



Minutes
Oregon Racing Commission
September 15, 2016

Meeting Detail

The Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) met on Thursday, September 15, 2016, in Room 1C of the Portland State Office Building (PSOB), 800 N.E. Oregon St., Portland, OR.

Call to Order

Chair Charles Williamson called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

In Attendance

Commissioners: Chair Charles Williamson, Vice Chair Jan Palmer, DVM, Commissioner Michael Huber, DVM (by phone), Commissioner Christopher Dudley (by phone, joining the meeting after the approval of the August minutes and the September agenda)

Staff

Jack McGrail, Executive Director, Raul Ramirez, Assistant Attorney General (AAG), who filled in for agency counsel Catriona McCracken, AAG

AGENDA ITEMS

Approvals:

September 15, 2016, Meeting Agenda

Action: Approve the September 15, 2016, meeting agenda.

Moved by: Vice Chair Jan Palmer, DVM

Seconded: Commissioner Michael Huber, DVM

Vote: Chair Williamson took roll and the results were unanimous with 3 Ayes, 0 Nays.

August 18, 2016, Meeting Minutes

Action: Motion to approve the August 18, 2016, Commission Meeting Minutes.

Moved by: Vice Chair Jan Palmer, DVM

Seconded: Commissioner Michael Huber, DVM

Vote: Chair Williamson took roll and the results were unanimous with 3 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Old Business:

Amend June 16, 2016, Meeting Minutes

Chair Williamson explained that the minutes from the June 16, 2016, Commission meeting contained a clerical error: a reference to ORS 462-160-0130 (11) should read OAR 462-160-0130 (11).

Action: Motion to approve the corrected June 16, 2016, Commission Meeting Minutes.

Moved by: Commissioner Michael Huber, DVM

Seconded: Vice Chair Jan Palmer, DVM

Vote: Chair Williamson took roll and the results were unanimous with 4 Ayes, 0 Nays.

Sub-Committee Update Reports:

a. **Advanced Deposit Wagering (ADW) and Multi-Jurisdictional Hubs**

No report.

b. **Best Practices**

No report.

c. **Budget and Hub Funds**

No report.

d. **Medication and Horse Welfare**

No report.

e. **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Jack McGrail stated that results of the recently concluded Harney County Fair race meet were mixed. The three-day meet drew 64 horses to the fairgrounds, resulting in three- and four-horse fields. The race meet application had called for 23 races, Director McGrail noted, but only 20 were run, many with short fields. The small fields hurt the handle, and Director McGrail stated that it was important that fair officials meet with the horsemen to identify issues and commit to recruiting horses for future meets. He noted that the pre-meet inspection found the starting gate was not ready. Presiding Steward Mike Twiggs worked with Director of Racing Fred Robertson to resolve the issue, but during the last race of the meet, two doors failed to open, a potentially dangerous situation that seems to be a recurring problem at Harney County. Handle was down significantly from last year, he added, noting that handle had been trending up at other summer meets around the state.

Director McGrail noted the meet's positives. The track surface was reported to be the best it has been in years. Trackman Steve Wood advised that the track be bladed from the inside rail, and Mr. Robertson managed to get that done by borrowing a grader. Plans call for adding wood chips and other organic material next year. Director McGrail stated that crowds were good and enthusiastic. He noted that the Harney County Fair has unique issues, and the Commission needs to partner earlier with officials to address them. He noted that a new fair manager this year was learning on the job. He summed up that Harney County has a strong tradition of horse racing, but for the meet to succeed, the horsemen must support it.

Regarding Steve Wood, Director McGrail noted it was the first year that the Commission has had a track surface consultant for the fair meets. He stated it was important to gather the opinions of the stewards, horsemen and fair managers to evaluate the program's benefits. Of the \$5,000 allocated for the program, the Commission spent \$4,159, because Mr. Wood did not go to Prineville. Mr. Wood has indicated his willingness to help next year, Director McGrail added.

He said the Request for Proposals (RFP) for drug-testing services had been received from the Department of Administrative Services and returned to that agency for the Department of Justice's final review. He noted that the Oregon Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (OHBPA) has appointed Susan Calvert to represent that group in the review and scoring.

The Coggins testing program has been completed, Director McGrail stated, noting that 146 horses were tested during five clinic days organized by the OHBPA. The Commission authorized spending up to \$5,000 for the program and actually spent \$1,460.

Leading up to the Portland Meadows meet, Director McGrail noted that the Commission has authorized adding hours in the investigators' office to help with licensing, using existing staff. This frees up the investigators' time to focus on that aspect of their work.

Vice Chair Palmer stated that she was frustrated with the the problems with the Harney County meet, which seem to recur annually. She wondered if the Commission needed to be more "heavy handed."

Chair Williamson noted that the Future of Racing in Oregon Group (FROG) discussed the Harney County problems this morning and expressed concern about the safety of both horses and people. Director McGrail responded that jockeys and horsemen had no complaints about the track surface and problems this year were not the same as in the past. He stated that the OHBPA needed to communicate earlier with fair officials, noting that the meet has problems attracting horses anyway, without imposing additional impediments. He added that Racing Secretary Shorty Martin had stated that increasing purses would not have drawn more horses.

Vice Chair Palmer noted that the starting gate had been a problem in past years, and the change in manager was no doubt also a factor in problems. However, she stated, the Commission allocates a significant amount of money every year, and every year concludes things have to be better. She stated that the horsemen had voted by not showing up. She asked what the time line was for addressing the issue.

Director McGrail stated the all-fairs meeting will be in October. That would be a time to get feedback from the fairs. He noted that the Harney County meet will never be like those at Prineville or Grants Pass, but it can be better than it is. He suggested that the Commission talk with the OHBPA to find out why horsemen did not attend this year.

Director McGrail added that the starting gate was an issue, noting that Harney County wanted to have one gate for the entire fair circuit. This was discussed two years ago, but at that time, each meet wanted its own gate.

Vice Chair Palmer stated that three out of five fairs had starting gate issues this year. Noting that the issue was not going to be resolved today, she stated that she wanted to establish a timeline for meetings and decisions before hub funds are allocated for the next biennium.

Director McGrail responded that he expected to get a list of concerns from the OHBPA and from Commission stewards, who are still finishing their report. When he has those reports, he will send a letter to the fair meet manager. He added that the meet applied for 23 races and ran only 20, meaning it owes the Commission \$6,000.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Palmer about the RFP for a testing lab, Director McGrail stated the RFP goes next to lawyers (not the Commission's counsel). The current contract expires November 9. He stated that he hoped solicitations would be returned before next month's medications and welfare meeting, so that the sub-committee could score responses to the RFP. If a lab other than the current one is selected, he noted the Commission (with input from horsemen) would have to decide whether to change labs in the middle of the Portland Meadows (PM) meet, or wait until the meet ends in

January. He stated he hoped the Commission would be able to make some decisions by its October meeting.

In response to a question from Chair Williamson, Director McGrail stated that if a decision is not reached by November 9, there will be no interruption in service; the contract with Truesdail Laboratories will continue until the Commission decides otherwise.

f. Future of Racing in Oregon Group (FROG) update

Vice Chair Palmer stated that the group met this morning and discussed social media/marketing strategies and the Harney County Fair. She noted FROG will sponsor a welcome-back luncheon at 11 a.m. September 20 on the Portland Meadows backside.

New Business:

Chair Williamson introduced Diego Conde, who is scheduled to become an Oregon Racing Commissioner, pending state Senate confirmation, later this month.

Contested Cases:

None

Other Business As May Properly Come Before the Commission:

None

Public Comment:

None

Confirmation of the Next Commission Meeting:

The next ORC meeting will be at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, October 20, 2016, in Room 1C of the Portland State Office Building, 800 N.E. Oregon St., Portland, OR.

Adjournment:

Action: Motion to adjourn.

Moved by: Vice Chair Jan Palmer, DVM

Seconded: Commissioner Michael Huber, DVM, prior to the adjournment vote, asked Director McGrail if the Commission is requesting that horses coming to Portland Meadows be tested for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) within 6 months. Director McGrail stated the Commission was not making that request, but that is Portland Meadows' policy. Karsten Hennze, PM General Manager, confirmed that the track is requiring a valid Coggins issued within 6 months. Vice Chair Palmer stated that she believed there had been additional EIA positives in Washington; those present at the meeting confirmed only that there had been none in Oregon.

Vote: Chair Williamson took roll and the results were unanimous with 4 Ayes, 0 Nays.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.