

Virginia Racing Commission

MINUTES

OF THE

COMMISSION MEETING

July 29, 2015

**Patrick Henry Building
West Reading Room
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219**

In Attendance

Commission Members:

J. Sargeant Reynolds, Jr., Chairman
D.G. Van Clief, Jr., Vice Chairman
Carol G. Dawson
I. Clinton Miller
Charles Steger, PhD

Commission Staff:

Bernard J. Hettel, Executive Secretary
C. Richard Harden, DVM, Equine Medical Director
David S. Lermond, Jr., Deputy Executive Secretary
Kimberly C. Mackey, Office Administrator
Courtney C. Reid, Program Support Technician

Office of Agriculture and Forestry

Sam Towell, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Attorney General's Office:

Joshua Laws, Esq.

At 9:59 a.m., the meeting of the Virginia Racing Commission (VRC) was called to order by Chairman Reynolds, with all Commissioners present.

The next VRC meeting was set for Wednesday, September 9th at 10:00 a.m., with the location to be determined.

The minutes of the meeting held on July 1, 2015 were amended to reflect one abstention on the vote to approve VHBPA purses for stakes races to be run at Laurel in the fall. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

The Commission approved the September 20th race day request from the Virginia Gold Cup Association at Great Meadow; this day will feature flat racing exclusively and will be run for the benefit of the SPCA.

The next agenda item was the review of the Virginia Equine Alliance (VEA) budget. Executive Director Jeb Hannum presented the budget, and after discussion about the appropriateness of using funds to support government affairs work, Frank Petramalo of the VHBPA said he would ask his board to forgive a \$45,000 portion of the loan it provided to VEA for governmental affairs expenses. The Commission approved the budget with the amendment.

During the public comment period, Heather Goodwin urged the Commission to approve the VEA budget in order for operations at Oak Ridge to begin in preparation for the scheduled fall harness races. Leanne Hester asked if the VEA budget would be altered if Colonial Downs were to reopen. Kristy Harold suggested that the VEA money being used to develop a venue to race at in Northern Virginia is not an appropriate use of state dollars. She also mentioned to the Commission the trickledown effect horse racing has on the agriculture industry as a whole. Tad Berman expressed his concerns regarding Easter Associates involvement with the Virginia Equine Alliance. Mr. Berman also expressed some concerns regarding the HBPA loan to the VEA.

The Commission unanimously approved the Virginia Breeders Fund Thoroughbred subcommittee's request for owners' bonuses on the September 20th race day at Great Meadow.

Frank Petramalo, Jr., Executive Director of the VHBPA, made a request for an additional \$350,000 in funds from the association's purse account for three graded stakes races to be run at Laurel Race Track in the fall. Petramalo explained that the Maryland Jockey Club had approached the Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association about providing the funds, and found that the association was overpaid in purse money for 2015 and had a cash flow problem so were reluctant to fund the purses. Petramalo explained that the Maryland Horsemen did offer to eliminate three of their own races, and instead fund the All-Along, a fillies race, in the amount of \$150,000 rather than the planned \$100,000. In addition, they agreed to allow the VHBPA to keep all wagering revenue from those races. Further, Petramalo emphasized that unless those races were held this year, their graded stakes accreditation would not be retained and could not be run in Virginia next year. After questioning and discussion, the Commission voted 4 – 1 to approve the request.

With no further business set forth on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.