

**MINUTES OF OCFEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
HELD October 12, 2021**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by Director Melahat Rafiei. Roll call was taken by Summer Angus.

4. DIRECTORS PRESENT (via Zoom):

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia, Vice Chair La Belle, Director Cervantes, Director Ruiz, Director Bagneris, Director Pham, Director Kovacevich and Director Rafiei.

DIRECTORS ABSENT/EXCUSED: Director Aitken.

Director Bagneris joined the meeting just after roll call.

Director Pham joined the meeting at 3:51 p.m.

OTHERS PRESENT:

(Via Zoom): Michele Richards, OCFEC CEO; Ken Karns, OCFEC Chief Operating Officer; Joan Hamill, OCFEC Chief Business Development Officer; Jason Jacobsen, OCFEC Director of Planning & Presentation; Terry Moore, OCFEC Director of Communications; Summer Angus, OCFEC Executive Assistant; Gibran Stout; Carolyn Beaver; Theresa Sears

5. MATTERS OF PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. GOVERNANCE PROCESS

A. 3-Year Strategic Planning Workshop #2 to Discuss Strategic Direction for OCFEC Programming

CEO Richards summarized what the Board accomplished from workshop number one:

- The 32nd DAA's purposes under the CDFA Code:
 - to hold fairs, expositions and exhibitions in Orange County to exhibit the industries and industrial enterprises, resources, and products of every kind or nature of the state, with a view toward improving, exploiting, encouraging, and stimulating them; and
 - to construct, maintain, and operate recreational and cultural facilities of general public interest in Orange County
- Draft Vision Statement:

- Orange County's town square – the safe place where the community gathers and finds value
- Draft Mission Statement:
 - Creating equitable community access to agriculture, entertainment, cultural and educational experiences
- Revision to Core Values (in progress):
 - Eliminate redundancy - descriptions are too long; simplify
 - Add "Equity" to "Diversity & Inclusion"
 - Staff recommendation - employee committee to work on revisions as part of governance and policy review

CEO Richards discussed strategic direction:

- Strategic direction is a path set out for our organization based on our vision and mission
- Strategic direction creates a bridge from our vision to our goals and action steps
- Strategic direction defines the destination – where we want to be – while goals define how to get there
- Strategic direction unifies the organization toward achieving a single goal
- Next Steps – Setting Strategic Direction:
 - Strategic Direction - Board developed
 - Goals (includes outcomes and measurements) – Board and staff developed
 - Action Steps – Staff developed
- Strategic Programming Areas (Board identified):
 - Equestrian Center, Annual OC Fair, Year-Round Events Program, Educational Assets, Centennial Farm, Heroes Hall, Imaginology, Foundations, Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation, Centennial Farm Foundation, Community Support, Resiliency Center

The Board (working in partners) completed an exercise regarding where they would like to see the Equestrian Center (EQC) by the year 2024. Board members were asked to:

- Develop 2-3 strategic goals for the Equestrian Center
- Write a statement for each goal that connects with the vision statement
 - Directors Rafiei and Cervantes:
 - Space to be used for more **public benefit** (equine center, therapeutic, etc.)
 - Directors Ruiz and Kovacevich:
 - To create a world class equestrian center, with **best in breed, safety and animal care standards** and to ensure equitable treatment for permanent horses and for animals in need of shelter
 - To design and implement creative programming that will **attract a broader group of constituents**

- throughout Orange County year-round – maximize community engagement**
- Chair Rubalcava-Garcia and Director Bagneris
 - OCFEC EQC would be a **true community asset** that provides access to the public
 - **OCFEC's Equestrian Center will be operated by OC Fair staff to ensure local youth and other members of the community have a safe place to experience the equestrian lifestyle**
 - The business model would support the new structure
- Vice Chair La Belle
 - 32nd DAA should be involved to a larger extent in the programming and operation of the EQC. 32nd DAA should be controlling the programming to the max benefit of the public
 - **Integrate programming at the EQC to coordinate with other OCFEC activities such as year-round events, OC Fair, Imaginology, etc.**
 - Opportunity to fully **max the financial benefits of EQC programming**

Board discussion ensued regarding the exercise; CEO Richards highlighted key ideas in the statements above to reflect Board comments (see bolded items above). CEO Richards stated she will work with Board Leadership to consolidate the above ideas into two to three draft strategic direct statements. Chair Rubalcava-Garcia asked for the consolidated draft statements to be agendaized for the October meeting.

Gibran Stout discussed an email she had sent to the Board regarding public programming currently taking place at the EQC and encouraged them to read the email. She spoke in support of more public engagement at the EQC. She asserted she has asked for the opportunity to do a presentation or to have a study session to present additional information to a Board committee (and/or full Board). She discussed comments regarding declining income and her concerns with the EQC study and asked to share her information on running the facility. She encouraged Board members to help judge the Halloween costume contest at the EQC.

Carolyn Beaver, EQC boarder/user, spoke in support of increased access of the EQC to the public. She asserted that horse owners and frequent users of the EQC are members of the public. She spoke in support of the current EQC operator and the quality of care for the horses and facility they provide. She suggested the Board consider a mixed model for the EQC, to continue the services of a professional EQC operator and have fairgrounds staff responsible for programming.

She asserted there are many trainers that would be happy to be involved in programming efforts.

CEO Richards confirmed for Chair Rubalcava-Garcia the EQC revenue figures presented were net proceeds to the fairgrounds, not to the operator.

The Board (working in partners) completed an exercise regarding where they would like to see the annual OC Fair by the year 2024. Board members were asked to:

- Develop 2-3 strategic goals for the OC Fair
- Write a brief statement for each goal that connects with the vision statement
 - Vice Chair La Belle and Director Pham
 - Increase overall experience, educational experiences, highlighting the community, community outreach with tickets, prominence of exhibits integrated with other programs
 - “greening up” the property
 - Maximize concessionaire opportunities for OC businesses; diverse mix of food options
 - Chair Rubalcava-Garcia and Director Bagneris:
 - Be #1 fair in the State for guest experience; top 5 in the U.S.
 - Solve our storage and parking needs to enhance guest experience
 - #1 destination of choice for family activities in the summer; offering programming for families that is more affordable for families; highlight the free of charge programming; offer family or group packages
 - Directors Kovacevich and Ruiz:
 - To create an opportunity for increased local business participation at the OC Fair resulting in over 50% of our vendors being from OC
 - To establish pioneering private/public partnerships designed to benefit and increase accessibility to lower income residents of OC
 - Directors Rafiei and Cervantes
 - Expand use of grounds year-round; not just banking on the summer fair
 - Working with local nonprofits to provide a full fair experience to lower income residents; a place where you can break out with your family without breaking the bank! Highlight free offerings
 - Storytelling by grandparents to kids; highlight traditions and family connections
 - Vice Chair La Belle and Director Bagneris discussed:
 - Foster kids and “Friends of the Fair” programs

No Action taken.

7. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MATTERS OF INFORMATION

Chair Rubalcava-Garcia announced the appointment of Directors Bagneris and Rafiei to the Community Affairs Committee, replacing Directors Ruiz and Kovacevich. She thanked Directors Ruiz and Kovacevich for their service, commitment and energy on the committee. She also announced the following appointments:

- Director Kovacevich to the Centennial Farm Foundation (liaison)
- Director Ruiz to serve as Chair of the Facilities Committee

Board members shared their support for the strategic planning process, Board and staff's work and commitment to make the meeting and the process possible.

12. NEXT BOARD MEETING: OCTOBER 28, 2021

13. ADJOURNMENT MOTION TO ADJOURN

Director Rafiei motioned and Director Bagneris seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned 5:02 p.m.



Natalie Rubalcava-Garcia, Chair



Michele Richards, Chief Executive Officer