

## **EXCLUSIVE: Republican State Assemblyman Led Push To Cancel Washington County Fair**

**By Mark Belling, WISN-AM**

**A Republican member of the Wisconsin State Assembly that successfully sued Governor Evers to end his statewide lockdown order himself was one of the leaders of the move to cancel the Washington County Fair. Minutes of the meetings of the Washington County Agricultural and Industrial Society, which operates the Fair, obtained by me in an open records request reveal the agency board voted 9-1 to cancel the 2020 Fair. Gundrum, the only state elected official on the board, was one of the nine who voted to kill the event in 2020.**

**The only board member who voted to hold the Fair was William Symicek. A number of local county fairs have been called off but some are being held including the neighboring Ozaukee County Fair and the largest county fair in the state, the Walworth County Fair. Several large fairs in northeastern Wisconsin are also being held as scheduled.**

**Even though the Washington County agency is cancelling the Fair and**

**kept the fairgrounds locked off for weeks, the Fair executive director Kellie Boone remains on board with full pay. I have repeatedly asked if the Agricultural Society will return the subsidy it gets from Washington County taxpayers given that Gundrum and the other board members aren't operating a fair this year. So far, there has been no response.**

**In announcing the Fair cancellation, Boone cited guidance from the joint Washington-Ozaukee health department but meeting minutes indicate there was no recommendation from that department to cancel the Fair. In the meantime, Ozaukee's Fair is still on for Labor Day weekend.**

**Gundrum, the state assembly member who voted to cancel the Fair, is drawing his full pay as a member of the state legislature and has not laid off any of his staffers. For Gundrum, the money keeps flowing in to him but the public gets less service and, in Washington County, no fair.**

**The Fair is separate from Washington County government. Nonetheless, the new county executive, Josh Schoemann, in a letter to the Fair said he**

**supports and understands the decision. Schoemann did not demand that the Agricultural Society return the \$60,000 in taxpayer money that it has pocketed.**

**Mark Belling**

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