

## **Missoula Horse Council Board Meeting**

9/17/24

In attendance: Deborah Anderson, Bill Bucher, Karla Nichwader, Jennifer Cote (Treasurer), Irene Given, Arwyn Anthony, Scott David (President), Clara Davison (Secretary), Katy Nichwander, Drue Kerns

**Start at 7:08**

***Deb makes a motion to approve the minutes from August. Jennifer 2nd. Motion carries.***

**Financials-** We are currently behind on memberships and falling short of last year's budget. Irene has expressed concern that we may have over-budgeted. Fortunately, we are about 25% under on expenses, which has helped offset the lower revenue.

The maintenance budget is also underspent, and Scott believes we may have over-budgeted for this as well. Additionally, the board was not informed that Bill Bucher is being paid as an independent contractor instead of using the maintenance budget for our employees, Ellie and Zane, meaning payments to him have not been allocated to the maintenance budget. The financial committee will correct this oversight. Although appreciated for stepping in and ensuring basic park maintenance is completed, there may also need to be a discussion regarding any potential conflict of interest posed by hiring Bill as an independent contractor.

We have yet to receive updates on the status of the two additional maintenance employees who were hired. Jennifer will be sending out proposals for accounting services to various businesses to obtain quotes.

**Events-** The omoksee had about 60 riders and brought in about \$2,000. It has been growing and has been the most successful year so far.

Dancing in the sand was a great success and Irene plans to do the series next year. Unfortunately, the revenue from these events will not fund the new dressage arena in the near future and other fundraising options may need to be looked into.

CMR had a smaller show due to the weather and smoke. The show went well despite that and everyone had a great time.

The mini-event is this weekend. They are short on volunteers, especially for jump judges. In addition to the event, the dressage judge Debbie Spence will hold a two-day clinic.

Halloween omoksee and jumper day will be in October.

Drue would like us to sign up for the homecoming parade, but that would conflict with the Jumper day. Arwyn is going to see if we can switch the jumper day to Sunday instead of Saturday, but it might conflict with the MHJA end of the year event.

**2025 Date-** Arwyn wants event coordinators to send her the dates for next year.

### **Committee Updates**

**PR/Marketing and Planning-** The committee is starting to revise the bylaws and will have reviews for our January retreat. The committee has also come up with some election questions for nominees. Callie Reger is on board with posting on social media about the election so we are hopeful that we get more candidates and participation this year. We would like to make a short term committee of people to run the elections. The members should not be up for reelection.

Prior to the meeting, Courtney Imhoff presented her proposal to lead fundraising efforts for the park. She has 8 years of experience working with nonprofits and has raised about \$4.5 million dollars in that time. She would help us get a base of sponsors, as well as event sponsors for a spring gala. She would also help us plan and execute the gala. Her fee is \$10,000, but is confident that her cost and the cost to run the gala will be covered prior to the event from sponsorships alone.

Jennifer thinks hiring Courtney is a good idea if we want to raise significant funds, however she wants board members to have time to sit with it. In October, we would also have most of our financial picture for the year, so it may be best to wait to vote until our next meeting. Karla let us know that if we do decide to hire her, it may push the deadline for the events back. In terms of finances, Jennifer thinks that we can afford to hire her, although any big spring projects might have to be on hold until the money is recouped from the fundraising efforts.

This is a very large decision for the board to make and philosophically, the board needs to decide if this is the direction the park should move towards. The park was founded as a tight-knit riding community and branching out into large sponsorships and infrastructure improvements is taking the park in a new direction. These large projects will also require cooperation with the county. The board will give their individual opinions by Friday 9/20/24.

### **New Business:**

Bill has a contact who would like an indoor arena. This contact has other friends who would also like an indoor and collectively would have the funds to build an arena. His motivation for partnering with the horse park is that the cost of land is cost prohibitive, but would be happy to partner with us. Our initial steps are to contact the county and start the approval process.

***Clara makes a motion to adjourn this meeting. Katy 2nd. All in favor, motion carries.***

***Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm***