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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
22ND DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

2260 JIMMY DURANTE BOULEVARD
DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA 92014
(TELECONFERENCE)
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

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Transcribed by:
QuickCaption, Inc.
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Riverside, CA 92506

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IN ATTENDANCE:

22ND DAA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS PRESENT:

SAM NEJABAT, CHAIR

LISA BARKETT, VICE CHAIR

MARK ARABO, DIRECTOR

PHIL BLAIR, DIRECTOR

DONNA DEBERRY, DIRECTOR

MICHAEL GELFAND, DIRECTOR

KATHLYN MEAD, DIRECTOR

JOYCE ROWLAND, DIRECTOR [VIA ZOOM]

FREDERICK SCHENK, DIRECTOR

22ND DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION STAFF:

CARLENE MOORE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

KATIE MUELLER, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

TRISTAN HALLMAN, CHIEF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

HENRY RIVERA, PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

MOLLY ARNOLD, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

22ND DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION COUNSEL:

JOSHUA CAPLAN, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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OTHER SPEAKERS:

ASHLEY COLBURN MCCAUGHAN, DON DIEGO SCHOLARSHIP

FOUNDATION

MELISSA ORTIZ, ACTIVATE HUMAN CAPITAL GROUP

PUBLIC COMMENTERS:

VERONICA ARVIZU

SHAUN BEARD

MARTHA SULLIVAN

JACK HAMILTON

ASHLEY JONES

JEWEL EDSON

1 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

2 Good morning.

3 Today is Tuesday, March 10th, 2026, and the
4 time is 9:35 a.m.

5 I now call this meeting of the 22nd DAA Board
6 of Directors to order.

7 May we please get the roll.

8 MS. ARNOLD: Chair Nejabat.

9 CHAIR NEJABAT: Here.

10 MS. ARNOLD: Vice Chair Barkett.

11 MS. BARKETT: Here.

12 MS. ARNOLD: Director Arabo.

13 MR. ARABO: Here.

14 MS. ARNOLD: Director Blair.

15 MR. BLAIR: Here.

16 MS. ARNOLD: Director DeBerry.

17 MS. DeBERRY: Here.

18 MS. ARNOLD: Director Gelfand.

19 MR. GELFAND: Here.

20 MS. ARNOLD: Director Mead.

21 MS. MEAD: Here.

22 MS. ARNOLD: Director Rowland.

23 MS. ROWLAND: Here.

24 MS. ARNOLD: Director Schenk.

1 MR. SCHENK: Here.

2 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

3 Great.

4 We have a quorum.

5 We'll now begin with item number 3 on the
6 agenda, which is public comment.

7 And that is for items not on the agenda.

8 If you are here to speak on an agenda item,
9 please wait until we take up that item.

10 For public comment opportunities today, each
11 speaker will be given two minutes.

12 Do we have any public speakers in the room with
13 us today for matters that are not on the agenda?

14 Please queue up and you have two minutes.

15 VERONICA ARVIZU: Good morning.

16 Thank you.

17 My name is Veronica Arvizu.

18 I represent Verizon Wireless Site Development,
19 and I've been working with the fairgrounds since
20 July of 2024 to do a minor modification on the
21 existing antennas near the one building with the
22 screen on it.

23 I'm sure you're aware.

24 I just wanted to come and speak on Verizon's

1 behalf because we are being delayed and we just
2 wanted to see what we can do to facilitate possibly
3 getting that amendment approved.

4 It's been in, I guess, queue since November,
5 December-ish.

6 And I just wanted to see if it needs to come
7 possibly to an item on the agenda to further discuss
8 and have any questions answered or anything like
9 that.

10 We're here for any questions.

11 I know this isn't the forum for it at this
12 point, but if I can possibly request perhaps getting
13 on the next possible agenda so that we can move this
14 project along.

15 It's been, you know, 18 months and I'm getting
16 questions asked daily.

17 So, anything you all can do to help get this
18 amendment approved and moving forward would be very
19 helpful.

20 But if you have any questions, or I'm sorry,
21 you can't ask questions.

22 But Tristan has my email contact information.

23 So if anything should come about this I'd
24 appreciate it.

1 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you for your comments.

2 Noted.

3 Thank you.

4 SHAUN BEARD: Good morning.

5 My name is Shaun Beard.

6 I'm the Chief Operating Officer for RK
7 Hospitality Group and everything I'm going to share
8 today is public information.

9 As some of you know, I used to hold a senior
10 position with ASM Global.

11 So today, I wanted to share with you that the
12 22nd and the board have a food and beverage
13 agreement with ASM Global that expires 12/31 of this
14 year.

15 And it has a five-year option at the end of
16 that agreement, then it needs to be mutually agreed
17 upon by both the 22nd and ASM Global.

18 The 22nd has a 180-day notification trigger to
19 inform Legends Global if they're going to take it
20 out to bid or not.

21 And that date would be about July 4th of this
22 year.

23 And to give you a little context to why I'm
24 here, this food and beverage management agreement

1 began in 1990 with George Karetas, an local
2 independent operator with Premier Foods.

3 In 2014, George sold that contract to a group
4 that, a management group that I ran called SMG.

5 And then subsequently SMG was sold to Onex, a
6 private equity group.

7 And then again in 2019, to another private
8 equity group and a private individual which you
9 might know Phil Anschutz.

10 And then here just recently in 2024, the
11 private equity company and Phil Anschutz sold to
12 another private equity group called, forget the name
13 of it now, Sixth Street up in San Francisco.

14 So basically 36 years have gone by without this
15 food and beverage agreement being competitively bid.

16 And that's why I stand here in front of you.

17 My request is the board and the staff review
18 this 36-year food and beverage agreement and issue a
19 food and beverage RFP to solicit what the future
20 could be in food and beverage.

21 Now all the companies will bid.

22 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you for your comments.

23 Apologize.

24 That's two minutes.

1 All right.

2 Seeing nobody else in the room, we have three
3 members on Zoom.

4 Martha Sullivan.

5 MARTHA SULLIVAN: Good morning.

6 This is Martha Sullivan from Imperial Beach.

7 In late January, the LA Times, John Sherwa,
8 retired sports editor who provided a daily
9 newsletter on the Winter Olympics and has reported
10 on the U.S.

11 horse racing industry for years, particularly
12 in California, appeared on at least two horse racing
13 podcasts, and said he believes that Santa Anita Park
14 will cease thoroughbred horse racing after 2028 when
15 it hosts the Olympic equestrian events, and be
16 developed into a high-end equestrian community like
17 Wellington, Florida.

18 He also predicted Santa Anita will go to two
19 days racing per week this year due to small fields.

20 On February 26th, Sherwa reported, quote, The
21 hopes of Northern California racing and breeding
22 interests were once again dashed when the California
23 horse racing board refused to license short racing
24 dates to the Tehama District Fair and the Humboldt

1 County Fair on Thursday.

2 Rather than a discussion about how to grow the
3 sport, the 2-hour, 45-minute meeting was mostly
4 about how bad the state of racing is in the state
5 and a determination that the future of Southern
6 California racing is in jeopardy if it isn't given
7 every advantage available.

8 Bill Nader, President and Chief Executive of
9 the Thoroughbred Owners of California, said a month
10 of fair racing cost the South \$2 million.

11 Nader summed up the state of the industry this
12 way.

13 Quote, We would all agree these are the most
14 difficult and challenging of times, and we can
15 further agree that the California racing industry
16 and Southern California, not Northern California,
17 but the whole California racing industry is fighting
18 desperately to remain relevant and sustainable, end
19 quote.

20 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right, thank you.

21 We're moving on to Jack Hamilton.

22 JACK HAMILTON: Hey, this is Jack from Del Mar.
23 Can you guys hear me?

24 CHAIR NEJABAT: Yes.

1 JACK HAMILTON: All right.

2 Thank you.

3 Like I said, good morning.

4 My name is Jack Hamilton.

5 I submitted a letter to this board last month
6 related to the Thoroughbred Club and potential
7 impacts and changes to the fairgrounds might have on
8 the horses.

9 I saw in the news this week that the mayor of
10 Del Mar is pushing for the train tracks to be
11 rerouted.

12 It sounds like she's gaining traction, which is
13 great because the tracks need to be safe for all
14 those riders.

15 But I have some concerns over where the reroute
16 will go.

17 I just want to make sure this board is pushing
18 for a seat at the table.

19 As I mentioned in my comments, these are living
20 animals that require highly controlled environments.

21 They also represent millions of dollars for our
22 local economy.

23 Any changes to this area could have unintended
24 consequences to their health, safety, and training

1 performance, not to mention the long-term viability
2 of the racing operations here in Del Mar.

3 And I would have a real problem with that.

4 I just hope you all stay close to this
5 situation.

6 And thank you for the opportunity to bend your
7 ear a little.

8 I've been going to these races for more than 40
9 years and it'd be a real shame if a train came
10 punching through the race track.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you.

13 Joseph Burke.

14 MR. RIVERA: He is not in the queue.

15 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

16 So that's it for public comment.

17 Thank you.

18 Moving on to item number 4, the consent
19 calendar.

20 Do any members of the public in the room wish
21 to speak on the consent calendar presented in
22 agenda?

23 Seeing none and nobody online, any board member
24 requests to remove anything from the consent

1 calendar or for further discussion?

2 MR. ARABO: I have a brief comment based on
3 generally on consent calendar, not a specific item.

4 Just as far as governance and as a fiduciary I
5 saw a lot of contracts in general having five-year
6 agreements and I think it's wise for the district to
7 look at a policy of maybe two-year agreements with
8 options.

9 I think good governance provides people need to
10 always check in on how the vendor is doing.

11 Not speaking on any specific contract or
12 vendor.

13 I think as a policy, a five-year contract is a
14 long time.

15 With that, I'm very comfortable with it.

16 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

17 Noted.

18 With that being said, do we have a motion for
19 approval of the consent calendar?

20 MR. BLAIR: I'll move approval.

21 MS. DeBERRY: Second.

22 CHAIR NEJABAT: Second.

23 All right.

24 May we please get the roll for that?

1 MS. ARNOLD: Chair Nejabat.
2 MR. NEJABAT: Aye.
3 MS. ARNOLD: Vice Chair Barkett.
4 MS. BARKETT: Aye.
5 MS. ARNOLD: Director Arabo.
6 MR. ARABO: Aye.
7 MS. ARNOLD: Director Blair.
8 MR. BLAIR: Aye.
9 MS. ARNOLD: Director DeBerry.
10 MS. DeBERRY: Aye.
11 MS. ARNOLD: Director Gelfand.
12 MR. GELFAND: Aye.
13 MS. ARNOLD: Director Mead.
14 MS. MEAD: Aye.
15 MS. ARNOLD: Director Rowland.
16 MS. ROWLAND: Aye.
17 MS. ARNOLD: Director Schenk.
18 MR. SCHENK: Aye.
19 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right, motion carries.
20 Now, moving on to item number 5, which is the
21 executive report.
22 At this time, I'd like to recognize our CEO,
23 Carlene Moore, to provide her report.
24 MS. MOORE: All right.

1 Thank you.

2 So reports can be found in your packet starting
3 on page 82.

4 And since you've had a chance to review those,
5 I'm really just going to hit three highlights.

6 But before I do, I also wanted to address and
7 just reassure this board and the community that we
8 do have a seat at the table regarding the LOSSAN
9 Realignment and continue to provide updates on that
10 as those occur.

11 But just rest assured, we are at that table.

12 And thank you very much for the community that
13 is also interested in how this is going to going to
14 impact it, so with that.

15 First, you all have in your packet starting on
16 page 87 but the various boards, committee standing
17 meetings that I have and that information that you
18 requested.

19 So it's there for you.

20 I'm also going to have a brief update from our
21 Chief Communications Officer Tristan Hallman on our
22 fairgrounds 2050 public outreach and engagement.

23 And then following that, a presentation about
24 our employee engagement initiative and specifically

1 about our baseline measurement survey results and
2 actions that were taken.

3 And so with that I would like to invite Tristan
4 up to the podium.

5 MR. HALLMAN: All right.

6 Well, I'll make this relatively quick.

7 So in February, as you know, we had three open
8 houses to kind of round out our series.

9 We looked back at the areas that we hit, that
10 we didn't hit.

11 And the idea was never, you know, go to every
12 single neighborhood in San Diego County, it was to
13 give access to people.

14 So we went to Claremont, we went to Carlsbad,
15 and we went to Southeast San Diego.

16 Good events.

17 We also opened up a survey online, we put it
18 out through our email universe and through social
19 media.

20 We actually have over 700 responses as of today
21 through that survey I'm giving through March 20th
22 basically as a way to compel people to take it and
23 we have to cut it off at some point.

24 So that's the update that we have.

1 I know we have a committee meeting coming up
2 where we'll just sort of discuss next steps,
3 including potentially the --

4 Well, I won't go over the agenda, but we'll
5 discuss next steps and wrap-up this public
6 engagement phase.

7 MS. MOORE: Thank you.

8 And then I need to apologize.

9 I was just reminded, and now I see her online.

10 No, you're okay, Tristan.

11 Thank you.

12 But we do also have Ashley from Don Diego
13 Scholarship Foundation.

14 She's online to give a brief update on the
15 scholarship foundation.

16 So my apologies, Ashley.

17 Take it away.

18 ASHLEY COLBURN MCCAUGHAN: No problem.

19 Can you hear me?

20 MS. MOORE: Yes.

21 ASHLEY COLBURN MCCAUGHAN: Okay, great.

22 Well, first of all, thanks again for having us
23 just to give a quick update.

24 We really appreciate our collaboration with the

1 fairgrounds.

2 And as we are approaching the fair, this means
3 the Don Diego Scholarship Foundation's busy season.

4 Currently our scholarship applications are
5 online for high school seniors to apply.

6 I'm excited to announce, and I think you heard
7 this last month, but we are awarding more than
8 \$100,000 this year.

9 So, if anyone in the room or listening to this
10 meeting knows anyone who qualifies, which means they
11 participated in the fairgrounds in some way, our
12 applications and all of the rules and regulations
13 are all online until March 30th.

14 That is our deadline.

15 We also are currently working on our Plant Grow
16 Eat Program with the fairgrounds down at the farm.

17 And so San Diego Title One schools are able to
18 apply for buses that we're then able to support so
19 that these students can come to the fairgrounds and
20 learn all about agriculture.

21 So we're currently accepting those buses and we
22 look forward to that collaboration again.

23 It was a huge success last year having it
24 before the fairgrounds opens.

1 And so we're excited for that opportunity again
2 later in May.

3 And then once again too, if you're ever walking
4 around the fairgrounds, our brick program is always
5 up and running.

6 This is for anyone who wants to leave a legacy
7 at the fairgrounds.

8 Basically you can go online
9 dondieoscholarship.org and buy a brick and the
10 proceeds of that go back to our foundation and our
11 scholarships and our programs that that we support.

12 So again, thank you so much for this great
13 relationship with the fairgrounds.

14 And we look forward to the fair coming up and
15 soon announcing our gala which is our big fundraiser
16 that happens during the fair.

17 So next month we'll definitely be able to give
18 more information about that.

19 But we look forward to that.

20 That will happen this year during the fair.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. SCHENK: May I just make a comment if I may?

23 Thank you.

24 Ashley, I just want to support the notion about

1 the bricks because that is something that our family
2 has been involved in many years ago.

3 And we laid a brick in memory of my late
4 brother-in-law who was once a chair of this board in
5 the 1980s when Don Diego was first established and
6 our family has put them down.

7 And whenever we come we love to bring our
8 guests to look at all the bricks and to see the ones
9 that we had forgotten about, you know, and so many
10 others.

11 So, I really would encourage everybody, it's a
12 great tribute that you could make to someone who's
13 alive, who's passed away.

14 And it supports the scholarship foundation and
15 it's a lovely way to make a difference.

16 So, I would really endorse everyone doing that
17 as well.

18 And thanks for mentioning that.

19 ASHLEY COLBURN MCCAUGHAN: Yeah.

20 Thank you, Fred.

21 MS. BARKETT: And I would just, Ashley, if you
22 could announce the date for save the date of the
23 gala.

24 ASHLEY COLBURN MCCAUGHAN: Yeah, I wasn't sure

1 if I was supposed to do that quite yet, but it's
2 going to be on June 10th.

3 So opening day of the fair.

4 MS. BARKETT: Wooahoo.

5 Opening day of the fair.

6 ASHLEY COLBURN MCCAUGHAN: Details to come.

7 MS. BARKETT: Thank you so much.

8 Great report.

9 MS. MOORE: All right.

10 Thank you.

11 Thank you, Ashley.

12 So moving on now to our employee engagement
13 initiative.

14 What I wanted to share was that the workplace
15 culture that really has been the focus of my tenure
16 since I stepped into this role about five years ago
17 has been to create a culture here that encourages
18 trust and teamwork, inclusivity, accountability
19 second creativity as well as innovation.

20 But more than just saying it, we need to be
21 able to measure and have comparable data to let us
22 know how are we doing in that realm.

23 So following a workshop that I participated in
24 several years ago at an industry conference, I

1 engaged the services of Melissa Ortiz with Activate
2 Human Capital Group to help us do just that, which
3 was to get a baseline reading of our employee
4 engagement effectiveness, you know, identify blind
5 spots that we have, develop action plans, provide
6 our supervisors with training and education
7 resources, and then to return again a couple of
8 years later, and we'll be doing this again in 2026,
9 to measure once again for comparison.

10 So I invited Melissa to join us here online
11 today to share with you the methodology that we use
12 kind of a high level a little bit of like sort of
13 the science behind it, high-level results sort of
14 interpretation of that data.

15 And what these results did and having done this
16 in 2024, is it really led to further conversations
17 and broader approaches within the organization.

18 And I'm going to speak to more of that at the
19 end of Melissa's portion of the presentation to talk
20 about those kind of five takeaways that that we had
21 and actions that leadership has taken over these
22 last, you know, personally year and a half and look
23 forward to sharing that with you.

24 And so with that, I'm going to turn it over to

1 Melissa.

2 And Melissa, if you'll just let us know when
3 you would like us to advance the slides.

4 MS. ORTIZ: Oh, great.

5 Then I won't be sharing.

6 I won't ask for sharing.

7 Great.

8 So, I will close mine so I can be focused on
9 your screen.

10 Excellent.

11 So, I'd say let's go ahead and go to the next
12 one because we're going to dive into this.

13 And I want to start at 50,000 feet.

14 I've been doing this work for almost 20 years.

15 I started with the Gallup Organization that's
16 really the grandfather of employee engagement.

17 I've spent a lot of time in the fair verticals.

18 And the things that we can see is the three
19 levers that we can pull as leaders.

20 The first one, go ahead, is the capital assets
21 lever.

22 And we can really improve our physical
23 facilities.

24 The next thing we can do to improve our

1 businesses, go ahead, is move our processes.

2 We can get better at the way that we manage our
3 business, whether that's individual events or fair
4 time activities.

5 And then the third one is that human capital
6 lever, and that's the people who run the processes,
7 the people who maintain the facilities.

8 And really what we're looking for is this extra
9 discretionary effort that people go above and beyond
10 paying what we pay them to do the very bare minimum.

11 And so my whole career has been really
12 understanding how do we extract more of that in a
13 way that's good for the employee, good for the
14 organization, and good for our guests.

15 So with that, let's talk a little bit about how
16 we see engagement.

17 And I think it's often a little bit playful to
18 start with what it doesn't look like because we
19 often see what it doesn't look like in the world all
20 around us.

21 So, next slide is a picture of a cake in a
22 bakery where the request was a graduation cake where
23 they wanted sprinkles on it.

24 And this employee who was not engaged in their

1 work did literally what the client wanted but not
2 actually what the client had wanted.

3 The next one is from our county roads
4 department where the people in the lining truck
5 chose not to get out to move that branch.

6 So they did the work, but they did it poorly,
7 and that's our tax dollars at work now having to
8 come back and fix that, if it gets fixed at all.

9 The next slide is really a breakout of how the
10 different levels of engagement as we see them.

11 So the far right in dark orange is what we call
12 actively disengaged.

13 These people are frustrated, angry, sometimes
14 they have a good point, it's just hard to hear them
15 because their tone is not productive.

16 And so one of the things I work with leadership
17 teams like Tristan and Carlene is how do we hear
18 them address the issues and help them come along
19 when we can.

20 It is not always, but sometimes that's really
21 what the root is.

22 The next bucket in in the yellow is our not
23 engaged employees.

24 They're kind of retired on active duty.

1 They're the stereotypical government employee
2 where they're just trading days for dollars.
3 Then there are two levels of engagement.
4 The two blues.
5 The lighter blue is our engaged.
6 Their head is in the game, but maybe their
7 heart isn't, and they're doing good work.
8 And then the dark blue is our all-in folks.
9 They're going above and beyond.
10 They're thinking about work in the shower.
11 They're really thinking about how they can
12 contribute more meaningfully to the organization and
13 to our guests.
14 So, we think about this as this emotional and
15 psychological commitment.
16 What we know is that it doesn't it isn't just a
17 one-and-done thing.
18 Just like the weather changes, our engagement
19 changes.
20 And there's probably no one in the room or on
21 Zoom that hasn't been disengaged at some point in
22 our careers.
23 It is not a fixed personality trait for all but
24 about 1 or 2% of the population.

1 It is something that we go through and so our
2 job as leaders is to understand what conditions
3 aren't being met and try to meet those.

4 So go ahead and continue.

5 And what we know is that it used to be when we
6 started this science 25 years ago, it was really the
7 manager's job to make sure employees were engaged.

8 But that was when we had very, very long
9 tenure.

10 And what we our thinking is really involved in
11 this space to know that an individual and a manager
12 share this responsibility.

13 If I don't have clear expectations, I need to,
14 surprise, ask the question about what you need from
15 me so I can win at work.

16 Manager by definition needs to give clear
17 expectations and go down the list of kind of the
18 basics of good management.

19 So it's kind of the shared partnership.

20 And then the last piece really is that the
21 managers still are the stewards of engagement on
22 their team.

23 They are the ones whose responsibility is to
24 supervise, support, coach, onboard, train, et

1 cetera.

2 So the reason that we manage and measure
3 engagement is first one is that there's a return on
4 investment that we can measure.

5 I was just looking at some of the data we've
6 collected over the years yesterday around like if
7 you take just Workers' Comp claims and you split
8 down the 50th percentile of more engaged versus less
9 engaged, the amount of days it takes someone to come
10 back to work, the amount of dollars we're spending
11 per claim is massive if you're more engaged versus
12 less.

13 Because it makes sense that the less engaged
14 people would be working the system, the more engaged
15 people want to get back to work.

16 So there's so many different metrics, whatever
17 we can collect that we can analyze and that's
18 something we should probably look at, is there
19 anything at Del Mar that we could be measuring that
20 way and doing the analysis.

21 The second reason that we measure it is that
22 it, like I mentioned, it continues to change.

23 So what was our target two years ago is going
24 to naturally evolve very likely in our 2026

1 measurement.

2 And we want to be addressing the most real-time
3 data that we can get without pestering them every
4 three minutes for their level of engagement.

5 And then the third one is that it gives us this
6 data-driven direction of where do we expend our
7 time, energy, and financial resources to make the
8 biggest impact.

9 So when we think about the data that we see
10 kind of in a meta-analysis, what we see is a huge
11 increase in profitability and productivity, better
12 guest and customer ratings, a whole lot less quality
13 issues when people's head and heart are in the game.

14 Whether if it's in healthcare, we see big
15 differences in patient safety, overall safety across
16 industries.

17 Shrinkage is that really nice word for stealing
18 from the organization.

19 And then we have we kind of bucketed overall
20 high turnover organizations versus low ones.

21 So think like a convenience store versus more
22 professional roles have different expectations of
23 turnover.

24 And then absenteeism, just people who don't

1 show up for work and we have to cover for them.

2 So let's get into the engagement results from
3 the most recent survey.

4 And I wanted to start with the headlines
5 because I like to take this data and say if I were
6 reading a newspaper and all I read were for the
7 headlines, here's what I would see.

8 So we really came up with four very specific
9 ones.

10 The first one was that we had a huge increase
11 from the first survey to the second in our response
12 rates.

13 One was we removed the temporary workers who
14 weren't as engaged by definition.

15 But also we had some major increases in trust
16 that allowed people to speak up without fear of
17 retaliation.

18 So huge gain there.

19 The second piece was that in addition to higher
20 response rates, we also saw stronger levels of
21 actual overall engagement.

22 So, we're moving the needle in a positive
23 direction there.

24 One of the ways I think about engagement is I

1 think about those blue groups that are engaged and
2 fully engaged, they're rowing in the same direction
3 that we all want to go.

4 The not engaged folks are asleep in the boat
5 and the actively disengaged are dragging their oars
6 in the back and trying to throw us off course.

7 So, we're making good gains here.

8 The next headline was around, overall there
9 wasn't a lot of change in employee needs.

10 So that gave us the response that we need to
11 continue to double down in the areas they gave us to
12 work on and keep meeting those needs.

13 And then the last one was really there were
14 three specific things that we know will actually
15 move the needle, not just in one area of engagement,
16 but in several areas.

17 It's like rising tides raise all ships.

18 And those three areas were clarity of
19 expectations, helping me know how I can win at work
20 and in my day-to-day interactions.

21 Second was resources.

22 And resources mean a whole lot of things to
23 different people.

24 Whether that's time and feedback from my

1 manager, maybe that's training.

2 Maybe it's I needed more paper for the printer.

3 There's a whole bunch of different things that
4 can be.

5 So, we have to niche down into that.

6 And then recognition, feeling like my
7 contributions are meaningful and not overlooked.

8 So, those were the four areas that we suggested
9 diving deeply into.

10 And then, like I said, our overall engagement
11 was up.

12 So you can go ahead, and I think it's two
13 clicks will get us to the full population on this
14 slide.

15 But our overall engagement was up from 33% when
16 you combine the two blue zones --

17 Oops.

18 Go back one -- to 38%.

19 And we also, the people we were picking up were
20 quite a few from our not engaged group.

21 So people were looking around going, "Yeah, I
22 think I could lean into this."

23 So and we had a few pick up in the actively
24 disengaged group.

1 So, we're trending in the right direction.

2 I've compared this to our 2023 data of full-
3 time versus full-time intent.

4 And interestingly, that isn't much different.

5 And then to our active database, which is what
6 we're working to match or beat over time.

7 So, I wanted to give you a little bit of
8 insight about what we're measuring.

9 I know you have one of the scorecards as a
10 sample, but the four core elements that the
11 individual supervisor or manager has to affect are
12 these four.

13 It's the basics of my job, my connection with
14 my manager, the relationships that are created on my
15 team, and my perspective of my growth trajectory.

16 Do I have opportunities to learn and grow here?

17 So in addition to those, we also gather data
18 around my internal or external customers or guests
19 and then the company overall.

20 So if you'll go two slides further, let's talk
21 about how we actually think about the scoring scale.

22 That is what's next.

23 MS. ROWLAND: Melissa, may I ask a question?

24 Because it relates to everything.

1 Your data your database, can you explain who is
2 in your database and the size of your database?

3 MS. ORTIZ: So it's a cross-section of
4 organizations, public and private sector, for-profit
5 and nonprofit.

6 Typically, we've got the ability to populate
7 data versus our internal company comparison versus
8 an industry.

9 I like to do the broader sector because that's
10 what employees have to choose from.

11 I know once they get in the state system they
12 often stay.

13 So we've got about 400,000 employees in the
14 database that are from a representative sample of
15 across industries, white collar, blue collar, et
16 cetera.

17 MS. ROWLAND: Thank you.

18 MS. ORTIZ: Okay, so when I think about this
19 scoring scale, the things that what employees were
20 presented with for each survey item were two ends of
21 the spectrum.

22 Nothing labeled in the middle except for
23 strongly agree on one side and strongly agree on the
24 other side.

1 And when we've analyzed this data against
2 employee productivity, employee sentiment, and
3 employee effectiveness, what we see is that a five
4 tends to be an absolute yes.

5 You can click to bring up these items.

6 A five tends to be an absolute yes.

7 No question this need is being met for me very
8 consistently.

9 A four is, yeah, mostly this need is being met.

10 A three is either a soft no or like I feel bad
11 giving you a two or I simply don't know.

12 A two is a no and a one is an angry no.

13 I need you to hear me.

14 And so as you look at the scorecard, there's a
15 breakout I think for they're kind of stacked ones,
16 twos, threes, fours, and then the percentage of
17 fives is broken out because what I don't care as
18 much about the score we got.

19 I care about how do we get people to a five?

20 How do we get them to strongly agree and say,
21 "Yeah, this need is being met for me."

22 And the rest of it we take as directionality of
23 where we need to work.

24 For instance, there's one around expertise in

1 my role.

2 Often the first time we do the survey, people
3 won't claim expertise, but guess who get expects
4 them to be experts?

5 Our guests expect them to be experts.

6 Our internal customers expect them to be
7 experts.

8 And so, it gives them this freedom to go work
9 on expertise and figure out what is next on their
10 path.

11 So some of the data, if you'll go to the next
12 slide, that we see in terms of coming after the
13 survey a lot of it depends on did we do any work.

14 Because if we don't follow up on the survey
15 results with some kind of action we should save our
16 money and throw a party because we'll get a morale
17 boost and not have to do any follow-up work.

18 If we do a survey it really depends on us doing
19 something with that data.

20 And that looks like sharing the data
21 transparently, creating some plans to get better,
22 and following through on those plans.

23 And what we see is that if we do that in a way
24 that employees see and feel, we'll see active

1 disengagement nearly disappear in the organization
2 because very few people will be actively disengaged
3 when they know the organization's working on it.

4 The next one we see is that when we look at
5 turnover by engagement, our fully engaged employees
6 generally stay.

7 Unless they have an event where they need to
8 move out of the area, they have a parent they need
9 to take care of.

10 They're typically pretty drastic things that
11 pull our full-time employees away, or they get these
12 incredible opportunities that they can't pass up.

13 Our actively disengaged employees though turn
14 over more frequently and we're losing their
15 knowledge and skills as well.

16 So as we push towards more engagement, what we
17 tend to see is lower overall turnover.

18 Next is I wanted to talk with you a little bit
19 about what everybody's roles and responsibilities
20 are in driving change over time.

21 So at the top level we start with, well I guess
22 let's start at the bottom because I think it makes
23 the most sense.

24 At the bottom level if I'm an individual

1 contributor I don't supervise or manage any people,
2 my job is to participate in the process.

3 That means hopefully I'll respond to the
4 survey.

5 Although leaders have no idea who has and has
6 not responded to the survey, only my team keeps
7 that.

8 They need to participate in the post-survey
9 process where they talk with their teams about what
10 they can do better to own their own to improve
11 engagement, and then they have to own their own
12 engagement to ask for what they need.

13 Because when it's a secret, what resources you
14 need, what clarification you need, what you want to
15 learn next, it's much harder for a manager to
16 support that individual.

17 If we notch up a level to if I'm a supervisor
18 or a manager, they are the stewards of team
19 engagement.

20 They need to do all the things the individuals
21 do because they're also individual contributors.

22 But also, they need to make sure that the team
23 has visibility into the team scorecard, run the
24 action planning session, make sure an action plan

1 has been committed.

2 Although that manager does not need to own the
3 action plan, it can very well be a team member who
4 says, "I'm passionate about this.

5 I'll lead the charge on this and make sure it
6 gets done by March 30th."

7 What have you.

8 A level up from that.

9 If I manage supervisors and managers, my job is
10 to support those individuals in making sure those
11 things are happening at the team level and to also
12 own my own engagement and we're really pushing for
13 improvement.

14 Okay.

15 What are you working on?

16 How's that going?

17 And then if we're leaders, we're really looking
18 at strategically what are we as an organization
19 working on?

20 Are there any top-down things happening in
21 tandem with the bottom-up efforts to improve
22 engagement?

23 So sometimes there are organization-wide items
24 in the customers or the company overall that we need

1 to work on top down that really aren't appropriate
2 to address from the bottom up.

3 And that brings us to our recommendations.

4 So when we pulled this data together, we had a
5 couple very specific things we suggested the team
6 work on.

7 One was manager focus should be on that team
8 level.

9 Where are we at?

10 How do we improve blocking and tackling?

11 The next level was that we should as an
12 organization be encouraging more meaningful
13 recognition.

14 One of the things that we see as s individuals
15 in our society is we are terrible at giving and
16 receiving meaningful recognition.

17 When someone gives you a compliment and you
18 brush it off, it's a less likely that person will
19 continue to give good recognition, but also you
20 haven't accepted the gift that has been given to
21 you.

22 And so we're thinking about this not only from
23 a top-down recognition but also peer-to-peer
24 specific, meaningful, and timely recognition.

1 The third element was improving the clarity and
2 resources of sorry, exploring and clarifying the
3 resources that are really needed across individuals
4 and teams.

5 So we say, okay, there's clearly an issue with
6 resources.

7 What does that mean?

8 Is it a policy problem, a training problem,
9 physical resources?

10 Do you not have enough pens in the office?

11 I don't know what it is, but let's find out
12 what those are.

13 And then the last one was really just doubling
14 down on the basics of good management.

15 Most people are promoted into a manager role
16 without ever being given training on what it looks
17 like to be an effective supervisor.

18 And so this is one that is often a
19 recommendation for most of my clients, especially
20 the first or second time that we go out for the
21 survey.

22 And if you'll bring up the next animation, this
23 is something that I believe, I think you'll have to
24 do one more, that all four, Carlene, you can correct

1 me if I'm wrong.

2 All four of these elements were things that
3 were made a focus by leadership and made progress on
4 that I think we'll see some movement when we come
5 back and collect the data again.

6 So if we look at scorecards is our next bucket
7 of just really how do we break down this data.

8 So the next slide really outlines what are we
9 looking at?

10 We're looking at the overall engagement score
11 at the top.

12 The six different areas mention I mentioned my
13 job, my manager, my team, my growth, my customers,
14 and my company.

15 There's the column labeled percentage of fives
16 that we're working towards.

17 The score, which is the average score for that
18 group of people on a 1 to 5 scale.

19 The columns labeled past and trend.

20 So when we have an equivalent group of people,
21 we look at the past score and the trend score.

22 That doesn't appear here because it was kind of
23 a muddled assessment beforehand.

24 So going time over time, we should see this

1 come up in the next go-round as long as 60% of the
2 team stays the same.

3 And then the red, yellow, and green indicators
4 on the far right are to tell us are we below the
5 50th percentile, 50th to 75th, and then above the
6 75th percentile.

7 So like in yellow, we're still above the 50th
8 percentile.

9 We've actually since recolor coded these
10 because I think they were creating some confusion
11 and we've just made them a whole series of blues.

12 Because we just want people to see where they
13 are in comparison to whatever data set we're
14 comparing them to.

15 The sample size is down at the bottom.

16 This one, for instance, it's probably hard for
17 you to see, but it says N equals 171.

18 So there were 171 responses in this survey.

19 MS.ROWLAND: No, 71.

20 MS.ORTIZ: I'm sorry.

21 Thank you for your correction.

22 71.

23 It's also small for me.

24 And then the team.

1 So, we're looking at Carlene's rollup.

2 So, a rollup is their entire span of control.

3 I've got a team scorecard, a rollup, and then
4 sometimes you'll see a manager's rollup, which is if
5 I'm not at the top, but I didn't get a scorecard,
6 but my manager has one.

7 We're trying to always get the closest set of
8 data to that team for them to understand and take
9 action on.

10 And then the database comparison we talked a
11 little bit about.

12 So really last but not least, what I find is
13 that this is really an ounce of prevention is worth
14 a pound of cure on the next slide.

15 This is something as we see the data and we do
16 something about it.

17 It's amazing how people respond to, oh wow,
18 you're really listening.

19 Then they're much more likely to speak up, to
20 ask questions, and to lean into the process.

21 So, I feel like we're really just getting our
22 feet under us with this process, getting people used
23 to seeing the data, asking questions about it, and
24 improving over time.

1 MS. MOORE: Thank you very much.

2 Thank you very much, Melissa.

3 And so with that, what I wanted to do was then
4 touch on as, I mentioned, you know, really in
5 essence these action steps that were developed
6 collaboratively with our leaders, with our managers,
7 our supervisors and even with our employees and kind
8 of what we have either continued to build upon or
9 because, as Melissa mentioned, that some of this is
10 also hearing, you know, what what's working, what
11 isn't, what are those blind spots that we might
12 have.

13 And so our five takeaways really were these
14 five.

15 Inclusivity, you know, this being important to
16 our team.

17 Communication, collaboration, and transparency,
18 investing in our employees, recognition, and fun.

19 People want to enjoy where they come to work.

20 And so in the area of inclusivity I think you
21 know first and foremost was just kind of doing the
22 engagement surveys in the first place.

23 You know, taking that that reading, that
24 temperature reading and just committing to this

1 process.

2 Also, it has included things like we have a
3 program which I typically talk about in September
4 which is our fair debrief.

5 And that's something that under my tenure here
6 beginning with the homegrown fund back in 2021.

7 This has really been an opportunity.

8 We bring our entire full-time staff in.

9 I mean, everybody from leadership to our
10 frontline level employees into the space where we
11 celebrate our accomplishments with the fair.

12 We celebrate other accomplishments as well.

13 We identify, you know, lessons learned.

14 We honor one another.

15 And it's just this space where everybody has
16 this opportunity to contribute.

17 We break down into small groups and things.

18 And the feedback on that on that program has
19 been very positive.

20 One of the other things which we have continued
21 to do and then we seek out feedback on it is meeting
22 with our core staff, which is our regular full-time
23 employees, recognizing that their needs are slightly
24 different or sometimes topics that we may be

1 discussing such as benefits and so forth.

2 It's really, you know, tailored to them.

3 Understanding and knowing how we're doing from
4 a business standpoint and sharing, you know,
5 financials.

6 Um, we always touch on, you know, here's what
7 happened at the latest board meeting, you know, so
8 they're aware of, you know, what the board is
9 considering and what the board is doing.

10 And it's also just an opportunity really to
11 break bread with our team every month and have that
12 that opportunity to just interact with them and sort
13 of cross collaboration happening across groups and
14 sections.

15 We really encourage people to mix it up in
16 terms of who they're sitting with at these meetings.

17 And then one of the other things that we did
18 coming out of this was just this last year we formed
19 a task force that really is focused on our new
20 hiring onboarding for regular full-time employees.

21 And we brought together some of our newer
22 employees, some employees who have been here for a
23 while.

24 So that really we are coming up with a more

1 unified experience as new employees come in of how
2 they're being introduced into the organization.

3 Not just, you know, okay, you've done your
4 paperwork, you've gotten badged, welcome to the
5 team, here's your job, you know, here's your
6 workspace, but a really a robust program that
7 includes tours.

8 It includes like having a buddy, that person
9 that you can just go to and to really just develop
10 that experience from the beginning.

11 Then in the area of communication,
12 collaboration, and transparency.

13 This has also been about establishing feedback
14 loops.

15 Not just waiting until we, you know, measure
16 again, you know, in terms of a formal survey, but
17 we've got suggestion boxes around the grounds in key
18 places for our employees.

19 We have other types of surveys that we do with
20 them to identify some of those resources that um
21 that they may be lacking.

22 We also ask and we've had some opportunities
23 for that.

24 Including that in January of 2025, so survey

1 last or 2024 fall in January of 2025 at our business
2 development meeting, which is with our department
3 heads, really had a very frank conversation around
4 this and talked about as a group like what does our
5 cultural initiative mean to people in our
6 organization mean, to our other our other managers.

7 We talked about what we as the executive team
8 were committing to the organization, to our group of
9 department heads.

10 We asked them, you know, what are you
11 committing to as well as we all work, you know,
12 collectively on this?

13 How is it that we're going to hold one another
14 accountable through this process.

15 And how are we building off of the information
16 and that feedback that we received through the
17 survey.

18 And then out of that, we did a number of things
19 like with the executive leadership team.

20 We did coffee and conversations where we went
21 around and just hung out for a little bit with our
22 various departments in their space.

23 And just an opportunity for them to ask
24 whatever questions that they might have and, again,

1 have those conversations.

2 During our summer school program with our
3 supervisors, we held a session that was simply a Q&A
4 type of forum where, well, you guys can ask us the
5 questions or we can all just sit here and look at
6 each other for the next hour that we have set aside.

7 But we really wound up in really great
8 conversation in that manner.

9 The other area in terms of investing in in our
10 employees is we also engaged Melissa for a strength
11 finder with all of our full-time employees, not just
12 with leadership positions, but really everybody
13 having the opportunity to take that assessment and
14 identify their strengths.

15 And part of this was the purpose of this was
16 also to empower our employees as they do look for
17 those advancement opportunities within the
18 organization.

19 They really have identified what their
20 strengths are.

21 And then for our supervisors, our managers, us
22 as the executive team.

23 You know, as we look to create some of these
24 task forces or we look at opportunities knowing and

1 people feeling really knowledgeable, and here's what
2 I bring to the table and here's what I can offer.

3 And hey, I'd like to volunteer because we do
4 offer some volunteer opportunities.

5 I'd like to volunteer in this role and build on
6 that.

7 We've also done some trainings with our
8 supervisors and managers around understanding
9 communication styles and understanding your own
10 style and being able to identify the style of others
11 and so that people are talking similar language and
12 understanding one another.

13 And then we have engaged in multiple just kind
14 of action planning these coaching sessions.

15 And so coming out of this data, all of our
16 department heads had the opportunity to meet one-to-
17 one with Melissa to help develop their action plan
18 for what they were going to be doing with their
19 teams and leadership.

20 >> [off mic]

21 MS. MOORE: Yes.

22 And then in in terms of recognition, we
23 deployed a recognition worksheet.

24 And so even as new full-time employees come on

1 board, it's something that we have them fill out as
2 part of their onboarding process where employees get
3 to tell us.

4 Because there are some people who, you know, I
5 want my names in lights, right.

6 And they really mean it.

7 And there are other people who would rather,
8 you know, curl up in a ball in the corner if you're
9 even announcing thank you to them like in a larger
10 group environment.

11 They want just that little Post-It note left on
12 their keyboard.

13 Like don't even look at me when you tell me
14 I've done a nice job.

15 So you know really at different areas.

16 And I think that is probably what a huge
17 takeaway is, just recognizing that like we all
18 individually have how we may want to be recognized
19 but it doesn't mean everybody else wants that too.

20 And sometimes, like I said, people actually
21 respond negatively to that moment of recognition.

22 And we have that to where we're able to access
23 it and look at it as you hear about or we see an
24 employee do something.

1 Okay.

2 What's going to be the proper recognition for
3 this for this person in that moment.

4 That also led to, we have during the fair our
5 department heads and supervisors identify an
6 employee of the week.

7 So, we have fun drawings within the departments
8 for the temporary employees.

9 But each week of the fair, it's identifying and
10 bringing that person in and talking about why it is,
11 what they did that really stood out that week with
12 our full-time team.

13 And then and then in the area of fun, this is
14 one where we have a spirit squad.

15 This is a group of kind of cross-departmental
16 employees.

17 It rotates out.

18 Some people stay on, new people come in, but
19 each year so that different people have that
20 opportunity.

21 And their part of it is tasked with, you know,
22 really help making sure that we keep fun in our
23 workday.

24 I mean, it's our one of our values as an

1 organization.

2 This is the fairgrounds.

3 This is a place where people come to interact.

4 And they've done things from we have department
5 decorating contests as we lead into the fair.

6 During the fair itself, we have snack boxes.

7 There's usually a fun activity with our core
8 staff meeting, so we're covering some business and
9 then we've got some fun with that as well.

10 For example, February's was a Mardi Gras, you
11 know, focused around that.

12 And so departments did shoe box floats as part
13 of that.

14 So some really, like I said, some really fun
15 activities.

16 We do a lot of potlucks for these staff
17 meetings.

18 You know people love to cook and to share.

19 The end of the year we do white elephant gifts
20 for everybody through them.

21 So, like I said, a lot of that like leftover,
22 you know, swag or those, you know, those bags and
23 things you pick up at conferences and stuff.

24 People love them.

1 Anyhow, so sharing those.

2 We've also done outings.

3 We've gone to a Padres' game.

4 We've taken the team to Legoland and just
5 really building on that as well.

6 But also recognize this is a business place,
7 but we can have fun while we're doing that.

8 All of that being said though, I think it's
9 also important that we recognize there's still more
10 we can be doing.

11 For example, one of the things that we are
12 currently working on is developing a formal upward
13 mobility program and what that looks like for our
14 represented employees.

15 And it's something we're looking to roll out
16 later this year.

17 There's still more to build upon as we get this
18 but looking forward to our next survey, which we'll
19 be conducting near the end of August.

20 And so, be coming back to this board with a
21 report.

22 And we're targeting the October board meeting
23 for that once we have that opportunity for our
24 employees to respond, get the data, go through that

1 and have our action planning for 2027, in essence.

2 And so with that, that that really concludes my
3 report unless there are any questions.

4 MS. BARKETT: I have a few.

5 Thank you.

6 Turn this on.

7 So I love the employee of the week.

8 We did that forever and recognition was very
9 important.

10 It was held at our 22nd Board of Directors
11 meetings.

12 And it gave a lot of sense of pride to the
13 organization and to the directors to see.

14 We've always had really, really good, I think,
15 employee togetherness.

16 They always looked out for each other.

17 They had a lot of fun together.

18 Now we feel a little bit further, at least I do
19 as a director, from the employees than we ever have.

20 We used to engage quite a bit with the
21 employees and we even had socials together with
22 them.

23 So that's a little bit, you know, where we're
24 maybe feeling the disjointedness from the past.

1 But and it'd be great to for us to know who the
2 employee of the week was.

3 I don't think I've ever seen anything on the
4 website.

5 I could be wrong.

6 Or that was sent to our inboxes, to the
7 directors.

8 Because if we run into one of them, we'd like
9 to say, hey, congratulations, you know, we saw you
10 got employee of the week.

11 And I think that would be a great thing too for
12 the employee to hear that the directors, wow, they
13 know that I was employee of the week.

14 Just that recognition.

15 Who is on that spirit squad?

16 I'm anxious to know.

17 So for this last year, who was on the spirit
18 squad from the employees?

19 Was it a set group or does it change every
20 week?

21 How does that spirit group work during it?

22 MS. MOORE: It doesn't change during.

23 The spirit squad is year round and it doesn't
24 change on a weekly basis.

1 It changes on an annual basis.

2 And again, some people stay on so that we have
3 some continuity and then other people being given
4 that that opportunity.

5 I started it in 2023, in terms of that.

6 But it's really comprised of a lot of our
7 frontline level employees for that.

8 And I'm happy to share more of that information
9 with you about that.

10 MS. BARKETT: I'd love to know who's on it this
11 year.

12 Yeah, for 2025.

13 This is the first year we're hearing about it.

14 Again, I want to applaud our spirit squat
15 because that's what, you know, gets that momentum
16 going for the fair.

17 And I love what you've implemented in terms of
18 snack boxes.

19 You know, outings.

20 That's the first time I heard that we're having
21 employee outings, which is great.

22 I encourage maybe directors go along sometime,
23 be invited.

24 And the formal upper mobility plan is very

1 important for employees.

2 They want to get to achieve at the top and I
3 think that is essential to work on.

4 I've always said we're a fairgrounds and if you
5 can't sell fun, how do you expect your employees or
6 your fairgoers to have fun?

7 That's is always what we're here to do.

8 And we've always done that.

9 And, I'm a big advocate of having fun.

10 I think more, you know, life would be a lot
11 more fun, you know, fun, right?

12 You know, and I was surprised that we haven't
13 heard about this because this was completed in
14 August of 2024.

15 Now, maybe the executive team at that time,
16 which I believe was Fred and Joyce and Michael,
17 might have heard about this, but the directors
18 hadn't.

19 This would have been a lovely thing to have in
20 2024.

21 We're now 2026 and it could have been
22 incorporated, I believe, under people and culture
23 when we did our own assessment.

24 So, I think it would have been nice to know

1 about that.

2 And I think, let's see, key areas, expectation,
3 resources, and recognition.

4 Totally agree.

5 Concentrate on those.

6 It was great to see where this all landed.

7 And I just want to say on behalf of the
8 directors, we really appreciate every single
9 employee and the hard work you give us.

10 The overtime you give us, I'm sure there's a
11 lot of overtime.

12 Some are salaried, some are not.

13 So, I just want to tell you how much we
14 appreciate all that you do for this organization and
15 our San Diego County and city.

16 And thank you.

17 MS. ROWLAND: And I'd like to echo that.

18 I think that, you know, there's good work
19 that's been done.

20 And the action plans that were laid out were
21 definitely, you know, taking into consideration real
22 data, which I appreciate.

23 I would have to say though that I think the
24 least fun thing to have done to me would be to have

1 had a member of my board of directors going on my
2 outings with me.

3 So I think I would say ixnay on that to be
4 honest.

5 MS. BARKETT: You don't have to go.

6 MS. ROWLAND: No.

7 As a staff person, I don't think I would have
8 wanted members of my board of directors going on my
9 fun day.

10 I'm just saying.

11 MR. SCHENK: So, Lisa, I don't recall knowing
12 about this, but I applaud the effort and I'm glad
13 that it was done.

14 One of the things that I did as chair
15 previously, was invite, as did Chair Nejabat last
16 month, which was to have the directors come in and
17 speak to their responsibilities for a few minutes.

18 That was, I think, what I did originally.

19 It was the first time it was ever done when I
20 was chair.

21 Because I think it's important to have that,
22 you know, that one-on-one and to hear from each of
23 the directors of the department heads.

24 The other thing that I miss is during the

1 holidays, we used to have, well the staff had a
2 holiday party and we were invited to it.

3 Were you just talking about it?

4 Because I see some --

5 You know what?

6 That was a great opportunity for the directors
7 and for the staff.

8 Everybody would show up.

9 There would be, and correct me if I'm wrong,
10 but I think more than once, Lisa, we had it off
11 property.

12 Why?

13 So that everybody got to celebrate and it
14 wasn't that staff were serving, they were
15 celebrating.

16 And I you know what, we used to look forward to
17 that event every single year and I miss that.

18 And one other thing that we used to do was the
19 beach cleanup together.

20 And maybe it's still being done, but if it is I
21 don't know about it.

22 But I miss that.

23 Anyway, just my thoughts.

24 CHAIR NEJABAT: Director Mead.

1 MS. MEAD: Thank you.

2 I just really thank you for bringing this to
3 the board and sharing the information.

4 Melissa, we appreciate you being here today as
5 well.

6 I have one comment and then one question.

7 Comment is, I really appreciate the staff
8 outings.

9 I know that for myself having served on this
10 board, I can't go to a concert or an event without
11 comparing what's happening with my experience at the
12 fairgrounds.

13 Is wayfinding easy when I go to an event
14 outside of the fairgrounds?

15 How are the greeters?

16 Are they are they meeting my expectations of
17 when I go to events?

18 And I think that, while it's fun, Carlene, it's
19 also the sort of transferable skills where we see am
20 I treating people the way that I want people to be
21 treated or the way I want to be treated at the fair.

22 And so I just think it's a great opportunity to
23 get both those experiences.

24 So, thank you.

1 Melissa, I have a question for you.

2 You a couple of slides back raised four areas
3 that I think you focused on, which probably are
4 similar to Carlene's five without the fun.

5 Here it is.

6 The recommended next steps.

7 I've been around a long time, so I have like at
8 least 30 years of experience with employee
9 satisfaction surveys.

10 When I look at these four, they're not much
11 different than four I see throughout the years in
12 just about every organization.

13 Communication always comes to the top.

14 Employee recognition always comes to the top.

15 Can you just tell us, is this similar and
16 familiar with most organizations and what are some
17 of the key things that organizations can do to move
18 in the right direction?

19 I suspect we're never going to be perfect in
20 any of these areas, but are there some things that
21 we could and should be doing that we're not that
22 might help advance these areas of interest?

23 MS. ORTIZ.

24 You're absolutely right.

1 A lot of organizations have exactly the same,
2 especially early in their journey because we want to
3 focus on the absolute foundational issues rather
4 than focusing on the more tertiary issues.

5 So one thing that didn't come up actually
6 interestingly was communication.

7 That was a strong point.

8 It was more some of the basics.

9 So yes, you are not alone.

10 It's very common.

11 One of the other ones that didn't come up was
12 expertise.

13 And that's very often the first go-round or
14 second even something that we focus on.

15 So, if we could get three things right, if we
16 could get clear expectations of how to win in my
17 role, resources I need to do my job, and I'm in the
18 right seat to honor who I am when Carlene talked
19 about my strengths, if my strengths are naturally
20 aligned with the demands of my role, think of
21 greeter who loves to connect with people or somebody
22 in inventory who's really particular, we don't want
23 those roles mixed.

24 And so when we get those things right, those

1 are things that can have a huge boost to overall
2 engagement because they affect everything else.

3 When I'm in the wrong seat, I tend to have
4 imposter syndrome.

5 I cast dispersions.

6 I have a lot more issues than when I'm doing
7 work.

8 And being called upon for the best within me,
9 I'm less likely to be a detractor.

10 So that's one that didn't come up strongly, but
11 it's something Carlene and I have been talking about
12 is continually taking the pulse on right people,
13 right seats.

14 MS. MEAD: Thank you, Melissa.

15 And that really does align then with strength
16 finders because if we really know how to focus on
17 our strengths, and like you said, we're in the right
18 seat, it sounds like that was a really good follow
19 up to the survey.

20 So thank you.

21 MS. ORTIZ: Thank you.

22 MR. ARABO: Thank you, Chair.

23 I have a few questions.

24 First think, Melissa, thank you so much for the

1 data points.

2 I'm a big believer in data and it's very
3 helpful.

4 A few questions.

5 And did we do this result in 2023?

6 I mean, did we do an engagement survey in 2023?

7 And if so, can the board get access to that as
8 well?

9 It's good to see trends.

10 MS. ORTIZ: Yes.

11 And the trending doesn't appear.

12 Go ahead.

13 >> [crosstalk]

14 MR. ARABO: And then did we do it in 2025?

15 MS. ORTIZ: No.

16 MR. ARABO: We did not.

17 Okay.

18 Other questions I have is so I understand this
19 right.

20 So the overall engagement score we're in the
21 22nd percentile out of 100%?

22 So there's 4,000 companies in your database.

23 Is that 400,000 employees?

24 MS. ORTIZ: 400,000 employees.

1 MR. ARABO: And out of the 400,000 employees,
2 the fairgrounds based on 2024 overall is in the 22nd
3 percentile.

4 >> [off mic]

5 MR. ARABO: Okay.

6 Do you know what we were in 2023?

7 MS. ORTIZ: We don't.

8 MR. ARABO: You don't.

9 Last question I have.

10 This is very helpful.

11 Is I'm surprised to hear today that the chair
12 did not know about this report.

13 So, and it happened in August 2024.

14 I want to say who on the board knew about it
15 and why didn't the board, why wasn't the board aware
16 of it till now in '26?

17 That's my question.

18 MS. BARKETT: It would have to be out of
19 committee.

20 Whatever committee had this.

21 MR. ARAO: Who on the board knew about it
22 presented to the board.

23 We're doing evaluations.

24 MS. BARKETT: There was nothing presented to the

1 board but it have to go through committee I would
2 think.

3 MR. ARABO: Do you know which, I don't know if
4 this is for Carlene or Josh Caplan, who on the board
5 would have this report, or to Melissa.

6 MS. MOORE: Perhaps I should address that as
7 your CEO.

8 So first of all, with regard to both times that
9 we have surveyed it is something that I have talked
10 about in my executive report, but you're correct, we
11 did not do a formal presentation to the board.

12 It's something that internally we have used and
13 so from a formal standpoint it's been a contract
14 that we have engaged.

15 And so I spoke about it when we were first
16 engaging that service even back in 2023.

17 So, but I appreciate --

18 And going forward what we'll be doing is
19 bringing these results forward as a formal
20 presentation to the board as well as then the work
21 that we're doing with our team internally.

22 MS. BARKETT: That's great because it's crucial.

23 It's crucial for the board to hear.

24 MR. ARABO: Which committee knew about it

1 because the chair didn't know about it last year.

2 Fred, is this the first time you're seeing the
3 surveys?

4 MR. SCHENK: Right.

5 I have not seen the data before.

6 MS. MOORE: It's the first time that this data
7 is being presented to the board.

8 MR. ARABO: But my question was so there's nine
9 board members.

10 I'm assuming two of the board members knew that
11 this data existed but never told the full board.

12 Is that a good assumption?

13 MS. BARKETT: I don't know.

14 MR. ARABO: Because the chair didn't know or did
15 anyone?

16 MS. MOORE: I just want to speak.

17 Again, I have brought this up at the board
18 level in terms of my report when we did it.

19 The data was not presented to any board member.

20 MR. ARABO: I understand.

21 Right.

22 MS. BARKETT: So it didn't come through a
23 committee?

24 MS. MOORE: It did not come through a committee.

1 Again, handled internally in terms of what from
2 an operations standpoint what we were doing with
3 this with this data in the organization.

4 MR. ARABO: So this is the first --

5 MS. MOORE: -- board, we will.

6 MR. ARABO: Okay.

7 This is the first time anyone on the board has
8 seen this data, the raw data.

9 MS. BARKETT: Yes.

10 MR. ARABO: Okay.

11 Well, I want to thank very much our chair and
12 our vice chair and - [crosstalk] - to the people who
13 brought this to the board because we're in March
14 2026 and for a report this important to come out
15 over a year later is for me it's alarming.

16 But thank you.

17 MS. BARKETT: Well, and I just want to say one
18 more thing.

19 When we talked, Fred, on just to, you know,
20 talk to your point.

21 When we had our lunch meeting with Carlene, Sam
22 and I on 9/26, we did a whole, you know, bullet
23 points of things that we'd love to see.

24 You're going to laugh.

1 One of them was employee recognitions at
2 meetings and the next one was a holiday social with
3 employees and staff.

4 Yeah.

5 And so, this goes back to September of 2025
6 when we had our meeting.

7 So, we were kind of on point with really, you
8 know, the well-being of our employees we were
9 concerned with Yeah.

10 MR. SCHENK: And when I was chair, I also
11 reminisced about some of those events that we didn't
12 have.

13 And look, I my feeling about 2023 is to be
14 mindful of the time frame.

15 We were coming out of a tough four years.

16 And so, you know, I understood where we were
17 and why we weren't able to do some of the things
18 that we had done in the past.

19 And my personal expressions were things that I
20 missed and hope that we would be able to once again
21 get back to.

22 But let's not forget where we were in our
23 world, you know, at that time.

24 MS. MOORE: And I would just like to offer that

1 if you as board members would like to contribute to
2 throw a holiday party for our staff, more than
3 happy.

4 >> [multiple speakers]

5 MS. BARKETT: I know, but then Sam.

6 CHAIR NEJABAT: And we did the same with
7 Breeders' Cup as well?

8 MS. BARKETT: Yeah, the same with Breeders' Cup
9 folks, as everybody knows.

10 MR. ARABO: Yeah.

11 I mean, Fred, to my main point was I think
12 everyone on the board needs to get all the data
13 points that are available and then we can make our
14 own assessment.

15 MR. SCHENK: No, I'm not -

16 MR. ARABO: - [indiscernible] - 2023 that I
17 think we're mindful of where we were as an
18 organization, but if there's critical data that we
19 have as an organization, I think it's imperative
20 that the board gets it.

21 MR. SCHENK: Absolutely.

22 I'm just putting it in into context, but you're
23 right, and I don't disagree and then I didn't know
24 about it.

1 I would have liked to have known.

2 If I had I would have brought it to everybody's
3 attention.

4 But I'm just saying today let's have some
5 historical, you know, reference points.

6 That's all.

7 CHAIR NEJABAT: Director DeBerry.

8 MS. DeBERRY: Okay.

9 You good?

10 So first of all, thank you so much for
11 presenting this data today.

12 We really appreciate it.

13 And for a person that this is what I do for a
14 living O.D. and employee engagement is embedded in
15 just about everything I do.

16 I have a question for Carlene.

17 Carlene, how did you communicate this to all
18 the employees?

19 Like the actual engagement in the survey, along
20 with your action plans based on, you know, the
21 results of the survey?

22 MS. MOORE: So, in terms of going into the
23 survey, we did several things.

24 We verbally said it, announced it at our staff

1 meeting, at our fair debrief and through summer
2 school that we were going to be doing this.

3 We had emails that also went out.

4 We had posters that were up and located in key
5 places such as where time some of our time clocks
6 and things like that were.

7 So, it's a multi-pronged approach of making
8 them aware.

9 And then during the survey period as well, we
10 also then asked our supervisors and manager, you
11 know, to remind employees to please respond.

12 And I think in 2024 we had an 82 or 87%
13 response rate on that.

14 So that's what we did to make sure that our
15 employees knew the survey was underway and we would
16 have that same approach this coming year as well.

17 Employees could also receive, they provide them
18 a text update for like in terms of the reminder, but
19 they had to sign up for if they aren't issued phones
20 like workplace phones, mobile phones, then they have
21 to sign up for that.

22 So there was really a multi-pronged approach to
23 the communication on it.

24 Then coming out of it.

1 So coming out of the survey and then in
2 receiving that data I'd say the biggest point was
3 when I talk about that January, well no, really even
4 in the fall that's where supervisors receive the
5 information, the scorecards.

6 They have a portal that they can go into where
7 there are additional resources and things.

8 And then we have them to set up their meetings
9 with their teams to develop their action plans and
10 go in and provide that.

11 And then the January 2025 meeting, our business
12 development, we have those on a monthly basis.

13 At that meeting is where we had even more
14 discussion with our with our department heads around
15 this.

16 And again, what from the results of this.

17 And again, what does culture and engagement
18 look like.

19 What are we all committed to and how are we
20 moving forward.

21 MS. DeBERRY: Okay.

22 So a couple things.

23 One, the employees as a whole there was not a,
24 and I'm just asking the question.

1 Typically, well why don't I make this
2 statement.

3 Typically, what works in organizations is when
4 there is a townhall meeting and the leader, the
5 president, and CEO delivers the results from the
6 employee engagement survey along with the action
7 plans.

8 So typically, there's a meeting.

9 All of the managers come together or your
10 committee or whatever.

11 You determine, you know, who is going to
12 disseminate information and also provide some action
13 plans, right.

14 So there's layers to it, right.

15 MS. MOORE: Yes.

16 MS. DeBERRY: Right.

17 And then the last step is that there is a
18 townhall meeting and the president and CEO delivers
19 the results of the employee engagement survey, along
20 with the action plans.

21 And then that lives someplace.

22 Because what you do as the president and CEO
23 and the executive team is there's a commitment
24 there.

1 When you have action plans, you're saying I'm
2 committed to making sure that the employee
3 experience is elevating at all cost, right.

4 And then it lives someplace so the employees
5 can see like the steps and the action, you know,
6 where are we going, some type of measurements.

7 Does that live someplace where employees can
8 say, okay, this was what the commitment was from the
9 executives and from the CEO, and here's where we are
10 today.

11 MS. MOORE: In terms of the here's where we are
12 to date, so our core staff meetings are what you're
13 referring to in terms of our town halls that we
14 have.

15 And this is something that, not in a formal
16 presentation this way, but we did bring back, here's
17 what we heard from you, here's what we're doing.

18 MS. DeBERRY: Who's in that, when you say,
19 "staff meetings"?

20 MS. MOORE: That's all of our regular full-time
21 employees, all 87, 82, 71, whatever that number has
22 been.

23 I mean we do have some employees who work
24 graveyard shifts so they're not in there, but we

1 also have communication of internal newsletters and
2 things that we do.

3 In terms of the document, like this survey
4 result living somewhere where all employees have
5 access to, we haven't had that and I think that's a
6 really great suggestion and going forward where we
7 can make this available to them on our internet to
8 employees so that they're also, you know, visually
9 seeing it as well and always have access to it.

10 MS. DeBERRY: Except -

11 CHAIR NEJABAT: You want to ask something?

12 MS. DeBERRY: Oh, okay.

13 Okay.

14 Let me see.

15 I think that was my last question.

16 I'm done.

17 MS. MEAD: My question has been asked which was
18 having to do with the employee roll-out.

19 So, thank you.

20 Get out of my head, as you say.

21 MS. DeBERRY: Get out of my head.

22 MR. SCHENK: Mr. Chair.

23 Having discovered that I hadn't been aware of
24 this before, I'm now wondering in my own

1 recollection, Carlene, do you know, have we had this
2 done historically where the board was not a made
3 aware prior to 2020?

4 I mean, before your involvement.

5 I don't remember this being done before, Lisa,
6 do you?

7 MS. MOORE: This is my understanding, and
8 perhaps Katie could actually speak to this since
9 she's been here longer.

10 But in terms of a formal survey and
11 measurement, no.

12 That and Katie might correct me on that or at
13 least in my short time that I was here.

14 What there was a survey during following the
15 fair that was done [no audio]

16 Hello?

17 MS. BARKETT: We lost audio.

18 Okay.

19 It's back.

20 It's not just you, Joyce.

21 >> [crosstalk]

22 MS. MOORE: Mine seems to be back.

23 Sorry, we lost audio for a moment.

24 MS. MEAD: You know, I was worried about that

1 when I saw you at the end.

2 MR. SCHENK: I'm asking more in terms of more
3 like a 360.

4 You know, was this kind of a survey done before
5 2023?

6 I don't remember it.

7 MS. MOORE: To my knowledge, no.

8 But again, I'm looking to Katie because at
9 least since 2019, no.

10 MS. MUELLER: So, the executives had a 360
11 review in the past.

12 So the CEO and at the time the deputy manager,
13 that was many years ago.

14 But our tradition was to do a employee survey
15 during the fair actually and we would survey
16 everybody, our temps, our full-time employees.

17 And that was done by Peter Baron Stark who was
18 our consultant at the time.

19 And so then at the fair debrief we would go
20 through the results of the survey and kind of set
21 goals for various departments.

22 MS. BARKETT: Yeah, it's in there.

23 MR. SCHENK: But I mean, was it done like this?

24 MS. MUELLER: No.

1 MR. SCHENK: I never remember seeing one.

2 MS. MUELLER: Not just a full time and not as in
3 depth as the survey was.

4 CHAIR NEJABAT: Director Gelfand.

5 MR. GELFAND: So, yeah, first of all, in our
6 ongoing evaluation of the CEO of the organization,
7 we can look at financial metrics and fair attendance
8 and those kinds of things.

9 We can look at your interactions with us but it
10 is hard to get a perspective of how the employees
11 feel about working here, feel about their
12 supervisor, and supervisors all the way up.

13 So this kind of report I think is really
14 important and I compliment you on with your own
15 volition starting this process.

16 It would have been nice if we heard the results
17 of it because I think it, you know, obviously would
18 lend a benefit to our evaluation of you.

19 But I think it's great that you're doing it,
20 that you did it, you started the process and that it
21 is ongoing.

22 And I look forward to the results in the
23 future.

24 MS. BARKETT: Yeah, I want you to know that I

1 did turn over the Peter Stark file that I had.

2 And it does have employee surveys in there and
3 it's from 2017 through 2020.

4 And then I also found Carlene's past one, that
5 survey and that was like 2000 to 2001.

6 One was done.

7 Yeah.

8 MS. MOORE: Again, I wasn't here.

9 You're asking me about things that I wasn't
10 here for.

11 MS. BARKETT: No, yours was done then when you
12 were deputy manager.

13 MS. MEAD: You're talking about the 360.

14 MS. MOORE: No, we did not have a 360 while I
15 was deputy manager.

16 MS. BARKETT: No, not a 360.

17 I switched.

18 I said there's one when you were deputy manager
19 that you did, which I have.

20 I just came about it in the files, too.

21 And it was a survey that was done.

22 Yeah, I have it.

23 It's numbered.

24 So, but I told her I had seen it and then I

1 didn't think anything of it because I thought, well,
2 they probably have it in people in culture already,
3 but they don't.

4 So, I can go back and look for it.

5 MS. MEAD: [off mic]

6 MS. BARKEET: Yeah.

7 Oh, absolutely.

8 Absolutely.

9 You know, absolutely.

10 But the Peter Stark file she hasn't looked at,
11 but it's all in there on the employee -

12 MR. BLAIR: Who is Peter Stark?

13 MS. BARKETT: He was a facilitator that we used
14 to use, and we were using him at the time for the
15 strategic plan.

16 I think Fred, you probably remember him.

17 And Sam, I think you had it, yeah, you were
18 there at the time.

19 I don't know about Joyce.

20 I'm sure Joyce was actually, too, with Peter
21 Stark.

22 MS. ROWLAND: No.

23 No.

24 Peter Stark.

1 MS. BARKETT: Okay.

2 Okay.

3 So, it goes back, you know, for some of us.

4 MS. MEAD: It's nice to have those things for
5 posterity.

6 So, that it'd be great for Carlene to have
7 that.

8 And that place that that Donna says that all
9 these things are housed.

10 Particularly for me is I just want to focus on
11 Fred's point, which is our organization has gone
12 through a lot of change through the transition of
13 our previous long-term CEO, coming through COVID.

14 I think that for me, the most recent data is
15 what I'd like to be able to focus on.

16 MS. DeBERRY: In agreement.

17 Melissa, on your slide that you had I think
18 they're you're recommendations, can you go back to
19 that for just a second?

20 Okay.

21 Quick question on these four recommendations.

22 Were there any, let me go back.

23 Was there ever an opportunity where you were
24 more, it was more defined on these recommendations?

1 Like you gave a percentage or not just define
2 and encourage more meaningful recognition for
3 employees, but you gave an example of what that
4 looks like.

5 MS. ORTIZ: We did.

6 And we actually went through this with the
7 whole employee group to look at the actual data of
8 where we were at.

9 I gave some examples of how this might look.

10 We completed the personalized recommendations
11 on recognition.

12 So, we went pretty deep in that.

13 And then our goal is always bottom up and top
14 down.

15 If they're doing stuff and we're doing stuff as
16 leaders, we're going to get a lot better traction
17 than if we're doing engagement for them.

18 MR. SCHENK: Did I get that right, that she
19 presented to the employees as a whole?

20 >> [off mic]

21 MR. SCHENK: Okay.

22 Okay.

23 MS. MEAD: That was the synonymous with town
24 hall.

1 MS. DeBERRY: Yes.

2 That's synonymous with the town hall.

3 Perfect.

4 Okay.

5 MS. ORTIZ: And I do apologize.

6 I have an 11:00 I need to actually physically
7 get to.

8 So, thank you so much for giving me the
9 opportunity to share with you.

10 I have it in my notes.

11 And we have it in our proposal, Carlene, for
12 October to come back to the board with the fresh
13 data from 2026.

14 MS. BARKETT: Thank you.

15 MS. MOORE: Thank you.

16 Thank you, Melissa.

17 And with that, that concludes my executive
18 report.

19 CHAIR NEJABAT: Great.

20 Any other comments, questions from the board?

21 MR. ARABO: I had a question on the executive
22 report.

23 I know we went fast for the engagement process
24 for the town halls.

1 Do we have an attendee list for the last three
2 ones we did?

3 MS. MOORE: Are you're referring to the
4 fairgrounds 2050 public outreach?

5 MR. ARABO: Yeah.

6 MS. MOORE: We do gather for people who do sign
7 in from all of those meetings.

8 So we have that information.

9 I don't have it with me.

10 MR. ARABO: Okay.

11 It'd be good to have in the future, like for
12 future meetings, please.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

15 Wrapping up questions from the board.

16 Do we have any members of the public who wish
17 to speak to executive report in the room?

18 Seeing none and nobody online.

19 Go ahead.

20 MR. GELFAND: Well, I don't know when it's
21 appropriate to ask a question.

22 But to your question, I'm assuming that the
23 results of your committee's work will, I mean what
24 you asked about, which is all of these public

1 outreach meetings that we had, the data from that I
2 assume you'll report to us.

3 I mean, it'll go through your committee and
4 you'll come back and tell us how many people
5 attended all those meetings and the sort of a
6 summarization of all of that?

7 MR. ARABO: Which committee?

8 MR. GELFAND: The public outreach meetings that
9 we had for the master plan.

10 MR. ARABO: Yeah, we have yet to meet but we
11 definitely want all the data points.

12 MR. GELFAND: I'm saying when you do I would
13 hope that you would tell us how many people
14 attended, what kind of issues did they raise.

15 MR. ARABO: Absolutely.

16 MR. GELFAND: All that.

17 MR. ARABO: As you could see from the last
18 point, I'm really big in transparency.

19 If someone has a document to bring it to the
20 full board.

21 CHAIR NEJABAT: Okay.

22 All right.

23 That concludes public comment on the executive
24 report.

1 With that moving on to item number 6, general
2 business, which consists of item 6A.

3 First item, audit and governance committee
4 report.

5 This is an information-only item.

6 You can find the report beginning on page 103
7 of your board packet.

8 Do we have any questions from the board?

9 Seeing none, we'll now take public comment on
10 the audit and governance committee report.

11 If you are in the room, please queue up.

12 Seeing nobody in the room and online, that
13 concludes public comment on this informational item.

14 Moving on to item 6B, which is the
15 entertainment and vendor relations committee report.

16 I'd like to recognize Director DeBerry for the
17 verbal report on this item.

18 MS. DeBERRY: Nothing to report right now.

19 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

20 Any questions from the board?

21 Seeing none, we'll now take public comment.

22 Anybody in the room who'd like to speak to this
23 matter?

24 Seeing nobody in the room and nobody on Zoom.

1 That concludes public comment on this
2 informational item.

3 The next item in general business is 6C, fair
4 ops committee report.

5 This is an information-only item beginning on
6 page 106.

7 My understanding is that we are making a few
8 more grandstand announcements today.

9 So with that, I'd like to recognize Director
10 Mead to provide further comment.

11 MS. MEAD: Thank you, Chair Nejabat.

12 I just want to report that Director Schenk and
13 I met with Carlene and Katie to get updates from the
14 current fair ops.

15 As you might know, things are happening fast
16 and furious.

17 This is March and the fair begins June 10th.

18 And so, it's kind of hard for me to keep up.

19 I can't even imagine how Katie keeps up, but I
20 would like to invite her to come up and give us an
21 update.

22 MS. MUELLER: A lot is happening with the fair.

23 I'm excited to be able to share a few more of
24 our plans before we do our big rollout in May with

1 everything that's going on.

2 But, since our last meeting, we had our
3 grandstand announcement of our first four acts.

4 And I'm pleased to say we're over \$350,000 in
5 concert ticket sales so far.

6 So really happy about that.

7 And today we're going to roll out seven more of
8 our grandstand acts for you.

9 And we will be going on sale we'll be starting
10 a pre-sale tomorrow with those.

11 And then we'll be going on sale to the general
12 public on Friday with all of the acts that we've
13 announced so far.

14 But we will have a big some big announcements,
15 some heavy hitters to announce in April.

16 Some of those guys, you know, just have
17 conflicts in the market with other shows and things
18 like that.

19 So, we've had to kind of hold off on them.

20 As well as we'll have our announcement of our
21 entire Paddock lineup, which I think you'll be very
22 pleased to see some big names in that Paddock lineup
23 as well.

24 So, that will all be coming in April.

1 But for now, without further ado, we have
2 Chicago on opening night, June 10th.

3 Very excited about this.

4 They have a ton of number-one hits and just
5 really, really, really, really thrilled for this
6 band to make an appearance.

7 We also have booked our remaining Hispanic
8 lineup.

9 If you recall, we announced Los Tucanes de
10 Tijuana at the February board meeting and so now we
11 have three more.

12 So we will have a Hispanic act every Sunday.

13 We have Pancho Barraza and Banda Machos on June
14 21st.

15 Nelly hip-hop artist is going to be returning
16 on June 25th.

17 If you recall, he was part of our grandstand
18 lineup, I want to say two years ago in '23.

19 Well, actually it was three years ago in '23.

20 And he was just about a sellout.

21 So, very popular artist.

22 Maren Morris will be joining us June 25th.

23 Really excited about this one.

24 She's a country pop crossover.

1 She's got some great hits out.

2 Really excited to have a female lead performing
3 on the grandstands.

4 And then we've got El Coyote and Chuy
5 Lizarraga.

6 So they were stars in their own right, but they
7 recently joined together and were huge sensations on
8 Tik Tok with this Capibaras Tour.

9 And you know what a capybara is?

10 Those big rodents from Africa.

11 They're really popular right now.

12 I don't know why exactly.

13 But they were featured actually in the Wall
14 Street Journal in an article with this tour.

15 So we're expecting this to be a big show on
16 June 28th.

17 And then we have AJR.

18 They are an indie rock pop band.

19 They are going to be on July 1st.

20 MR. SCHENK: We had them here before.

21 MS. MUELLER: We did.

22 They were here in 2018 or '19, I can't
23 remember.

24 And then finally as part of to round out our

1 announcement is our final Hispanic act and it's
2 Conjunto Primavera on Sunday July 5th the last
3 Sunday of the fair.

4 So just as a reminder this is our complete
5 lineup so far.

6 We've got I think four or five more acts that
7 we'll be announcing just for the grandstand in April
8 and then as well as, like I mentioned, our Paddock
9 lineup.

10 So if you recall last meeting we had announced
11 Koe Wetzel, Los Tucanes de Tijuana, Marshmello, and
12 Good Charlotte who are all doing very well in their
13 ticket sales.

14 MS. DeBERRY: So where's Bad Bunny?

15 Just asking.

16 I mean, you know, you're failing me right now.

17 Bad Bunny.

18 Bad Bunny.

19 MR. BLAIR: There aren't enough zeros in our
20 account.

21 MS. MUELLER: There's not enough zeros in our
22 concert series.

23 MS. DeBERRY: Bad Bunny.

24 Bad Bunny.

1 Bad Bunny.

2 MS. ROWLAND: We've signed up rapid rabbit but,
3 you know, no Bad Bunny.

4 MS. MEAD: Can you explain what pre-sale and
5 general public, the difference between those?

6 MS. MUELLER: Sure.

7 MS. MEAD: Thank you.

8 MS. MUELLER: So if you're on our e-blast
9 mailing list, you will receive an e-blast to your
10 inbox probably today with the code, with a special
11 code that you can use to buy your tickets tomorrow.

12 So, it really doesn't it doesn't get you a
13 discount, but it gives you access to the very best
14 tickets first.

15 So, you get two days to buy before the general
16 public does.

17 Yeah.

18 MS. MOORE: And remind people how they can sign
19 up for that newsletter.

20 MS. MUELLER: Yes.

21 If you go to our website, sdfair.com, you'll
22 find a handy-dandy place to sign up for the e-blast
23 newsletter.

24 And hopefully you guys are all on that.

1 MR. SCHENK: And just as a reminder if we can,
2 Chicago is the same night as the Don Diego gala.

3 MS. MUELLER: I didn't want to say that.

4 I was hoping one of you guys would say it.

5 MR. SCHENK: By the way - [laughing]

6 MS. BARKETT: And we have an honoree that
7 evening, Director Schenk.

8 MS. MUELLER: That's right.

9 MS. BARKETT: So, good planning.

10 Buy your tickets now.

11 MS. MUELLER: That's right.

12 That's right.

13 It'll be a very special evening for sure.

14 MS. DeBERRY: Katie, did you say you already
15 have selected the talent for the Paddock?

16 MS. MUELLER: Yes.

17 MS. DeBERRY: Okay.

18 MS. MUELLER: Yep.

19 Yeah.

20 Everything is pretty much, with the exception
21 of one or two, is contracted.

22 MS. DeBERRY: Bad Bunny.

23 Still no?

24 MS. MUELLER: You never know.

1 You never know.

2 We'll keep you guessing.

3 >> [crosstalk]

4 MS. MEAD: If he shows up, you'll be the first
5 to know.

6 MR. BLAIR: Katie, on a more concerning note, I
7 mean, the Latino bands are great.

8 And I remember last year because of a scare,
9 our sales were down quite a bit for unfortunate
10 reasons.

11 Do you feel like that's in our past or is that
12 still a concern having a major event?

13 MS. DeBERRY: Don't answer it.

14 MR. BLAIR: You know, I mean, I don't -

15 MS. MUELLER: You know I feel, and in
16 consultation with our the Hispanic booking agent who
17 books talent all over, he feels --

18 I will say this.

19 We have had less choices because they've had
20 more trouble getting visas to come across to perform
21 in the United States.

22 But the Hispanic acts are selling very strongly
23 throughout the country.

24 And so you know, I think the fair, I think we

1 did a really good job of messaging how the fair is a
2 fun, safe, inclusive place.

3 And you know, I can't predict the future, the
4 next few months but I think that people are going to
5 be able to come out and have fun.

6 We're offering a special value pack for sale in
7 Northgate Markets that we've never done before.

8 Four adult admissions and a parking pass, four
9 general admissions and a parking pass for a very
10 discounted price.

11 So, we're hoping that that is a success.

12 MR. BLAIR: It's unfortunate we have this
13 concern.

14 MR. SCHENK: Phil, may I just comment on that if
15 I may?

16 We always have to be concerned for the safety
17 of all of our guests here.

18 But Fair Ops meets with security before the
19 fair begins.

20 Security is aware nationally, statewide, and
21 locally of what's going on.

22 And they do everything that they can to provide
23 a safe place for our guests to come and visit.

24 And I think last summer we saw that.

1 There was fear but there wasn't any activities,
2 thankfully, that created an unusual risk.

3 And I think I'm proud of what we'll be doing in
4 this year as we have in the past to make sure that
5 our guests feel safe on this property.

6 MR. BLAIR: Yeah.

7 I guess sort of get into the weeds.

8 Can I.C.E. come onto our property?

9 Come into our fair.

10 I mean, we're a public place, right?

11 Publicly owned, publicly everything.

12 So, if an I.C.E. van pulls up, they can come in
13 and walk through or I mean, what's the sort of --

14 MS. MOORE: There are protocols that are in
15 place even on the I.C.E. side.

16 And I think that's a conversation, I would just
17 like say, that's conversation for a different day
18 versus today.

19 But there are protocols that even I.C.E. has to
20 follow in terms of access and during events and so
21 forth that we're aware of.

22 MS. BARKETT: Thank you to Mark Alvin, head of
23 security.

24 [applause]

1 >> [crosstalk]

2 MS. MUELLER: Thank you very much.

3 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you.

4 All right, we will now move on to public
5 comment for Fair Ops Committee report.

6 Anybody in the room who'd like to speak on this
7 report?

8 Seeing none, we have one member of the public
9 on Zoom.

10 Joseph, you have two minutes.

11 MR. RIVERA: He is not in the queue.

12 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right, that concludes public
13 comment on this informational item.

14 Moving on to 6D1, Finance Committee report.

15 And that is the consideration and vote on
16 whether to approve the proposed facility rental
17 rates beginning in 2027.

18 This is an action item.

19 Just a reminder, under Robert's Rules, the
20 procedure for action items is as follows.

21 The item is read into record.

22 Next, we'll entertain public comment.

23 Then we'll need a motion and a second.

24 And then after that, we'll open that up to

1 questions and discussion for the board and then a
2 vote.

3 Moving on.

4 I've already read this item into the record.

5 So now we'll move on to public comment.

6 Anybody in the room who'd like to speak on this
7 matter?

8 Seeing nobody in the room, nobody online.

9 May I get a motion, please?

10 MR. GELFAND: So moved.

11 MS. DeBERRY: Second.

12 CHAIR NEJABAT: Second, Director DeBerry.

13 All right, any discussion from the board?

14 MR.ARABO: We had a really good committee
15 meeting.

16 I want to thank Director Gelfand and thank the
17 staff as well.

18 The staff would like to increase it to be more
19 competitive.

20 We always want to make sure we maximize revenue
21 for the district, make sure we don't decrease any
22 demand.

23 So, committee is very happy, encouraging of
24 this action item.

1 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

2 With that being said, go ahead, director.

3 MR. BLAIR: I have a question on, for example,
4 those of you who missed the tsunami, not the
5 tsunami, the sumo wrestlers last week, which was
6 very different.

7 Tsunami and sumo wrestler, there's a connection
8 there.

9 Just finance-wise, and they were in Wyland
10 Center.

11 Did they pay \$5,600 a day for six days or only
12 the days they perform?

13 Or is there a set-up day and a tear-down day
14 they pay for, or how does that work?

15 MS. MOORE: I don't have the particulars of that
16 agreement on hand to be able to answer that -
17 [crosstalk]

18 MS. MOORE: So we charge for event days
19 typically.

20 I'm going to let Katie address this more.

21 Maybe she has some insight into exactly what
22 that contract was, what our process is for rental.

23 MS. MUELLER: Typically, we charge for event
24 days, the days that the actual events are happening.

1 MR. BLAIR: So, setup and tear-down days are not
2 billed?

3 MS. MUELLER: Correct.

4 MR. BLAIR: Okay.

5 That's the same as the convention center.

6 Okay.

7 Thanks.

8 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

9 Can we please get a roll call for the vote?

10 MS. ARNOLD: Chair Nejabat.

11 MR. NEJABAT: Aye.

12 MS. ARNOLD: Vice Chair Barkett.

13 MS. BARKETT: Aye.

14 MS. ARNOLD: Director Arabo.

15 MR. ARABO: Aye.

16 MS. ARNOLD: Director Blair.

17 MR. BLAIR: Aye.

18 MS. ARNOLD: Director DeBerry.

19 MS. DeBERRY: Aye.

20 MS. ARNOLD: Director Gelfand.

21 MR. GELFAND: Aye.

22 MS. ARNOLD: Director Mead.

23 MS. MEAD: Aye.

24 MS. ARNOLD: Director Rowland.

1 MS. ROWLAND: Aye.

2 MS. ARNOLD: Director Schenk.

3 MR. SCHENK: Aye.

4 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

5 Motion carries.

6 The next item is 6E1, which is the Legal
7 Committee report.

8 Discuss and vote to amend the exclusive
9 negotiating rights agreement entered into between
10 the District and the City of Del Mar.

11 You can find the report beginning on page 115.

12 This is also an action item.

13 So we will start with public comment.

14 Any members of the public in the room who wish
15 to speak on this item, go ahead please.

16 Just as a reminder you have two minutes.

17 ASHLEY JONES: Thank you.

18 I don't know that I'll take all of my time.

19 I just wanted to let you know I'm here today.

20 Ashley Jones, City Manager, City of Del Mar.

21 I just want to thank the district staff and the
22 board members that we worked with on coming up with
23 this amendment to the ENRA.

24 We really tried hard to be responsive to the

1 comments that we heard from the board.

2 I feel like we've accomplished that and I hope
3 you do too.

4 And we were happy to work with your team to
5 make these changes.

6 So, we're asking that you support the
7 recommended action before you today.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you.

10 Anyone else in the room?

11 JEWEL EDSON: Hi, Jewel Edson here, on behalf of
12 the Solana Beach City Council.

13 We hope that you will also support the
14 amendment that's proposed.

15 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you.

16 Seeing nobody else in the room would like to
17 speak on this matter and nobody signed online, that
18 concludes public comment.

19 At this time, I will entertain a motion.

20 MR. SCHENK: Well, if I may just add as the
21 chair of this committee.

22 I just wanted to comment, not specifically to
23 the word spoken, but just to the notion that we have
24 the City of Del Mar and Solana Beach endorsing this

1 together, and we haven't been there all the way
2 through this process.

3 So, I just want to recognize and acknowledge
4 that process because I think it's very meaningful.

5 And with that, I will move the approval of
6 this.

7 MR. GELFAND: I'll second it.

8 MR. SCHENK: First, we have to have -
9 [crosstalk] - yeah.

10 CHAIR NEJABAT: Okay.

11 Second, Director Gelfand.

12 Now we can have discussion from the board.

13 MR. ARABO: I have a few points of
14 clarification.

15 What exactly are we voting on?

16 If you could the chair could walk us through.

17 I know the red lines, but I see that you're
18 extending the ENRA to 2027.

19 Are there any timeline extensions with this
20 amendment or is it just the language?

21 Is anything proposed today that the board
22 didn't ask the committee to do at the prior board
23 meetings?

24 MR. SCHENK: Not that I'm aware of.

1 MS. MOORE: The adjustments to the timeline are
2 to bring those so that they're in line with the
3 first amendment that was done.

4 So, it isn't anything new.

5 That was the first amendment.

6 So, it's not changing anything going forward,
7 but that way it's reflected in the document.

8 MR. ARABO: Because we received, I mean, I
9 received an email from some member of the public
10 regarding the Attorney General's Office and the City
11 of Del Mar.

12 It's their issue, not the fairground's issue.

13 I respect and understand that.

14 I just want to make sure that the fairgrounds
15 in negotiating the language is protected, we're
16 indemnified, and we don't get dragged into a fight
17 between the Attorney General's Office and the City
18 of Del Mar.

19 So if the committees can always be mindful of
20 it's their fight not ours.

21 We don't want to be dragged into something.

22 And we always want to protect as fiduciaries
23 the fairgrounds.

24 Right.

1 MR. SCHENK: That has not changed.

2 MR. ARABO: Okay.

3 MR. CAPLAN: And for the comfort of Director
4 Arabo and the other board members, that's the role
5 that our office plays is to ensure that we're
6 protecting the interests of the 22nd District Ag
7 Association against all unanticipated risk and we do
8 everything we can to ensure that this agency is
9 protected.

10 And so the agreement that this board approved
11 in its initial iteration and the amendment that
12 you're considering today, it originally included two
13 separate indemnification provisions.

14 Section 2.7C, which really speaks specifically
15 to physical access.

16 So when Del Mar or their consultants or agents
17 are accessing the property, it provides pretty
18 strong indemnification in the event an issue arises
19 and a claim is asserted against this organization.

20 And then at Section 3.8, a second more broad
21 indemnification provision that also provides a high
22 level of protection to this organization.

23 So there's two layers of protection here, which
24 I think was really important for this board at the

1 time the original agreement was approved.

2 And that language has not changed in any way.

3 MR. ARABO: Okay.

4 Great.

5 So you feel comfortable, Josh, that the
6 fairgrounds is protected?

7 MR. CAPLAN: Yes.

8 MR. ARABO: All right.

9 Excellent.

10 MS. DeBERRY: Double down.

11 Double down on it.

12 MR. ARABO: Thank you.

13 MS. MOORE: If it would be helpful.

14 I've been asked to address, and you may have
15 seen we had a media inquiry regarding the timeline.

16 And the timeline that the City of Del Mar is
17 under and like the letter they've received from HCD
18 about that timeline, that is their timeline.

19 Our timelines are outlined in this document.

20 We're going to have to change the name of it
21 because we wind up, once you vote on it we can't --

22 We won't be referring to it as the ENRA anymore
23 since we're changing the name.

24 But in terms of that, one of the things that

1 has been outlined and so just for this board's
2 awareness is so the city identified having a lease
3 with us by November of 2026.

4 That is their timeline with HCD, that's not our
5 timeline.

6 As we have previously discussed as a board,
7 first this board needs to make the decision of if we
8 want housing, and then if so, where.

9 So there's those things and then work from
10 there.

11 And timelines with regard to leases on DAA
12 property really are outside of our control.

13 Because as you recall, when it comes to a
14 lease, the Department of General Services is part of
15 that approval process for them.

16 So I just want to clarify for everyone.

17 But we did receive this media inquiry about the
18 time, if in terms of us meeting that timeline, and
19 it's not our timeline.

20 It's the city's.

21 Yes.

22 MR. ARABO: Okay.

23 Thank you.

24 I have a question on how do we reconcile the

1 fact that if the City of Del Mar is saying to the
2 State of California, the fairgrounds is part of our
3 housing plan.

4 Yet the fairgrounds we have said very clear
5 that we have not decided either way if we're going
6 to do affordable housing or not.

7 How do we as an organization reconcile to make
8 sure that the City of Del Mar has been very
9 transparent with the state and also with us.

10 Because I believe that our position as a board
11 has been we haven't approved as an organization if
12 we're doing housing.

13 That's our position.

14 But how then is the City of Del Mar saying,
15 well we have a plan to fix City of Del Mar's issue
16 for housing and the fairgrounds is part of it.

17 It seems like they're promising something that
18 does not exist.

19 And what is our role in that and how do we
20 reconcile that as an organization.

21 MS. MOORE: I can appreciate the question around
22 that.

23 So one of the things that we do is we meet, we
24 as the 22nd DAA, my team and I meet with HCD Housing

1 and Community Development, the state entity that is
2 responsible.

3 So HCD, that's something that they are
4 monitoring as well.

5 They're aware of our position.

6 It's very clear.

7 We are very clear with HCD, and I believe the
8 city is as well, that this decision has not been
9 made.

10 What City of Del Mar has put forward as their
11 plan to the state includes the fairgrounds.

12 But then they have if that doesn't work out
13 there are then it's like next steps that they have
14 to go to.

15 So they haven't promised that it will be built
16 here.

17 It's just in terms from a planning standpoint,
18 their intention is that that would happen and that
19 we are just continuing to work forward.

20 And my team has been very clear and to HCD
21 staff as well as, we this board has not yet made
22 this decision.

23 And what I have pledged to them is, and I can't
24 tell you when this board will make that decision.

1 MR. ARABO: Right.

2 I just want to make sure that the fairgrounds
3 is not in a position where the City of Del Mar
4 writes a check that the fairgrounds can't cash right
5 to the State of California.

6 MS. MOORE: They cannot obligate us.

7 MR. ARABO: Okay.

8 MS. MOORE: And perhaps Josh could weigh in on
9 that as well, but the city cannot obligate us to
10 their plan.

11 MR. CAPLAN: Yeah, that I would agree
12 completely.

13 This board of directors has 100% authority over
14 the use of its own property.

15 So when the time comes, if this board decides
16 that it's not in the best interest of the master
17 site planning process to site affordable housing
18 somewhere on the property, that's this board's
19 decision and this board's decision alone.

20 MR. ARABO: And then we have in no way promised
21 it to the City of Del Mar.

22 MS. MOORE: Correct.

23 MR. SCHENK: Nothing more than what's --

24 MR. ARABO: We're promising this study.

1 MS. MOORE: We're just exploring.

2 MR. ARABO: And by the way, I'm very pro-
3 housing and that's why ENRA --

4 But I want to make sure that I look at my
5 perspective as a fiduciary and to protect the
6 fairgrounds and be very honest with the state and
7 with HCD and with ourselves.

8 MR. SCHENK: I think what you're observing is
9 not all the timelines are in sync and that's part of
10 the problem.

11 MR. ARABO: Right, it'd be good to get alignment
12 on timelines.

13 Because if we have a document saying "A" and
14 the city is saying it's B, C, D and they're
15 presenting to the state that's B, C, D but we're
16 saying "A," this doesn't reconcile because they're
17 saying something different than we are.

18 And they're almost implying through their plan
19 that it's a foregone conclusion when it's not.

20 That's my concern as the fairgrounds
21 perspective.

22 MR. BLAIR: Yeah.

23 And the "if" and the "where" I think have to go
24 together, so that there's not years of gaps between

1 if and where.

2 So it may be years before we can answer either
3 one of those depending on where our strategic plan
4 goes.

5 So just eyes wide open.

6 MS. ROWLAND: Yeah.

7 And I just have to say I don't think there is
8 any daylight between, you know, where we are and
9 where the City of Del Mar is and what the state's
10 understanding is.

11 There's just been too many times when we've
12 had, you know, through Carlene's staff conversations
13 directly with the state.

14 I think that the nuance the state entirely
15 understands the nuance in all of this with what Del
16 Mar needs to have put forward to be able to, you
17 know, be at the point where we're at.

18 So, I don't think there's any ambiguity or
19 misunderstanding on the part of the state.

20 I just don't discern any.

21 MR. ARABO: I mean, I'm pointing out to the
22 timelines.

23 That's to Director Rowland's point.

24 Our timelines and the City of Del Mar's

1 timelines don't match.

2 That's daylight in itself.

3 MS. ROWLAND: They don't have to match.

4 And I'm not sure they're saying exactly the
5 same thing.

6 MR. ARABO: Well, if we're saying one thing and
7 they're saying another, there's separation.

8 We're not saying the same thing.

9 MS. ROWLAND: So, I think it's obvious that to
10 the state we don't have to be saying the same thing
11 exactly because they're on a little bit of a
12 different path than we're on.

13 But obviously what they're saying is meeting
14 their requirements at this time and what we're
15 saying is not is not causing that to not be the
16 case.

17 MS. BARKETT: Maybe Fred wants to -- [crosstalk]

18 MS. MOORE: If I could speak.

19 So in terms of with HCD, HCD is aware we have
20 this document.

21 This is the timeline.

22 And one of the key decision points will be this
23 board making its decision.

24 That being said, as Josh has said, that's up to

1 this board for when that decision will be made and
2 how.

3 So that's where, so yes, there may be competing
4 information that's being provided.

5 HCD is also keeping us informed.

6 We respond, I responded to HCD when they -- of
7 this would be a Mike.

8 I don't know that that date is achievable.

9 MR. ARABO: Or that even we're going to.

10 But see more than -

11 MS. MOORE: That's HCD will hold City of Del Mar
12 accountable to what the City of Del Mar has
13 committed to them.

14 What we have is this document.

15 MR. ARABO: Yeah.

16 You know what would be helpful too, if we could
17 as an organization invite HCD to a board meeting.

18 I think it's very important that HCD hears
19 directly from us as a board that we agreed to study
20 this in good faith with our neighbors and because we
21 care about the issue.

22 But we as an organization have not committed to
23 affordable housing in the City of Del Mar.

24 I have been in previous meetings very pro-

1 housing in our land in the City of San Diego.

2 And I think that we should definitely look at
3 that.

4 But for this specific issue, I want to make
5 sure that no other agency or organization is
6 misrepresenting our position.

7 And our position from what I get today is we
8 have not as an organization committed to housing,
9 but we are in a plan that's been promised to the
10 state as a solution for their issue.

11 And that's what's hard for me to reconcile
12 those two items.

13 MR. SCHENK: I don't think there's any confusion
14 as to what is our position.

15 And our timeline is our timeline.

16 And if it works, that'd be okay.

17 That'd be good.

18 But I don't know that anybody, certainly not in
19 this document nor in any other formal communications
20 has committed us to doing something on a timeline
21 that is not ours nor to do take any action that is
22 not in our best interest.

23 MR. ARABO: Okay.

24 Perfect.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. BARKETT: Okay.

3 Thank you.

4 And I just have a request.

5 MR. SCHENK: But there has been a motion and a
6 second.

7 You're still discussing.

8 MS. BARKETT: Yeah.

9 Yeah.

10 MR. SCHENK: Oh, okay.

11 I'm sorry.

12 I just wanted to tie that knot at the end.

13 Yeah.

14 MS. BARKETT: Well, one thing I want to say
15 it's, you know, it's all really this is all based on
16 expectations.

17 Okay.

18 And that's a problem because some people are
19 going to view expectations much more narrowly than
20 others are.

21 And so, you know, we fall into that gray area
22 when that happens.

23 And that's, I think that's where we are.

24 But, you know, I'm sure it'll all be resolved.

1 But I just have a request that for our packets
2 next time under affordable housing that we have the
3 new document agreement for affordable housing site,
4 due diligence, and development feasibility and
5 analysis in our packet along with a copy of the MOU.

6 And the other thing I noticed is item 8F was
7 left out, which was an action item.

8 If that could be added to that in the packet
9 that would be great.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. MOORE: I'm sorry.

12 Item 8F.

13 And first let me just address that, yes, we
14 will update.

15 So in your binders in the affordable housing
16 section, you should have the information you're
17 referring to.

18 If you want to include it in the packet, we can
19 as well.

20 MS. BARKETT: No, I'm talking about in our in
21 our housing.

22 There's no MOU in there and there's been no
23 ENRA contract in there, which should be in there
24 along with that.

1 But you also put in prior board, if you look,
2 I'll direct you to the exact page.

3 So item 7C would be page 14 of 14 basically.

4 You included the item 7C and item 8F.

5 Oh, great.

6 8F is in there.

7 So, I didn't see it before.

8 Okay.

9 8F is in there, but not our MOU or the new
10 agreement.

11 If those could be in there that would be great.

12 MS. MOORE: And once you vote on this agreement,
13 if it passes, we'll put that one in.

14 MS. BARKETT: Yeah, and the MOU too.

15 Yeah.

16 Thank you.

17 Appreciate it.

18 MR. GELFAND: I'm just curious, what are we
19 going to call this?

20 The AHSDDFA or the AHDD or any ideas?

21 MS. BARKETT: You want the acronym?

22 MS. ROWLAND: ADHD, I don't know.

23 MR. CAPLAN: Perhaps you can call it the DADD
24 agreement, development and due diligence, but I'll

1 defer to the board.

2 MR. GELFAND: I like that.

3 MR. CAPLAN: A better acronym.

4 MR. ARABO: To Director Schenk, I have a
5 question for the changes.

6 So can you walk us through, we remove the term
7 "exclusivity."

8 >> [crosstalk]

9 MR. SCHENK: I mean you can, everything that's -
10 it's not redlined here but --

11 [crosstalk]

12 MR. SCHENK: So I mean, whatever has been
13 crossed out and has been replaced is the language
14 that we're voting on.

15 MR. ARABO: Great.

16 MS. MOORE: If you would like it, starting on
17 page 116 of your packet, the bold items there kind
18 of explain what adjustments were made.

19 So adding language to specifically align the
20 ENRA or now the DADD agreement with the requirements
21 of state housing laws.

22 Then the next, requiring all actions and
23 milestones to be presented to and approved by the
24 22nd DAA Board.

1 Removing the language regarding exclusivity,
2 hence the new name for the document as well.

3 And then we did, the committee did take time to
4 review the indemnification language and felt that
5 that was very customary.

6 So but that's kind, and then it provides a
7 little more detail with what those, so that's that
8 summary you were just asking for, Director Arabo, of
9 what has changed in it that you would then see in
10 the redline version.

11 MR. SCHENK: Or blue line.

12 MS. MOORE: Or blue line.

13 Yes.

14 MR. ARABO: Thank you.

15 MR. SCHENK: Yeah.

16 >> [off mic]

17 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you very much.

18 MS. BARKETT: Yes.

19 MR. ARABO: Yes.

20 MS. BARKETT: Very much so.

21 Very good.

22 >> [crosstalk]

23 MS. ARNOLD: Chair Nejabat.

24 MR. NEJABAT: Aye.

1 MS. ARNOLD: Vice Chair Barkett.
2 MS. BARKETT: Aye.
3 MS. ARNOLD: Director Arabo.
4 MR. ARABO: Aye.
5 MS. ARNOLD: Director Blair.
6 MR. BLAIR: Aye.
7 MS. ARNOLD: Director DeBerry.
8 MS. DeBERRY: Aye.
9 MS. ARNOLD: Director Gelfand.
10 MR. GELFAND: Aye.
11 MS. ARNOLD: Director Mead.
12 MS. MEAD: Aye.
13 MS. ARNOLD: Director Rowland.
14 MS. ROWLAND: Aye.
15 MS. ARNOLD: Director Schenk.
16 MR. SCHENK: Aye.
17 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right, the motion carries.
18 We're now moving on to item 6F, People and
19 Culture Committee.
20 This is an information-only item.
21 You can find the report beginning on page 161
22 of your board packet.
23 Do we have any questions from the board?
24 Seeing none, we'll now move on to public

1 comments.

2 Anyone in the room who'd like to speak on this
3 matter?

4 Seeing nobody in the room and nobody on Zoom,
5 that concludes public comment on this informational
6 item.

7 We'll now move on to item 6G, the Regulatory
8 and Government Affairs Committee report.

9 This is an information-only item as well.

10 You can find the report beginning on page 167.

11 Do we have any questions from the board?

12 All right, seeing none, we'll take public
13 comment.

14 Anyone in the room who would like to speak on
15 this matter?

16 Seeing nobody in the room and nobody online,
17 that concludes public comment on this informational
18 item.

19 We'll now move to item 8, the eighth item in
20 our general business report 6H, the RTA SRTLC
21 meetings report item.

22 This is an informational item only as well.

23 These meetings just occurred yesterday.

24 So to provide the verbal report, the Chair

1 recognizes Director Arabo.

2 MR. ARABO: Thank you, Chair Nejabat.

3 We had a RTA and SRTLTC meeting yesterday.

4 Thank you.

5 Mr. Michael Flores was here yesterday.

6 He's here today.

7 Very grateful for your time and for all the
8 agencies that came together.

9 The most exciting news we have is we have a new
10 president of the Race Track Authority.

11 Director Mead was unanimously and very happy
12 and congratulations, Director Mead.

13 [Applause]

14 MR. ARABO: And the Authority had a great
15 meeting.

16 And different things they're going to be
17 looking at.

18 One of them is looking at some type of staff
19 who's going to reimburse the counsel and for the
20 work.

21 There's four different agencies sit on the Race
22 Track Authority and we're hoping to, whatever the
23 chair would like, the president the next meeting
24 would be.

1 And we also mentioned recap on the bonds and
2 the screens.

3 We also mentioned a five-year look back audit
4 potentially.

5 And the Authority recommended that this
6 organization really takes up the issue first if we
7 want to do it or not.

8 But it was a great meeting, a lot of progress.

9 The DMTC presented and said that over the last
10 5 years horse racing has yielded around 50, a little
11 over \$50 million for the fairgrounds.

12 Over the last 10 years, the DMTC horse racing
13 has yielded over \$100 million dollars to the
14 fairgrounds.

15 So, we're very grateful for them as an operator
16 and it was an overall great meeting.

17 Thank you to Vice President Barkett also.

18 She was at that meeting, and our CEO Carlene
19 Moore, and our counsel, Josh Caplan.

20 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

21 MR. ARABO: If anything fellow board members
22 want to add.

23 And congratulations Director Mead.

24 You'll be a great president for the Authority.

1 MS. MEAD: Thank you, Director Arabo.

2 And my only comment is to thank you for your
3 service.

4 You certainly led our, I never can say it
5 right, RTA, during the past year and we appreciate
6 your service.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. ARABO: Thank you.

9 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you, Director Arabo.

10 And congratulations, Director Mead.

11 With that, we'll now move on to public comment.

12 Anyone in the room who'd like to speak on this
13 matter?

14 Seeing nobody in the room, we have one member
15 of the public on Zoom, Martha Sullivan.

16 Two minutes, please.

17 MARTHA SULLIVAN: Martha Sullivan from Imperial
18 Beach again.

19 Fitch bond ratings continue to reflect the
20 warnings I and others have given these bodies and
21 others in California for several years about the
22 horse racing industry, particularly in California.

23 Quote, the BB minus rating reflects the
24 elevated vulnerability of the RTA's operating

1 profile to the declining popularity of horse racing
2 in California and across the country.

3 Longer-term historical declines in track
4 attendance have reduced margins for track net
5 revenue leading to lower net revenue from racing
6 operations and greater reliance on concession
7 revenue to support that service.

8 Declines in the California horse racing as well
9 as exposure to adverse events such as equine deaths
10 at tracks have driven a long-term trend of reduced
11 attendance and uncertainty in fan support despite
12 temporary improvements during the pandemic.

13 Tracks also increasingly compete with internet
14 gaming and regional casinos for gamblers.

15 These weaknesses are somewhat offset by an
16 affluent service area combined with semi-diverse
17 revenue from wagering and concessions generated from
18 other fairground events.

19 However, given the industry's continued
20 deterioration, track revenue appears less
21 sustainable over the longer term.

22 Fitch cases reflect declining horse racing
23 trends and thin operating margins on net race track
24 revenue.

1 This leads to higher reliance on net concession
2 revenue, which also is vulnerable to deterioration.

3 Under Fitch's rating case, net racetrack
4 revenue is depleted by 2028, end quote.

5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR NEJABAT: Thank you.

7 That concludes public comment on this
8 informational item.

9 MR. ARABO: One point I forgot to mention.

10 One point I forgot to mention.

11 The committee, the RTA did approve an action
12 item for tasking the counsel to see the
13 possibilities of potentially increasing operating
14 agreement with DMTC as far as legal options.

15 It's just studying it.

16 That was unanimously passed as well.

17 MS. MEAD: And the reason why.

18 MR. ARABO: The reason why, it's tied to the
19 bonds that we had.

20 And we want to make sure that fiduciaries would
21 go to 2038.

22 Yeah.

23 Just they're studying it and coming back with
24 legal their legal opinion.

1 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

2 Thanks for sharing that.

3 All right.

4 We'll now move on to our last general business
5 item 6I, Board of Directors one-way request for
6 placement of information or action items on an
7 agenda for a future meeting.

8 I'll entertain any requests from board members
9 about future items, agenda items that they'd like to
10 add.

11 Anything from anyone?

12 MR. ARABO: I'd like to invite the City of Del
13 Mar to see more information about this rail project.

14 I'm worried about the potentiality of them
15 saying one thing and doing another.

16 We've seen that in the past with their rail,
17 advocating for a rail during SANDAG.

18 So, it' be good just to bring them in.

19 I'd also like to request if we can invite HCD
20 just so the fairgrounds very clear on record on how
21 we stand on housing.

22 MR. BLAIR: Director Arabo, what is HCD?

23 MR. ARABO: HCD is the housing authority for the
24 State of California.

1 CHAIR NEJABAT: Housing and Community
2 Development.

3 MR. GELFAND: So in regards to your request,
4 somebody mentioned earlier today that the City of
5 Del Mar had taken some action regarding rail
6 alignments.

7 It may be as opposed to formally asking them to
8 come in to potentially every board meeting if as
9 part of your report, Carlene, you could let us know
10 if anything has changed officially from the City of
11 Del Mar because it would be public.

12 And if you do know what they were talking about
13 earlier today that they've announced, I haven't
14 heard anything about it.

15 So, if you could let us know now, it'd be
16 helpful.

17 MS. MOORE: It was a bit of news to me as well.

18 So, we'll look into it.

19 I'll send out an update.

20 But in terms of an update on the rail
21 realignment perhaps rather than City of Del Mar,
22 perhaps for consideration would be SANDAG.

23 I want to clarify, City of Del Mar or SANDAG.

24 Can I do that?

1 MR. CAPLAN: That's fine, but Director Arabo
2 made a request for something on the agenda for next
3 month.

4 But I just want to make sure that doesn't turn
5 into a substantive discussion on Del Mar's position
6 on rail realignment at the meeting today because
7 that's not on the agenda.

8 MR. ARABO: Right.

9 I'd also like to make a request also inviting
10 SANDAG as well.

11 So two, an invitation to Del Mar and an
12 invitation to SANDAG, so that everyone hears from
13 us.

14 CHAIR NEJABAT: Any other requests?

15 Anyone else?

16 All right.

17 Seeing none, we'll now take public comment.

18 Anyone in the room would like to speak on this
19 issue.

20 Seeing nobody in the room and nobody online,
21 that concludes public comment on this informational
22 item.

23 We'll now take a break for lunch and move to
24 closed session at noon.

1 That's when counsel is expecting us.

2 Okay, we got some extra time.

3 MS. MOORE: Box lunches are in the -

4 [Recess for lunch and closed session]

5 [Returned from closed session at 2:24 p.m.]

6 CHAIR NEJABAT: All right.

7 The time is 2:24 p.m.

8 And we have returned from our close session.

9 The 22nd DAA Board considered the advice of
10 counsel on items listed on the closed session
11 portion of the agenda and we have nothing to report.

12 The board also met in closed session to
13 evaluate the performance of its CEO consistent with
14 the Government Code and nothing further to report.

15 Before we adjourn, I'd like to note that you
16 can find matters of information beginning on page
17 169 of your packet.

18 Seeing no other business before the Board of
19 Directors today, the time is 2:25 p.m. on Tuesday,
20 March 10th, 2026.

21 And this meeting of the 22nd DAA Board is
22 hereby adjourned.

23

24 [Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.]

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