



Minutes
Oregon Racing Commission
March 18, 2021

Meeting Detail

The Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) met at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, March 18, 2021. The meeting was held via videoconference.

Call to Order

Chair Diego Conde called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.

In Attendance

Commissioners: Chair Diego Conde; Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan; Commissioner Jan Palmer, DVM

Absent

Commissioner Charles Williamson

Staff

Executive Director Jack McGrail; Catriona McCracken, Assistant Attorney General

Agenda Items

Approvals:

Action: Approval of the meeting agenda

Moved by: Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Action: Approval of the minutes from the Feb. 18, 2021, ORC meeting

Moved by: Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

Old Business:

Budget Subcommittee Report

Subcommittee Chair Palmer reported that the subcommittee met this week to discuss one-time allocations of reserve funds. The Commission has between \$740,000 and \$800,000 to disburse by June 30, she stated, beyond funds already earmarked for the fairs, jockey incentive and jockey insurance.

She explained that Tillamook County Fair (TCF) has requested \$42,000 and Crooked River Roundup (CRRU) \$45,000 to offset costs related to COVID. These range from increased costs for security, sanitation, and dividing venues into cohorts, to revenue reductions brought about by limits to crowd size, ticket and beverage sales.

Subcommittee Chair Palmer asked other industry groups to submit their requests for funding from the one-time allocation by April 9.

Action: Approve COVID-related funding requests from TCF and CRRU

Moved by: Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan

Seconded: Chair Diego Conde

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

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director McGrail reported that the ORC will be using a new lab for testing during the Grants Pass Downs meet. The contract has not been nailed down yet, and Senior State Veterinarian Tom Everman is working on the details, but Director McGrail stated he expected a smooth transition.

The recruitment to fill the chief investigator position closes March 24. A group from the Organization of Racing Investigators will be brought to Grants Pass to conduct a seminar May 15-19 for the new hire and other ORC staff. Racing and security personnel from Grants Pass Downs have been invited to attend.

The ORC budget meeting in Salem has been postponed until April 12. Approval is expected to be routine, Director McGrail reported.

On the national front, he stated, the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, scheduled to take effect July 2022, is now the subject of a lawsuit by the national Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association.

Director McGrail reported that representatives of the summer fair meets have been meeting monthly to discuss how to run their meets in COVID times, and they have done a lot of legwork with local and public health officials, individually and collaboratively. TCF and CRRU both are hopeful they can run four-day meets. The Eastern Oregon Livestock Show (EOLS) wants to run its three-day meet, but faces an additional challenge with the recent decision by Sun Downs in Kennewick to cancel its meet this year. EOLS hopes to have a decision by April 6. Harney County Fair is also exploring the feasibility of running this summer, with new dates in July instead of being held in conjunction with the September fair. Director McGrail noted that the ORC does not want to see any of the meets canceled.

Director McGrail noted that GPD's race dates run into the week CRRU starts, which is not ideal, but he stated he does not think that will have a big effect on the horse population in Prineville – that meet does not necessarily draw the same horses. He hopes the Racing Secretary John Everly can write races geared to the horse population. If EOLS does not run, GPD can adjust its dates to solve the problem.

Noting that Grace Kenworthy is leaving her role as vice president of TVG, Director McGrail thanked her for her contributions to and support of the racing industry. Gordon Tallman, who has long ties to Oregon racing, will take her place, and Director McGrail stated he looked forward to the same level of support.

Grants Pass Downs (GPD) Report

Rod Lowe, GPD chief operating officer, stated that everything is in place for the track's opening April 2. They have applications for more horses – 472 – than stalls – 460 – available. He has asked horsemen not bring their 2-year-old Thoroughbreds, as there will be no races for them in the spring/summer meet. Similarly, they have 39 applications for the 32 available RV spots.

Training starts April 5. Works is scheduled to be done by opening day on the chute extension for the 440-yard/6-furlong races. New finish lights are being completed, and security fencing and new stalls will be completed by move-in.

Randy Evers, GPD president, reported on the OTBs. Noting that pandemic protocols have limited capacity at the OTBs, he stated that February handle was a little under \$1 million. March should be \$1.4 to \$1.5 million, and Mr. Evers noted he expected that to keep going up with the expansion of OTB hours and wagering on Kentucky Derby prep races. Two new OTBs, in Roseburg and Eugene, will bring the total outlets to 11. Mr. Evers stated they are also pursuing opportunities in Ontario, Northeast Oregon, Beaverton, and partnering with tribal casinos.

New Business:

Review and possible approval of Form A for Tillamook County Fair

Director McGrail noted that the application is for the fair's regular dates, Aug. 11-14, subject to the meet receiving approval to run from county and health officials.

Action: Approve Form A for Tillamook County Fair

Moved by: Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan

Seconded: Commission Jan Palmer

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

Other Business as May Properly Come Before the Commission:

None

Public Comment:

Mr. Evers of GPD expressed his thanks to Grace Kenworthy, saying she had done a great job and been a friend to horseracing. He also congratulated Gordon Tallman on being her successor, noting TVG's importance to GPD's success.

Camy VonSeggern of the Tillamook County Fair thanked the Commission for its support of the fair's funding request, noting that it will make a huge difference in being able to conduct racing this year.

Contested Cases:

None

Confirmation of next meeting:

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. April 15, 2020, via videoconference.

Adjournment:

Action: Adjourn meeting

Moved by: Vice Chair Steve O'Hagan

Seconded: Commissioner Jan Palmer

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:01 p.m.