a brief construction update. She also briefly explained Senate Bill 18 which has been introduced this legislative session. The bill asks for an additional \$9 million in one-time funds to complete the project (\$6 million general funds and \$3 million other funds). The construction schedule is still on track with substantial completion June 2023.
7. **SHED Update:** Fundraising efforts will continue with a fundraising goal of \$3 million. The hope is to have the fundraising commitments by this year's state fair.

8. **2023 SD State Fair:** August 31-September 4.
  - a. Admission Gates: The committee that was appointed at the last commission meeting gave a report on some strategies identified pertaining to the admission gates which included:
    - i. Establishing a plan of action for each gatehouse that allows staffing to be scaled up/down during particular times of day.
    - ii. Starting in April, target non-profit organizations to work at gates for fundraising opportunity.
    - iii. Developing a supervisor training program separate from gate attendants.
    - iv. Translate help wanted advertising and training materials into different languages.
    - v. Develop ways to improve the employee experience such as fans in the gate houses, shade structures, morning and shift change briefings, etc.
    - vi. New pricing model to encourage pre-purchased gate admission tickets to reduce the purchasing traffic at the gates.
    - vii. Develop self-serve kiosks.
    - viii. Discontinue scanning vehicles at the gates (will have to inspect parking passes upon arrival) and enforce towing of vehicle without proper credentials.
  - b. Open Class Sheep Show: Will be held the weekend prior to the fair, August 25-27.
  - c. DEX Transition Team: The committee has been meeting and is still working through many of the details including load-in/load-out, outside ties, stalling, etc.
  - d. Camping Reservation Renewal: Camping renewals went out early January. The renewal deadline is March 1. New reservations for Gate 13 and H open April 17.
  - e. Vendor Renewal: 280 renewals have been sent out with approximately 60% already returned.
  - f. Other: Working on updating the Exhibitor Handbooks. The Education Department will accept online entries this year.
9. **America 250:** A commemoration of the semi quincentennial, or 250th anniversary, of the United States in 2026. Looking for ideas for activities on the fairgrounds to hold during the fair as part of the celebration.
10. **Non-Fair Time Activities:** There are many upcoming meetings, and celebrations but the upcoming public events include Performance Radio Outdoor Show and Heartland Pool and Dart Tournament in March and Wheel Jam June 1-4.
11. **Maintenance and Repairs:** Projects for 2023 include:
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Water Loop: Replacing the 4" waterline with a 6" water line.
  - Replacing the existing siding, carpet, and doors on the infield trailer homes.
  - Expo, HVAC and Storefront/Wall Panel Replacement: Planning and design for replacement of the HVAC and wall panel system. Construction would happen in the future as funds allow.
  - Campus Wide Electrical Pole Replacement: Replacing electrical poles that are at the end of their useful life and moving some electrical lines underground where feasible.
  - Campground Water Sewer: Design and planning for adding water and sewer in campgrounds.
  - Tech Center: ADA Bathrooms Renovation.
  - Rushmore Corner: Roof Replacement.
  - Recreation Ave: Sewer Replacement.

- Nordby Exhibit Hall/Family Living Center Area Storm Sewers: Adding new storm inlets behind the Family Living Center and to the west of the Nordby Exhibit Hall.

**12. Commissioner or Manager Reports:**

- a. Stade reported 4-H is working on updating 4-H information for this year's fair. Also mentioned the Agri-workforce Coordinator position is vacant.
- b. Generators: The question was asked if it would be possible to have the National Guard's generator on stand-by during the fair in the event of an emergency. This would need to be pre-approved well in advance.
- c. July 18: Emergency planning training.
- d. Anderson mentioned he recently met with Red Wilk to discuss manure removal during the fair as it relates to the DEX.

**13. Adjourned.**