



**Minutes**  
**Oregon Racing Commission**  
**April 16, 2020**

**Meeting Detail**

The Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) met on Thursday, April 16, 2020. The meeting was held via teleconference.

**Call to Order**

Chair Jan Palmer, DVM, called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

**In Attendance**

**Commissioners:** Chair Jan Palmer, DVM; Vice Chair Diego Conde (joined meeting at 1:20 p.m.); Commissioner Steven O'Hagan; Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Staff**

Executive Director Jack McGrail; Catriona McCracken, Assistant Attorney General

**Agenda Items**

**Approvals:**

**Action:** Approval of the meeting agenda

**Moved by:** Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Seconded:** Commissioner Steven O'Hagan

**Vote:** Commissioners Palmer, Williamson and O'Hagan voted AYE, and the motion carried unanimously (3:0).

**Action:** Approval of the minutes from the Feb. 20, 2020, ORC meeting

**Moved by:** Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Seconded:** Commissioner Steven O'Hagan

**Vote:** Commissioners Palmer, Williamson and O'Hagan voted AYE, and the motion carried unanimously (3:0).

**Old Business:**

**Medication and Horse Welfare Subcommittee Report**

Commissioner O'Hagan reported that the subcommittee met yesterday and discussed management of the test barn area. Senior State Veterinarian Tom Everman, DVM, has suggested the test barn be set up with a table outside for handlers and witnesses to sign samples, to keep the number of people entering the test barn office at a minimum.

Commissioner O'Hagan added that Randy Evers of Grants Pass Downs explained planned changes to backside protocols, including handwashing and tack cleaning, due to coronavirus.

Commissioner O'Hagan stated that the subcommittee discussed the “prerace second look” protocol, in which the trainer of a scratched horse can ask for the second Commission veterinarian to examine the horse and weigh in. The two Commission veterinarians in consultation will decide if the horse will be allowed to start.

The subcommittee discussed whether the Commission should conduct TCO2 testing, which looks for the presence of bicarbonate administered in an effort to reduce lactic acid. The subcommittee decided to do randomized testing to determine whether this practice, known as “milkshaking,” is a problem in Oregon before pursuing more robust testing.

Dr. Everman plans to amend the confidential report form submitted by track veterinarians to better track intra-articular joint injections and their possible connection to catastrophic injuries.

A policy change will eliminate the administration of post-race Lasix in the test barn, Commission O'Hagan stated. To get a urine sample, horses generally will be kept up to an hour and 15 minutes in the test barn, at the discretion of the Commission veterinarian, before being released.

In laboratory news, Dr. Everman is researching labs that test hair samples and is reviewing the status of Truesdail laboratory. Both will be discussed further at the next medication subcommittee meeting, Commissioner O'Hagan added.

### **Budget Subcommittee Report**

Chair Palmer reported that the subcommittee met this week to discuss hub fund allocations for the remainder of the fiscal year. She recapped that a total of \$615,000 was available for distribution this year, and so far, \$267,150 has been disbursed: \$128,300 to the Oregon Horsemen's Benevolent & Protective Association (OHBPA), \$81,250 to the Oregon Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association (OTOBA), and \$57,600 to the Oregon Quarter Horse Racing Association (OQHRA). That left \$347,850 to be distributed.

The subcommittee recommends allocating 30 percent of that sum, or \$104,355, to Grants Pass Downs, and dividing the remainder equally among the three industry groups, so each would receive \$81,165, Chair Palmer explained. That would bring one-year totals for the groups to: \$209,465 for OHBPA, \$162,415 for OTOBA, and \$138,765 for OQHRA. She noted that the OHBPA will receive less money than in the past, while the other two groups get more.

**Action:** Adopt the recommended hub fund allocations for 2020 as outlined by Chair Palmer.

**Moved by:** Vice Chair Diego Conde

**Seconded:** Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Vote:** Commissioners Palmer, Conde, Williamson and O'Hagan voted AYE, and the motion carried unanimously (4:0).

### **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director McGrail noted these are difficult times nationally and locally for the racing industry, as for many other industries. The budget subcommittee faced challenges in balancing competing interests and deserving programs in need of funding – always a difficult task, but particularly this year because of budget shortfalls.

He reported that officials at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show plan to meet tomorrow to discuss whether the June event will be held, but Nate Jacob, mutuels manager, has indicated he was not optimistic for this year. In Prineville, Doug Smith has told him that organizers of the Crooked River Roundup (CRRU) also are concerned about holding this year's event. That meet is scheduled for July 15-18, so they have some time to decide. Director McGrail noted that an economic consideration for CRRU and all the meets is the withdrawal of sponsorships by businesses that have been hurt financially by the COVID-19 shutdown.

The Commission has been talking with Grants Pass Downs officials about how that meet might operate, perhaps without spectators. Other jurisdictions are operating with safeguards such as restricting access to essential, taking temperatures, posting fliers about hygiene and providing masks, gloves and hand sanitizers. He noted that biosecurity measures have been used in the past during outbreaks of horse diseases.

Director McGrail reported that the Commission has meetings scheduled in May in Salem regarding budget updates. He does not anticipate any issues. He added there will more clarity about allocations for the next fiscal year afterward.

He noted that discussion of the federal Horseracing Integrity Act of 2019 has been deferred until next month. He invited stakeholders to weigh in on the topic.

In response to a question from Chair Palmer, Director McGrail stated that allocations have not yet been issued to EOLS and CRRU. That happens 30 days before the meet.

### **Grants Pass Downs (GPD) Report**

Randy Evers, president of GPD, stated that the track is aiming for a June 20 opening, which would require the backside to open for training at least 30 days prior. He noted it is very fluid, depending on what the governor does. The closure of restaurants and bowling alleys has resulted in closure of the OTB network, which is housed in those sites. He noted that GPD has hired a new management company, MSH Solutions, to re-energize and rebrand the OTBs once they are open.

Rod Lowe, GPD chief operations officer, gave an update on track improvements. Completed additions include: two more stalls in the paddock; curb, gutter, retaining wall, and fencing from the paddock around the first turn; two backside guard shacks; backside security fencing; 170 12-by-12 Noble stalls set up; lights in the barns; track has been expanded to 68 feet up to the

paddock to accommodate a 10-horse field; curb and gutter to the chute; track lighting to the chute for night racing.

Mr. Lowe added that projects in process include: two new camera towers; retaining wall down the chute; electricity and fiber optic to the towers; new timer infrastructure; concrete in front of the grandstand; safety buffer between the track and soccer fields; grading and drainage in the chute; heating and cooling for the race, stewards' and investigator's offices; new mile markers.

Katy Burris, human resources for GPD, outlined COVID-19 protocols for the backside to open, noting that these will be continuously assessed and adjusted: screen everyone who comes in, which could include taking temperatures; restrict access; install educational signs; provide personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers; ramp up cleaning.

## **New Business**

### **Discussion and Possible Approval of Changes to TMB Racing License**

**Action:** Motion to approve change in Grants Pass Downs race dates, canceling spring meet.

**Moved by:** Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Seconded:** Vice Chair Diego Conde

**Vote:** Commissioners Palmer, Conde, Williamson and O'Hagan voted AYE, and the motion carried unanimously (4:0).

### **Discussion and Possible Approval of Rule Amendments Implementing Digital Tattoo**

Director McGrail explained that the proposed rule amendments adopt the industry standard of identifying racehorses by digital tattoo rather than lip tattoo.

**Action:** Motion to approve rule changes to implement digital tattoo to OARs 462-110-0010, 462-130-0010, 462-140-0130, 462-140-0150, 462-140-0395, 462-150-0040

**Moved by:** Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Seconded:** Vice Chair Diego Conde

**Vote:** Commissioners Palmer, Conde, Williamson and O'Hagan voted AYE, and the motion carried unanimously (4:0).

## **Public Comment:**

Camy Vonseggern of the Tillamook County Fair reported that Oregon Fairs Association members have been discussing the effects of the coronavirus shutdown on this summer's fairs. She noted that Tillamook continues planning for its August fair, but she is "mediocre optimistic" about it actually being held.

## **Contested Cases:**

None

## **Confirmation of next meeting:**

The next Commission meeting will be at 1:30 p.m. May 21, 2020, location to be determined.

## **Adjournment:**

**Action:** Motion to adjourn.

**Moved by:** Commissioner Charles Williamson

**Seconded:** Vice Chair Diego Conde

**Vote:** Commissioners Palmer, Conde, Williamson and O'Hagan voted AYE, and the motion carried unanimously (4:0).

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.