



Corn Palace Events and Entertainment Board  
City Council Chambers, City Hall, 612 N. Main Street  
September 3, 2024

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 4:02 pm by Board Chair John Foster

**2. Attendance**

Attendance was taken. Those present included city staff: Mayor Hanson, Stephanie Ellwein, Doug Greenway, Craig Stucky. Board present included Carol Cersosimo, Gio Lanier, Jory Hanson, Jean Koehler, John Foster, Jordan Gau, Tim Goldammer, Steve Morgan, Johanna Allen (in place of Alex Heidinger)

**3. Approval Of The Minutes**

Minutes were asked to be updated with the correct spelling of Jean Koehler in the attendance line. The change was noted. Motion to approved the August minutes was made by Gio and 2nd by Jean. All members voted Aye to approve the August minutes.

**4. Approval Of The Agenda**

It was noted by Doug that there would be an executive session for discussion of a service contract that needed approval. No other changes to the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda was made by Steve and 2nd by Gio. All members voted AYE to approve the agenda.

**A. Corn Palace Festival Review**

- **Concert Attendance**
- **Plaza Stage Entertainment**
- **Vendors**
- **Gold Star Amusement**
- **Ticketing/Bars/Concessions**
- **Next Steps for 2025 Festival, August 20-24, 2025**

Doug reviewed the festival P/L with the board. The festival was profitable overall with a few expenses yet to be received and paid and a few outstanding payments from sponsors. Both are expected to be received shortly. Concert Tickets Sales included Scotty McCreery with 2237 tickets sold for \$123,565, Battle of the Bands, 366 tickets sold for \$3660, Skillet 1512 tickets sold for \$83,760. Each show had an additional 290-295 attendees with sponsor tickets.

The general thought the concerts were of good quality with good sound and were enjoyed by those attending. There was very good feedback from those attending as well. Total alcohol

sales during the festival concerts was \$44,741.

The Plaza Stage Entertainment cost \$7660.00 for the 5 days of the festival. The largest cost was the free concert appearance by Brandon Jones on Wednesday with a cost of \$3000. Vendor feedback was generally very good. There was concern from some with a smaller concert event on Friday that their sales were not as good and Sunday's hot weather kept people away.

Gold Star Amusement reported a record revenue for the Corn Palace Festival. However, much of that was due to increased prices for both the ride vouchers from \$49-\$52 dollars for presale and \$55/\$60 dollars after the festival started. The sale of passport vouchers was down from 2023 considerably. 2023- 564, and in 2024 we sold, 499.

Some discussions on operations during the concerts included longer lines for entry, it was recommend to put a special stamp or image on the Party Pit tickets so they are easier to identify. The Party Pit entrance seemed to work well and was improved for the Skillet concert.

Other discussions were concerns for the long lines for concessions and lack of hot food available in concessions. All items were noted for improvement with ideas shared to improve this experience. Alcohol pricing approved in July for indoor concerts received some negative reviews. Tim Goldammer shared some feedback after attending the State Fair where 12 oz beer was \$6 vs \$7 at the festival and Cocktails at the fair were \$8 while the Corn Palace at \$10. Selling drink tickets was discussed as an option for our concerts. It generally leads to unused tickets and generally higher revenue. Doug shared concerns with more lines to get tickets and the need to have more help to sell the tickets. Bar location was discussed and suggestions of placement nearer the the seated crowd. It was determined that if they were seated for the show, they were less likely to get up and walk to the bar. It was noted the Show Choir parents worked the beverage tables in the lobby and did a very good job getting people through quickly. All suggestions were noted and will be reviewed for other ticketed events.

It was noted that the 2025 Festival would be held August 20-24 with Pepper Entertainment working on developing a list of avails to consider for concerts. Gold Star Amusement will be back for the Carnival with it scheduled to be in the 5th - 9th street location. There was discussion about relocating the carnival back down main street between 1st - 7th. This was discussed with Gold Star briefly and they would be invited to call in to the October meeting.

They had concerns about a move back down the street, due to difficulty placing rides that didn't block main street businesses. They have a higher level of vandalism when down main street, and sales are better when carnival rides are near or grouped together, as attendees tend to move from ride to ride when they are clustered together. It was noted that main street businesses could be surveyed again. Doug shared that when polled in 2021, the majority of business owners did not want the carnival in front of their businesses for a number of reasons.

Street closure, litter, vandalism, etc. Mitchell Public Safety prefers the current location, as does the Corn Palace Director, due to the Corn Palace being in the middle of the festival and the Electrical connections have been installed between 5th - 7th that allow the vendors to be connected quite easily. Gold Star Amusement prefers the current location as well and the Carnival is a big part of the festival. This will be discussed more at the October meeting.

## **B. 2026 Mural Themes discussion**

The 2026 mural themes discussed in the August meeting were reviewed, and it was determined that the best theme would be "250 Years of America" It was noted that the story

book theme was a good one and should be looked at for 2027. The story could flow from mural #1 to #9 and tell a story in pictures. [www.america250.org](http://www.america250.org) is a National Celebration of the Semiquincentennial or 250th year celebration of our independence. Doug will send the theme idea to DWU and ask the students to brain storm ideas for the murals. The board will be tasked with researching the theme and bringing ideas to the October meeting.

## **5. Citizen's Input**

There was no citizen input.

## **6. Executive Session : Motion To Enter Into Executive Session In Accordance With SDCL 1-25-2 (5) To approve contract for Services within the Corn Palace.**

The Board moved into executive session to discuss a service contract for the Corn Palace.

Following discussion a motion was made by Gio to accept the service agreement for 2025 with Johnson Controls for the service and maintenance of the HVAC systems in the Corn Palace.

A 2nd was made by Carol. All members voted Aye to accept the service agreement. It was noted that the agreement would be reviewed next summer to determine if they wish to continue with the 2nd year of the agreement or to request out of the agreement.

## **7. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.

## **A. Next Meeting, October 1, 2024, 4 pm in City Council**