



Minutes
Oregon Racing Commission
June 17, 2021

Meeting Detail

The Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) met at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, June 17, 2021. The meeting was held via videoconference.

Call to Order

Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

In Attendance

Commissioners: Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan; Commissioner Charles Williamson; Commissioner Jan Palmer, DVM

Excused

Chair Diego Conde

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 Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approval of the minutes from the May 20, 2021, ORC meeting, amended to separate Executive Session from Deliberations

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Old Business:

ADW Subcommittee Report

Commissioner Williamson stated that the subcommittee met today, and among topics discussed was the ORC's competitive standing in ADW licensing. He asked Executive Director McGrail to report on Senate Bill 165.

Director McGrail explained that the Legislature had concurred on SB 165 and sent it to the governor for her signature, which is anticipated. The bill originally was about historic horse racing (HHR) at Grants Pass Downs and the distribution of funds to racing industry groups. However, the bill was amended to eliminate HHR on ADW platforms. This is likely to affect some ORC licensees. The bill, if signed by the governor, would become law in January 2022.

Commissioner Williamson suggested the Commission move onto consideration of ADW license renewals.

New Business:

Review and Possible Approval of ADW License Renewals

ADW Supervisor Connie Winn reported briefly on each licensee, giving an overview of its status and recommending, in each case, the Commission grant a 5-year license renewal.

Action: Approve license renewal for AmWest Entertainment, LLC dba AmWager

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for Churchill Downs Technology Initiatives Company, dba TwinSpires

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for eBet Technologies Inc.

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for NYRA Bets, LLC

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for ODS Technologies, LP, dba TVG

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

In the case of Premier Turf Club, Ms. Winn noted the company has undergone a recent change in ownership, and one set of fingerprints is outstanding from its renewal application. She recommended approval, pending receipt of the fingerprints.

Action: Approve license renewal for Premier Turf Club, dba BetPTC, conditional on receipt and acceptance of outstanding fingerprints

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for US Off-Track, LLC, dba Greyhound Channel

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Annual Review of ADW Licenses Not Up for Renewal

Ms. Winn reported that she has done all quarterly reviews for three licensees not up for renewal. All are current on their licenses, bonds, and letter of credit; have a source market agreement with Grants Pass Downs; are registered in Oregon; and there were no findings of concern. She noted that the three passed their reviews, have had virtual audits within the past 6 months, and are in good standing. They are: Game Play Network, dba b Spot; ELS Gaming, LLC, dba Luckii.com; and Xpressbet, LLC.

Review and Possible Approval of Totalizator License Renewals

Josh Dieringer, Supervisor of Pari-mutuels, reported that six tote companies are up for renewal of their one-year licenses. He reported that each is in good standing, and, in each case, recommended approval.

Action: Approve license renewal for AmTote International

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for Colossusbets Ltd.

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for Exacta Systems

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for I-Neda Ltd.

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for Sportech Racing, LLC

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approve license renewal for United Tote

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Review and Possible Approval of Race Meet License Renewal: TMB Racing/Grants Pass Downs

Director McGrail reported that the Commission has received all the information necessary to approve the license, including the export list, financial resources, budget, security plan, responsible wagering, injury management guidelines, organizational chart, jockey and liability insurance, and registration to do business in Oregon. He noted TMB Racing has made significant improvements to the facility and to the quality of the system to transmit their signal. Some races are being televised, which should improve handle, he noted. He added that the Commission has not yet received an application for the track to provide historic horse racing, but one is expected. He recommended approval of the license.

Action: Approve race meet license renewal for TMB Racing/Grants Pass Downs

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Old Business:

Executive Director's Report

Director McGrail reported that the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in Union was held June 11-13, and he called it a qualified success. There were fewer races and horses than ideal -- with some trouble filling 15 races -- in part because of earlier uncertainty about whether COVID restrictions would permit the meet to be held. Both the ORC and the Oregon Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (OHBPA) added money to purses in hopes of drawing bigger fields. He noted that it is clearly a challenge to get from Grants Pass to Union, and everyone involved will need to come up with some strategies next year to improve attendance. He added there were no injuries to horses or riders, and no significant complaints. Director McGrail added that track consultant Steve Wood has benefited the fair meets.

In Grants Pass, 52 horses entered the seven time trials for the Firecracker Futurity, he reported.

He added that the Commission is working with a new testing lab. There have been a few bute overages. He noted the lab may be more efficient than its predecessor, and it will take some time for the horsemen to adjust.

Grants Pass Downs (GPD) Report

Rod Lowe, GPD chief operating officer, reported on track safety. He noted that jockeys, stewards, trainers, and horsemen are invited to the weekly safety meeting. Both the horse and human ambulances are parked on the track. GPD is proud to have Steve Wood as its track superintendent, he added. There has been one equine fatality this year, he noted, with 10 race days held, eight races per day, averaging fields of 7.3 horses.

GPD saw one hot week, when temperatures reached 105 degrees, and the track monitors the heat index, Mr. Lowe reported. The track distributed water and lots of hoses were available to the horsemen. Safety is their No. 1 priority, he stated.

Kendra Lellis, GPD vice president, stated that the two race days that were canceled to make it easier for horses to go to Union will be made up this fall. Average daily attendance over the 10 days of the spring meet so far has been 560, she reported. Average daily purses have been \$56,000. Total handle has been \$4,491,000, with \$241,000 of that on track.

Katy Burris, GPD chief administrative officer, reported on COVID protocol, noting that Josephine County is rated "moderate risk." Those who are fully vaccinated do not have to wear masks, and attendance in the stands is capped at 1000 people. Jockeys who leave Oregon and are not fully vaccinated, or who come from out of state, will be required to get a COVID test before riding.

Randy Evers, GPD president, reported on the OTB network. May handle was about \$1.8 million, with June anticipated to be \$1.7 million. Handle is expected to increase, perhaps to \$2 million monthly, as summer meets in Del Mar and Saratoga begin.

Mr. Evers stated that GPD is seeking to open more OTBs, looking at the Hermiston area and Portland's west side. He added that GPD conducts inspections of its OTBs to ensure they meet the same standards as they have at the racetrack.

The first Pick the Winners handicapping contest was won by Jim Kuvallis, he reported.

Mr. Evers stated that GPD is taking the lead on a new study on the economic impact of horse racing, updating one done in 2012. It will be done by Hunden Strategic Partners of Chicago, which has done similar studies for tracks including Churchill Downs, Kentucky Downs, Gulfstream Park, and Laurel Park. GPD is partnering with the ORC and industry groups. Representatives of the company will be in Oregon June 29. He added that information on the importance of horse racing is critical, and GPD wants to have study results ready for the 2022 Legislature.

He added that reporter Joe Drape of The New York Times is scheduled to come to Grants Pass with two photographers next week. Mr. Evers noted that Mr. Drape was interested in the number of women who are successful jockeys and trainers at the meet.

Other Business as May Properly Come Before the Commission:

None

Public Comment:

Leah Nelson, representing the Oregon Quarter Horse Racing Association (OQHRA), thanked TMB Racing for making the quarter horse time trials successful. She noted that the OQHRA provide a free lunch for everyone, and the day was a big success. AQHA Challenge races are coming up, she added, and the AQHA's chief racing officer, Janet VanBebber, is expected to attend the June 28 races.

Confirmation of next meeting:

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. July 15, 2021, via videoconference.

Adjournment:

Action: Adjourn meeting

Moved by: Commissioner Charles Williamson

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.