



**22<sup>nd</sup> DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Del Mar Fairgrounds  
2260 Jimmy Durante Boulevard, Del Mar, CA 92014  
**March 10, 2026**

**MINUTES**

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

<https://www.delmarfairgrounds.com/p/public-information1>

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Sam Nejabat, Chair  
Lisa Barkett, Vice Chair

**DIRECTORS PRESENT**

Mark Arabo  
Phil Blair  
Donna DeBerry  
Michael Gelfand  
Kathlyn Mead  
Joyce Rowland  
Frederick Schenk

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Joshua Caplan, Deputy Attorney General (Counsel)  
Carlene Moore, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Tristan Hallman, Chief Communications Officer (CCO)  
Katie Mueller, Chief Operations Officer (COO)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Nejabat called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, Blair, DeBerry, Gelfand, Mead, Rowland, and Schenk were all present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA** (see pages 5-12 of transcript)

Veronica Arvizu, Shaun Beard, Martha Sullivan, Jack Hamilton

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT CALENDAR** (see page 12 of transcript)

None

Director Blair moved to approve the Consent Calendar. Director DeBerry seconded the motion. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, Blair, DeBerry, Gelfand, Mead, Rowland, and Schenk all voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

## **EXECUTIVE REPORT**

- A list of boards, committees, and standing meetings of the CEO can be found on pages 87-92 of the packet.
- CCO Hallman recapped the three Fairgrounds 2050 open house events held in February in Clairemont, Carlsbad, and Southeast San Diego, where community members provided ideas and advice on the future of the Del Mar Fairgrounds. This followed six open house events in fall 2025. Following the in-person events, the 22<sup>nd</sup> DAA launched an online survey to collect additional input, and as of the March 10 Board meeting, more than 700 people had submitted responses.
- Don Diego Scholarship Foundation Executive Director Ashley McCaughan reported that applications for high school seniors are being accepted through March 30. The foundation is also working on arranging bus transportation for Title I schools in San Diego for this year's Plant\*Grow\*Eat event in May.
- Melissa Ortiz of Activate Human Capital Group presented results of the 2024 employee engagement survey conducted among full-time staff at the District.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON EXECUTIVE REPORT (see page 88 of transcript)

None

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### Item 6-A: Audit & Governance Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 103-105 of the meeting packet.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-A (see page 90 of transcript)

None

### Item 6-B: Entertainment & Vendor Relations Committee Report

Committee Chair DeBerry reported that there was no information to share with the Board at this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-B (see page 90 of transcript)

None

### Item 6-C: Fair Operations Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 106-107 of the meeting packet. Committee Chair Mead introduced COO Mueller, who announced seven more Grandstand concerts, with more to come in April, including the Paddock concert lineup. Fans who sign up for the San Diego County Fair newsletter receive a pre-sale code to buy tickets two days earlier than the general public.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-C (see page 101 of transcript)

None

Item 6-D: Finance Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 108-114 of the meeting packet.

Item 6-D-1: Consideration and vote on whether to approve the proposed Facility Rental Rates beginning in 2027

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-D-1 (see page 102 of transcript)

None

Director Gelfand moved to approve the proposed Facility Rental Rates beginning in 2027. Director DeBerry seconded the motion. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, Blair, DeBerry, Gelfand, Mead, Rowland, and Schenk all voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Item 6-E: Legal Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 115-160 of the meeting packet.

Item 6-E-1: Discuss and vote to amend the Exclusive Negotiating Rights Agreement entered into between the District and the City of Del Mar

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-E-1 (see pages 105-106 of transcript)

Ashley Jones, Jewel Edson

Director Schenk moved to approve the proposed amendments to the ENRA as presented in the meeting packet. Director Gelfand seconded the motion. Chair Nejabat, Vice Chair Barkett, and Directors Arabo, Blair, DeBerry, Gelfand, Mead, Rowland, and Schenk all voted in favor. The motion carried 9-0.

Item 6-F: People & Culture Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 161-166 of the meeting packet.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-B (see page 126 of transcript)

None

Item 6-G: Regulatory & Government Affairs Committee Report

Chair Nejabat referred to the report on pages 167-168 of the meeting packet.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-B (see page 126 of transcript)

None

Item 6-H: RTA-SRTLTC Meetings Report

Director Arabo recapped the meetings and actions of the State Race Track Leasing Commission and Del Mar Race Track Authority, and reported that Director Mead was elected to serve as the Authority's next president.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-H (see pages 129-131 of transcript)  
Martha Sullivan

Item 6-I: Board of Directors' one-way requests for placement of information or action items on an agenda for a future meeting of the District's Board of Directors

Director Arabo requested that the following items appear on a future Board meeting agenda:

- A discussion with officials from the City of Del Mar, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, and SANDAG regarding SANDAG's plans to realign railroad tracks in Del Mar.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEM 6-I (see page 134 of transcript)  
None

**RECESS TO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board recessed to a lunch break followed by Closed Executive Session at 11:40 a.m.

**RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**

The Board reconvened to Open Session at 2:24 p.m. Chair Nejabat stated that the District Board of Directors considered the advice of Counsel on the items listed on the Closed Session portion of the agenda and has nothing to report. The Board also evaluated the performance of its CEO consistent with government code, and has nothing to report.

**MATTERS OF INFORMATION**

Correspondence can be found on pages 169-174 of the meeting packet. Contracts executed per the CEO's delegated authority can be found on pages 175-199 of the meeting packet.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Nejabat adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.



Sam Nejabat (Apr 16, 2026 08:48:49 PDT)

Sam Nejabat

Interim Chief Executive Officer