

The Board of  
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Commissioners

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October 20, 2023

Sent via email to [buck.holmes@laramiecountywy.gov](mailto:buck.holmes@laramiecountywy.gov)

Buck Holmes, Chairman  
Laramie County Fair Board  
P. O. 608  
Cheyenne, WY 82003

RE: Dissolution of Laramie County Fair Board

Dear Sir,

This letter is to inform the Laramie County Fair Board, pursuant to Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 18-3-525, that the Laramie County Board of Commissioners ('BOCC') intends dissolution of the Laramie County Fair Board.

The BOCC will announce its intent for this dissolution at its regularly set meeting on November 21, 2023. The purpose for which the Board was initially created under Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 18-9-101 et seq. no longer exists and continuing the Fair Board is a duplication of resources. The annual Laramie County Fair has been for several years, and will continue to be, conducted, and managed by Laramie County through the Laramie County Events Department.

On November 7, 2023, the BOCC will holding public meeting as required by Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 18-3-525 (C)(iii) to provide opportunity for public comment in person or in writing.

Attached please find a draft resolution, pursuant to Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 18-3-525(a)(ii) outlining the plan for dissolution and a proposed language to effectuate the dissolution of the Fair Board. No final decision has been made in this time regarding dissolution of the Fair Board. As noted, the Board will consider the matter at the public meeting indicated above.

Laramie County, over several years, has provided management and expanded the facilities used for the annual County Fair. The Fair is now part of the year round operations at the Laramie County Archer complex. The Archer Complex represents a significant investment, approved by the citizens of Laramie County, which includes, but is not limited to, the County Fair.

The complexity of the operations at the Archer complex require unified and focused attention by Laramie County government, in both an organizational and fiduciary capacity, to maximize the benefits to and protect the investment of, the citizens of Laramie County. The annual County Fair significantly benefits from the expansion of resources and facilities available at the Archer complex and from the unified direction and control of the Laramie County Commissioners.

It is the BOCC's understanding that the majority of the Fair Board agree that dissolution of the Fair Board and elimination of duplication of effort and resources is in the best interests of the County and the Laramie County Fair.

Changes, experience and advancements in facilities available to the County, over almost 20 years have moved toward, and support this decision.

In 2004, Laramie County purchased a significant section of property previously belonging to the University of Wyoming, now designated as the 'Archer' complex property. Among the primary purposes for the acquisition of this property, was a location for the Laramie County Fair. Given the expansive development of the Archer property it has taken a number of years to construct facilities and create an operational structure for their management. During much of that, the County Fair Board continued its involvement in the conduct of the annual county fair, which had been moved in its entirety to the Archer complex as facilities became available.

In 2012, the citizens of Laramie County approved a specific purpose tax in the amount of \$21,851,000 for the County to construct a year-round multi-purpose event center facilities at what was described in the ballot proposition, as the Laramie County Fairgrounds at the Archer Complex.

In 2017, the citizens of Laramie County again approved a significant specific purpose tax in the amount of a \$9,885,000 to the Laramie County Fair Board, for the design, construction, equipping, and furnishing of a multipurpose facility at the Laramie County Archer Complex. In addition to being used for the annual County Fair the ballot proposition was approved with the understanding by the citizens that it would also host a variety of events, year-round for both residents and visitors, including trade shows, expositions, sporting events, RV rallies, concerts, horse and stock shows.

Citizen approval for the funding of the expansion and improvement of facilities at the Archer complex has continued. This included an additional approval by the citizens of the County in 2021, in the amount of 1.5 million for Events Center improvements and \$6.9 million for sewer connections at the Archer Complex.

The uses of the facilities at Archer continue to expand. In addition to conducting the annual County Fair, the complex hosts, Expos, entertainment, conventions, gun shows, livestock exhibitions and many other events, all under the supervision and management of the Laramie County Events Department.

Size and complexity of operations at the Archer Complex, which include the fair, require a more regularized and unified form of management. The complex is in operation year-round and in order to protect the significant investment of the citizens of Laramie County, including providing effective and transparent fiduciary management, the operations warrant inclusion in an existing Governmental infrastructure.

At the time the Fair was moved to Archer, the Fair Board entered into an agreement with Laramie County for use of the facilities for the conduct of the annual Laramie County Fair.

As the majority of the facilities at Archer came on-line, the County created the "Laramie County Events Department" to manage the facilities. Given the size, year-round and multi-use nature of the complex, it was necessary to have a professional management structure in place. For the last several years, the Fair Board has been party to an agreement with Laramie County whereby it delegated conduct of the annual Fair to Laramie County, through its Events Department.

The Events Department has specific staff devoted to the year-round mission of organizing and putting on the annual County Fair. This includes an individual designated as the "Laramie County Fair Manager." As part of this process, the Events staff act in the same capacity as has the Fair Board over the years. Events staff interacts with and receives input from all of the interested and involved parties in the annual county Fair such as FFA, 4-H and many others on all related subjects including production of the annual "Fair Book." Events staff manages the Fair ambassadors, acquires advertising and support funds from entities in the community, among the many functions previously performed by the Fair Board.

In 2019 a mil levy, which had been directed by order of the BOCC to the support of the Fair Board was terminated. The County provided no funding for the Fair Board in its annual budget. These actions eliminating all County provided funds to the Laramie County Fair Board pursuant and subject to Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 18-9-101(a)(iv).

Since November 2018, no funds, from any source, have been provided by the County to the Laramie County Fair Board.

After November 2018, Laramie County through its Events Department has managed and conducted every annual county fair.

An audit provided to and approved by the First Judicial District in Docket 190-761 determined remaining funds attributable to the ownership and control of the Fair Board to be in an amount of \$220,050.30.

These funds have been used by Laramie County for conduct of the Fair. Between March of 2021 and February of 2022, the costs expended for the conduct of the annual Fair was \$237,334.23. The additional funds required were provided by Laramie County. As a result, all funds previously held by the Fair Board have been expended for the conduct of the Fair.

On April 4, 2020, Laramie County Fair Board executed an "Agreement for use of County Property Buildings and Grounds." (Contract 200415-2) The Agreement provided that the Fair Board could use the facilities at the Archer property for conduct of the Fair and that the County would bear all costs of maintenance and management upkeep and repair of the facilities and grounds used for the annual County Fair.

On April 20, 2020, the Laramie County Fair Board entered into an 'Agreement and Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Operation and Conduct of the Laramie County Fair (Contract 200415-3).

Pursuant to the April 2020 agreement, the Fair Board delegated all responsibilities involved in and regarding the conduct of the annual Laramie County Fair, to Laramie County through its Events

Department. It further provided that Laramie County would bear all costs related to the conduct of annual County Fair.


All the activities and interactions needed, and part of the Fair process will continue as they are within the assigned functions of the Events Department. During the years that the Events Department has been responsible for the Fair, it has been conducted successfully.

The County Fair has been successfully conducted by the Events Department using the facilities authorized for that purpose by the citizens of Laramie County. Continuation of the Laramie County Fair Board would represent a duplication of resources and is unnecessary and/or redundant for continuation of the Laramie County Fair.

It is for the foregoing reasons that the BOCC provides notice of its intention to dissolve the Fair Board.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy Thompson", written over a horizontal line.

Chairman Dr. Troy Thompson,  
Board of Laramie County Commissioners