

John F. Tanner Jr., *Chair*
Gillian Gordon-Moore, *Vice Chair*
Stuart C. Siegel
Martha S. Mavredes
Nancy L. Williams



Waqas Ahmed
Executive Secretary

Brian Wolford
Deputy Executive Secretary

Virginia Racing Commission
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Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held March 11, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Location: Electronically

In Attendance:

Commission Members
John F. Tanner Jr., Chair
Gillian Gordon-Moore, Vice Chair
Stuart C. Siegel
Martha S. Mavredes
Nancy L. Williams

Commission Staff & Presenters
Waqas Ahmed, Executive Secretary
Brian Wolford, Deputy Executive Secretary
Kimberly Mackey, Director of Operations
Israel Saavedra, Director of Licensing and Investigations
Eris Jones, Director of Audit and Compliance
Katreena Lewis, Director of Policy and Licensing
Gabrielle Cordle, Director of Finance
John Birchfield, Wagering Systems Officer
Camille Breland, Audit and Compliance Manager
Frank Hopf, Colonial Downs

The regular meeting of the Virginia Racing Commission was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on March 11, 2026, by Vice Chair John F. Tanner Jr. A roll call confirmed all commissioners were present, establishing a quorum. Vice Chair John F. Tanner welcomed newly appointed Commissioners, Martha S. Mavredes and Nancy L. Williams.

Under election of officers, a motion to nominate John F. Tanner Jr. as Chair was made by Commissioner Siegel, seconded by Commissioner Gordon-Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to nominate Gillian Gordon-Moore as Vice Chair was made by Commissioner Siegel, seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting of December 15, 2025, was made by Commissioner Siegel, seconded by Vice Chair Gordon-Moore. The motion was approved unanimously.

Under department reports, Chair John Tanner Jr. discussed priorities for the upcoming year, including sustainability of horseracing, integrity, safety, and adapting to changes in the gaming landscape. No public comments were offered during the first public comment period.

Executive Secretary Waqas Ahmed introduced the full team, commending their efforts toward transparency and improvement. Mr. Ahmed announced the March 2026 Colonial Downs meet beginning March 12 through March 14, including the Virginia Derby and Virginia Oaks. Reported that all regulatory preparations, staffing, licensing, and safety procedures were complete. Noted that the VRC now has ten full-time employees, reaching its maximum authorized staffing level. Discussed ongoing office relocation efforts and infrastructure improvements. Provided legislative updates related to gaming and iGaming legislation. Reported historical horse racing handle exceeded \$6.3 billion in the prior year. Discussed regulatory modernization efforts and ongoing collaboration with industry stakeholders.

Director of Finance, Gabrielle Cordle reported on the completion of the biennial budget draft and updated revenue estimates through 2027. Reviewed financial trends from FY2023 – FY2025. Director Cordle explained staffing and operational pressures resulting from expanded regulatory responsibilities and HISA obligations.

Under old business, Director of Licensing and Policy, Katreena Lewis presented the following matters for the Commissioner's consideration. Director Lewis recommended approval of conditional licenses for the Shenandoah County Agricultural Foundation for its spring meet and the Virginia Downs Foundation for its fall meet. She explained that the conditional nature of the licenses reflects the licensees' operational structure, under which the Virginia Equine Alliance (VEA) conducts both race meets, while preserving the entities' non-delegable regulatory responsibilities. Director Lewis further noted that certain obligations, including the submission of additional operational information, must be fulfilled by the licensees, with the cooperation of the VEA, no later than March 27, 2026. She stated that the conditional licenses do not reflect any finding of misconduct but rather ensure that the Commission receives the information necessary to verify compliance.

Director Lewis further recommended approval of the 2026 license for The Virginia Gold Cup Association, Inc. She also recommended approval of the 2026 license for Colonial Downs Group, LLC, including Colonial Downs' request to conduct National Steeplechase Association races during the 2026 summer meet, to add an additional steeplechase race card on June 29, 2026, and to conduct steeplechase races on July 23, August 13, and September 3, 2026. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Commission unanimously approved the foregoing license applications and requests.

Director Lewis also recommended approval of permanent 2026 Advance Deposit Wagering licenses for Churchill Downs Technology Initiatives Company; NYRABets, LLC; ODS Technologies, L.P. dba TVG and FanDuel Racing; and Xpressbet, LLC. A motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Siegel and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion passed unanimously.

Under new business, Executive Secretary Ahmed recommended that the Commission approve the ratification of the 2026 Voluntary Implementation Agreement with Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority. A motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Siegel and seconded by Commissioner Gordon-Moore. The motion passed unanimously.



Under Delegation of Authority, Director of Licensing and Policy Katreena Lewis introduced the proposed delegation. Staff recommended its approval in order to provide a clear and transparent framework for administrative operations while preserving the Commission's policymaking and oversight authority. A motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Mavredes and seconded by Commissioner Siegel. The motion passed unanimously.

Director of Audit and Compliance Eris Jones presented the request from the Virginia Harness Horse Association's request for withdrawal of \$72,455. A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon-Moore, seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion carried unanimously.

Under the Virginia Harness Horse Association's racing benevolence request, staff recommends proceeding with the general benevolence request (\$27,000) and the individual assistance request (\$10,000). A motion was made by Commissioner Mavredes, seconded by Commissioner Siegel. The motion passed unanimously.

Under the proposed Virginia Breeders Fund distributions for calendar year 2025 related to administration, promotion, and awards for Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses. A motion was made by Commissioner Siegel and seconded by Commissioner Mavredes. The following Commissioners voted, aye: Chair John Tanner; Commissioner Siegel; Commissioner Mavredes; and Commissioner Williams. Vice Chair Gordon Moore abstained from the vote.

During the public comment period, Debbie Easter shared comments regarding the upcoming race meetings. Commissioner Siegel expressed the importance of meeting in person. Commissioner Gordon-Moore thanked the staff for the well written and informative reports. Commissioner Mavredes was appreciative of the work presented by staff.

With no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

