

**MINUTES OF OCFEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
HELD FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

The following Minutes are a summary of Board action and proceedings. For a full transcript please click on the link below or visit the ocfair.com website.

[https://s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/ocfair.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/19150352/26\\_02\\_February\\_Transcript.pdf](https://s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/ocfair.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/19150352/26_02_February_Transcript.pdf)

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Bagneris, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

**2. MISSION STATEMENT**

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by Director Doug La Belle. Roll call was taken by meeting secretary, Summer Angus.

**4. DIRECTORS PRESENT:**

Chair Bagneris, Vice Chair Ruiz, Director Kovacevich, Director Pham (via Zoom), Director La Belle, Director Bilezikjian and Director Sanchez Cannady.

Director Pham joined the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

**DIRECTORS ABSENT/EXCUSED:** Director Jackson and Director Rubalcava-Garcia.

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

James Canfield, OCFEC Chief Executive Officer; Melissa Au-Yeung, OCFEC Chief Administrative Officer; Michele Capps, OCFEC Chief Business Development Officer; Jason Jacobsen, OCFEC Production & Planning Director; Summer Angus, OCFEC Executive Assistant; Josh Caplan, Office of the Attorney General; Evy Young, OCFEC Director of Agriculture Programs, Reginald Joseph, transcriptionist; Michael Searle; Reggie Mundekis

**5. PRESENTATIONS:**

**A. Presentation of Black History Month Proclamation by Community Affairs Committee**

Information Item

Chair Bagneris, on behalf of Community Affairs Committee, read the Black History Month proclamation honoring Charlene Reynolds, Director of John Wayne Airport (not present).

A video message was played wherein Charlene Reynolds accepted and thanked the Board for the honor.

**6. MINUTES:**

**A. Board meeting held January 29, 2026**

Action Item

**ACTION:** Director La Belle motioned and Vice Chair Ruiz seconded to approve the Minutes from Board meeting held January 29, 2026. **MOTION CARRIED.**  
**AYES:** Chair Bagneris, Vice Chair Ruiz, Director Kovacevich, Director Pham, Director La Belle, Director Bilezikjian and Director Sanchez Cannady. **NAYES:** None. **ABSTENTIONS:** None.

## 7. MATTERS OF PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

## 8. CONSENT CALENDAR

**A. Standard Agreements:** SA-002-26MB; SA-039-26HB; SA-040-26IO; SA-041-26IO; SA-042-26IO; SA-043-26IO; SA-044-26GE; SA-045-26SP; SA-046-26SP; SA-047-26SP; SA-048-26HB; SA-049-26GE; SA-050-26GE; SA-051-26GE; SA-052-26YR; SA-053-26FT; SA-054-26FTYR; SA-055-26GE; SA-056-26GE; SA-057-26FT; SA-058-26FT; SA-058-26FT; SA-059-26SP; SA-060-26SP; SA-061-26SP; SA-062-26GE; SA-063-26GE; SA-064-26GE; SA-065-26GE; SA-066-26GE; SA-067-26GE; SA-068-26GE; SA-069-26GE; SA-070-26GE; SA-071-26GE; SA-072-26GE; SA-073-26GE; SA-074-26GE; SA-076-26GE; SA-077-26GE; SA-078-26GE; SA-079-26GE; SA-080-26SP; SA-081-26SP

**i. Standard Agreement Amendments:** SA-006-25FTYR (Amend. #1); SA-019-26HB (Amend. #1); SA-023-26HB (Amend. #1)

**ii. Standard Agreement Amendments (Exercise Option):** SA-048-22YR (Amend. #3); SA-050-22YR (Amend. #3); SA-079-22FTYR (Amend. #3); SA-085-22FTYR (Amend. #5); SA-086-22FT (Amend. #3); SA-087-22FT (Amend. #3); SA-088-22FT (Amend. #3); SA-016-23FT (Amend. #5); SA-025-23YR (Amend. #3); SA-046-23YR (Amend. #3); SA-047-23YR (Amend. #3); SA-008-24FTYR (Amend. #1); SA-061-24FTYR (Amend. #1); SA-091-24FT (Amend. #3); SA-093-24FT (Amend. #1); SA-102-23YR (Amend. #3); SA-103-23YR (Amend. #4)

**B. Rental Agreements:** RA-EQC010-26; RA-EQC011-26; RA-EQC012-26; RA-EQC014-26; RA-EQC013-26; R-009-26; R-015-26; R-016-26; R-017-26; R-021-26; R-024-26; R-029-26; R-051-26; R-060-26; R-061-26; R-062-26; R-067-26; R-068-26; R-069-26; R-070-26; R-074-26; R-076-26

**i. Rental Agreement Amendments:** RA-EQC001-26 (Amend. #1); R-106-25 (Amend. #2); R-023-26 (REV. # 2); R-028-26 (REV. #1); R-044-26 (Amend. #1); R-046-26 (REV. #2); R-053-26 (REV. #1)

**C. Active Joint Powers Authority Agreements (New):** None.

### D. Correspondence:

Communications to the Board from members of the public related to OCFEC business are identified below and included with the Board materials (available on

the OCFEC website). Note that this agenda item includes only those communication(s) that were sent to the entire Board and CEO before the publication of this month's agenda. The deadline for correspondence to be included on the March agenda is March 13, 2026.

i. 2/5/26 John Sullivan – Timeshare in OC

**E. CDFA Correspondence:**

Communications to the Board from the California Department of Food & Agriculture Division of Fairs & Expositions regarding relevant topics at Fairs and Expositions.

i. None.

– End of Consent Calendar –

**ACTION:** Director Bilezikjian motioned and Vice Chair Ruiz seconded to approve the Consent Calendar. **MOTION CARRIED. AYES: Chair Bagneris, Vice Chair Ruiz, Director Kovacevich, Director Pham, Director La Belle, Director Bilezikjian and Director Sanchez Cannady. NAYES: None. ABSTENTIONS: None.**

**9. CLOSED SESSION (Closed to the Public)**

None.

**10. CEO'S OPERATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES**

CEO Canfield reported the following:

- Introduced Michael Searle as the new OCFEC COO effective March 9
- Announced new bookings in the Pacific Amphitheatre, The Hangar and Action Sports Arena
- Reported participation in legislative meetings in Sacramento with the California Emergency Response and Resiliency Venues and Fairgrounds (CERRVF) group, advocating for the role of fairgrounds in emergency response, infrastructure funding, and increased grant eligibility
  - Emphasized that fairgrounds statewide are utilized more days for emergency response purposes than for fair operations, and highlighted need for greater awareness among legislators
- Attended California Construction Authority board meeting; noted ongoing organizational restructuring, strategic planning efforts, and his appointment as Vice Chair of the CCA Board
- Maintenance Mania hosted at OCFEC in early February with over seventy attendees
  - Highlighted organizational initiative to improve employee engagement and collaboration following consolidation into the new administration building
  - Implementing staff development efforts including employee engagement surveys and facilitated team sessions focused on communication, teamwork, and reducing silos

Michele Capps, OCFEC CBDO, announced OCFEC won twenty-two WFA Awards, eleven being first place.

Evy Young, on behalf of Max from Hana Fields by Tanaka Farms, expressed appreciation to the OC Fair & Event Center and The Ranch Community Center for sheltering over 100 of their animals during recent storms, with about 80 still on site as their repairs continue. They noted positive participation in Discovery Days and interest in future collaboration.

A newborn goat was briefly introduced at the meeting.

## 11. GOVERNANCE PROCESS

### A. 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Update

#### Information Item

CEO Canfield provided an overview of the five-year strategic plan adopted in March 2025, noting it was developed prior to his tenure with extensive community input and that staff has made meaningful, largely organic progress in implementing key initiatives. He highlighted ongoing efforts across major focus areas, including technology upgrades and systems integration, enhanced programming informed by guest feedback, facility and master site plan improvements, new revenue-generating events and partnerships, expanded fundraising support, organizational development and customer service initiatives, and strengthened data-driven decision-making and stewardship of state assets. CEO Canfield noted that implementation is ongoing, with continued evaluation, committee engagement, and potential future updates to ensure alignment with Board priorities.

Reggie Mundekis spoke in support of proposed parking management technology to improve utilization of existing parking capacity, particularly in identifying and directing vehicles to dispersed open spaces during peak times. She also shared support for ticket bundling options for admissions, parking, and amenities, emphasizing that such offerings should remain optional, clearly presented, and value-oriented for consumers.

#### **Board discussion ensued; items discussed included:**

- General support and enthusiasm for progress on strategic plan implementation, with recognition of new ideas, leadership, and focus on operational improvements, including parking management
- Positive feedback on recent Master Site Plan review and adjustments, and anticipation for future updates and continued coordination with partner organizations
- Commendation for early progress in expanding year-round events and programming aligned with prior Board priorities
- Discussion of leveraging existing marketing, sponsorships, and partnerships to support new entertainment and event initiatives

- Consideration of revisiting a multi-use parking structure, acknowledging past community concerns and the need to evaluate future transportation trends
- Emphasis on identifying and diversifying revenue streams, including contingency planning should projected revenues not materialize
- Overall support for continued alignment with the organization's core mission while advancing strategic initiatives

Director La Belle, on behalf of the Entertainment Task Force, reported the committee is exploring new revenue-generating opportunities such as a potential multi-use entertainment complex, indoor ice rink, and possible minor league baseball partnership; recommendations of viability anticipated within 30–90 days.

## **B. The Ranch Community Center Update**

### Information Item

Evy Young, OC FEC Director of Agriculture Programs, provided an update on the Ranch Community Center, highlighting continued progress in equine boarding operations, program growth, and community engagement. She reported increased boarding activity and revenue, expansion of trainers and disciplines offered, and ongoing deferred maintenance improvements, with a goal of completion by mid-year. She also shared strong participation in educational and community programs, including Ranch Discovery Days, after-school programming in partnership with local schools, and collaboration with nonprofit partner Walk Inuit, which has experienced increased client engagement and program delivery. Director Young noted ongoing use of the facility for trainings, events, and potential shows, as well as continued alignment with the Board's vision to integrate agricultural education, community programming, and equine operations, with plans for continued growth and expanded participation.

Director La Belle noted the potential benefit of a County of Orange multi-purpose trail system to enhance equine and educational programming, though it remains unfunded and may require coordination with the City of Costa Mesa. He encouraged continued exploration of the concept and reporting back on feasibility as part of long-term planning efforts.

CEO Canfield agreed to report out on trail system at next meeting.

Director Pham left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

## **C. Committee / Ad Hoc Committee / Liaison Report**

### Information Item

To assure compliance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, Committee reports are only for the purpose of the Committee chair, Ad Hoc Committee members or Liaison to provide a verbal update. Should the Board want to

discuss any Committee work item not already on the agenda; those would need to be agendaized for a future Board meeting.

- i. **Leadership Committee** (Chair Bagneris, Committee Chair; Vice Chair Ruiz)
- ii. **Financial Monitoring and Audit Committee** (Director Pham, Committee Chair; Director Bilezikjian)
- iii. **Facilities Committee** (Director Bilezikjian, Committee Chair; Director Kovacevich)
- iv. **Community Affairs Committee** (Director Rubalcava-Garcia & Director Jackson, Committee Co-Chairs)
- v. **Governance Committee** (Director Kovacevich; Director Sanchez Cannady)
- vi. **Entertainment Task Force** (Director La Belle, Committee Chair; Director Jackson)

Chair Bagneris, on behalf of the Leadership Committee, reported:

- Committee met on February 11 to plan the February agenda
- Next meeting is scheduled for March 11

Director Bilezikjian, on behalf of the Financial Monitoring and Audit Committee, reported:

- The Committee met on February 23 and discussed:
  - The January financial reports (financial reports presented)
  - Staff provided the Committee with a brief review of the 2025 audit process
  - Next meeting is scheduled for March 23

Director Bilezikjian, on behalf of the Facilities Committee, reported:

- Committee met on February 4
  - CapX projects: 45 active; 6 completed one on hold
  - MSP Phase One (Admin): working on closeout items
  - Phase Two (Midway restrooms): Using different tactics, exploring lower cost opportunities
  - Master Site Plan: looking forward to updated version of the MSP the Board discussed
  - Paving projects delayed due to rain and events
  - A Capital Project Manager position
  - Next meeting scheduled for early March

Director La Belle suggested that the Facilities Committee work with staff to identify elements of the Master Site Plan that could be incorporated into a future entertainment complex, ensuring coordination with ongoing projects and avoiding duplicate expenditures.

Chair Bagneris announced the appointment of Director Sanchez Cannady to the Governance Committee, with Director Kovacevich as the Committee Chair.

Reggie Mundekis expressed concern about proposed sports facilities, such as an ice rink or baseball stadium, noting potential financial risk, neighborhood impacts from scale, traffic, noise, and light, and questioned local demand. She suggested

the City of Costa Mesa and residence be brought in to the loop immediately to share their concerns. She spoke in support of a parking garage in a less-used corner of the property as a more appropriate infrastructure improvement.

## **12. UPCOMING EVENTS PREVIEW**

Michele Capps, Chief Business Development Officer gave an update on upcoming events at OCFEC.

## **13. BOARD OF DIRECTORS MATTERS OF INFORMATION**

Board members made concluding comments:

- Expressions of gratitude for the meeting and recognized the efforts of staff and leadership
- Several members welcomed the new COO and highlighted excitement about ongoing programs, events, and future initiatives
- Appreciation was shared for teamwork, organizational improvements, and successful outcomes of recent projects and presentations
- Board members acknowledged the importance of diversity, community engagement, and the continued celebration of Black History Month

## **14. NEXT BOARD MEETING: MARCH 26, 2026**

## **15. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

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Barbara Bagneris, Board Chair

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James Canfield, Chief Executive Officer