

In The Matter Of:
VIRGINIA RACING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING

Transcript of Proceedings
June 24, 2026

ORTEGA INTERNATIONAL REPORTING
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1 VIRGINIA:

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4 VIRGINIA RACING COMMISSION

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6
7 PUBLIC HEARING

8
9
10 Wednesday, June 24, 2026

11
12 1:00 p.m.

13
14
15 When heard at:

16
17 Colonial Downs

18 Ballroom, 4th Floor

19 10515 Colonial Downs Parkway

20 New Kent, Virginia 23124

21
22
23
24 Reported by:
25 JUAN ORTEGA, CCR

1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2

3 COMMISSION MEMBERS:

4 John F. Tanner, Jr., Chair

5 Stuart C. Siegel

6 Nancy Love Williams

7 Martha Sedwick Mavredes

8 Gillian Gordon-Moore

9

COMMISSION STAFF:

10

Waqas Ahmed, Executive Secretary

11

Kimberly C. Mackey, Director of Operations

12

Frank Hopf, Director of Racing Operations
At Colonial Downs

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 June 24, 2026

3
4 CHAIR TANNER: I'll call this
5 meeting of the Virginia Racing
6 Commission to order. Today is
7 Wednesday, June 24th, 2026. It's now
8 1:01. We are convening here at
9 Colonial Downs in the ballroom on the
10 fourth floor.

11 Mr. Ahmed, please call the roll.

12 MR. AHMED: Commissioner Tanner.

13 CHAIR TANNER: Here.

14 MR. AHMED: Commissioner
15 Gordon-Moore.

16 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Here.

17 MR. AHMED: Commissioner
18 Williams.

19 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Here.

20 MR. AHMED: Commissioner Siegel.

21 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Here.

22 MR. AHMED: Commissioner
23 Mavredes.

24 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Here.

25 MR. AHMED: All are present.

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2 CHAIR TANNER: Terrific. We'll
3 now proceed.

4 We'll now open the floor for our
5 first period of public comment. Each
6 speaker is limited to three minutes
7 with the exception of any open
8 disciplinary application files.
9 Please state your name and
10 organization before speaking, and we
11 have microphones on the podium.

12 Okay. Seeing no speakers. The
13 public comment period is closed.

14 The next item is approval of the
15 minutes from the previous meeting of
16 The Commission, which was held on
17 March 11th, 2026.

18 The commissioners have had an
19 opportunity to review the drafted
20 minutes.

21 Are there any questions or
22 corrections or additions?

23 Okay. Is there a motion to
24 approve the minutes from the March
25 11th meeting?

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2 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: So moved.

3 CHAIR TANNER: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE:

5 Second.

6 CHAIR TANNER: Moved and

7 seconded.

8 All in favor say aye.

9 (Ayes).

10 Any opposed, same sign.

11 The motion carries.

12 We will now hear agency reports.

13 First, we have the executive

14 secretary's record.

15 MR. AHMED: Good afternoon,

16 commissioners, stakeholders, and

17 members of the public.

18 Before we proceed today with

19 today's formal agenda -- everybody

20 hear me?

21 Okay. I want to provide a brief

22 update on our agency's operations

23 covering our recent successes,

24 structural changes, and the road

25 ahead.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 First, I want to formally welcome
3 the newest additions to our racing
4 official's team. Whitney Verbal will
5 continue as a senior Commonwealth
6 steward, and joining her will be two
7 new stewards, Brooke Hawkins and Reese
8 Howard.

9 If you all want to stand up.

10 Thank you for being here. Jim
11 Lodges, who recently served as the
12 head steward last year returns as our
13 new safety director. There's Jim.

14 And Dr. Stanford has onboarded a
15 large team of regulatory
16 veterinarians, who are obviously not
17 here. They're on the back side. So
18 congratulations to them. We'll have
19 ample coverage there.

20 And then lastly, we want to
21 welcome Michelle Kuwait, who has
22 joined our finance team. Michelle, if
23 you can wave hello. Thank you.

24 We've also formalized our
25 department's structure to match the

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agency's expanded responsibilities.

So these mainly relate to the names of the different divisions. The former Investigations Division is now officially the Division of Enforcement. The Division of Audit and Compliance is now Division of Audit. And Licensing -- and Policy is now known as Licensing. They'll cover both individual licensing as well as enterprise licensing.

Next month, we'll onboard a new policy advisor who will report directly to the executive secretary while we wait for the final decision from the Attorney General's office on our request for an in-house general counsel.

Operationally, we continue our formal after-action reviews following the Shenandoah Downs Spring Meet and Virginia Gold Cup. These reviews allowed us to sit down with track management and the horsemen to

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2 identify what went well and what
3 requires corrective action.

4 We'll continue to work closely
5 with our licensees to update -- to
6 implement those improvements. At this
7 point, there's not anything
8 substantive requiring commission
9 action. Each licensee is working with
10 us to ensure proper response to the
11 identified issues. So we want to
12 thank the stakeholders from each
13 licensee for working with us.

14 Looking ahead to the fall
15 licensing season, we are implementing
16 a new timeline this year. All
17 licensing, including ADWs and tracks
18 will be asked to submit their
19 applications and race-day requests by
20 mid-August or early September.

21 Katreena Lewis, our director of
22 licensing, will be issuing the exact
23 guidelines, as well as new
24 applications to each group. This
25 extended runway allows our staff and

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commissioners adequate time to review materials and engage in substantive discussions before the next racing -- race season takes shape.

Now for the fiscal updates.

We're preparing for the upcoming budget cycle for fiscal year 2027.

The Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry expects our finalized legislative and budgetary priorities by mid-September. I want to take a moment at this time to recognize Secretary Katie Frasier and her team, Deputy Secretary Ben Roe, who is here, for their support.

Her administration's commitment to supporting Virginia's agro-business and equine sector has been instrumental in our work to secure the resources that this agency and our racing industry needs. She is committed to helping us rightsize this agency, and I would encourage the industry to continue dialogue and

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partner with us on helping the
secretary achieve our common goals.

Between the new administration
legislator's budget and policy teams,
there are a lot of opportunities for
us to showcase work that is being done
by the industry and its state
partners.

Thank you, Ben, for attending.

While we do have a lot to
celebrate in all the successes,
transparency does require us to name
the challenges that we're facing as an
agency. We're -- we're regulating, as
you all know, a rapidly-growing
multibillion-dollar industry under
baseline regulations and resources
that in many cases have not been
updated since 1998. We're also
navigating a national shortage of
equine veterinarians that demands
constant coordination to maintain
continuous coverage at our race meets.

For fiscal year 2026, our agency

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1 brought in over \$40 million in
2 non-general fund revenues through
3 historical horse racing and ADW
4 revenues. However, we've been stuck
5 at a \$4.6 million appropriation, which
6 limits our operations as the oversight
7 body across all racing in the
8 Commonwealth.
9

10 With the secretary's assistance,
11 we were very pleased to see avenues in
12 the most recent budget proposal that
13 will enable us to pay for HISA fees
14 and rising costs for this upcoming
15 year. I believe that was signed --
16 has not yet been signed, right?
17 Budget will be signed soon.

18 We look forward with the -- so we
19 look forward to working with the
20 administration, legislators, and the
21 industry to highlight the need for
22 additional resources to appropriately
23 utilize these revenues, non-general
24 fund revenues, and provide the
25 necessary oversight to ensure that we

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2 continue to benefit from historical
3 horse racing, live racing, and all of
4 its accompanying revenues.

5 With that, Virginia Racing
6 Commission is more prepared and more
7 specialized at any point in our
8 history. I'm proud of the team that
9 we have built. I'd like to thank both
10 the staff and the board for their
11 support in helping us accomplish this.

12 Mr. Chairman, I'll turn it back
13 to you.

14 CHAIR TANNER: Thank you.

15 Are there any questions for the
16 executive secretary?

17 All right. Next, we will hear
18 the Shenandoah Downs Spring 2026 Meet
19 recap.

20 MR. WOOD: Good afternoon,
21 commissioners. My name is Derrell
22 Wood. I work for the Virginia Equine
23 Alliance and I'm the operations
24 manager at Shenandoah Downs.

25 The spring meet this year was

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seven weeks. We ran every Saturday and Sunday. We lost half a day to a -- a heavy rain, but got the other days all in. A pretty good meet. I think more support from horsemen than we've seen in prior spring meets. There were Sundays we had 14 and 15 races, and the barn area was full. So very encouraging fifth spring meet we had.

The history, just I know there's a couple of new commissioners. And a brief history about harness racing here in the -- in the state. Harness racing took place here in Colonial from 1998 through 2014. The next year, in 2015, it moved to Oak Ridge Estate in Nelson County. And in 2016, the VEA invested close to a million dollars in upgrading the track surface itself to a state-of-the-art oval, and we've been there now for 11 years. 11 years. Yeah.

This is probably the biggest plus

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 that we experienced this year. Last
3 year, we built a -- almost a
4 \$2-million barn in the back stretch.
5 It really provides safe housing for
6 the horses. Just a welcome -- welcome
7 aspect to this property. We had 175
8 horses in there this spring. It's
9 32,500 square feet, and it's been kind
10 of a game changer of sorts for
11 Shenandoah Downs, and I know the
12 horsemen most welcome the addition.

13 What we did for the barn is we
14 wanted to recognize some influential
15 horsemen over the years at Shenandoah,
16 so we started a wall of colors this
17 year. And Chief Robins, who you see
18 here on the left-hand side, longtime
19 horseman, and he was instrumental in
20 building. He was kind of the project
21 manager of that barn at Shenandoah.
22 So he was the first inductee, and we
23 had two more this spring.

24 Scott Woogen, right here in the
25 audience. Scott has been involved for

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the VHHA for decades. Was here at the very beginning. He's been president of the VHHA now for ten years. He's a horseman. He's a driver. Competed overseas in amateur driving competitions, and it's really the reason why harness racing has never missed a beat here, even when Colonial Downs closed down the racing circuit. Just kept right on going. So Scott was number two inductee.

And number three was Dr. Charlie Dunavant. Doc was the first president of the VHHA. He was instrumental in getting pari-mutuel legislation passed and getting harness racing initially at Colonial Downs. And he still has trotters that compete in Virginia Breeder's races and stake races every year. So between Doc, Scott, and Chief, we've got a good first three folks that are recognized forever up on that barn.

Handle. Scott kind of, before

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1 the meet, threw a curve ball at us to
2 a sense and wanted to go with
3 seven-horse fields instead of
4 eight-horse fields. And I thought the
5 handle might take a tumble because of
6 that. It turns out we increased the
7 handle by 9 percent, which is great.
8 More people from around the country
9 and via TwinSpires and TBG wagered on
10 us. And beyond tray handle increased
11 as well, which is great. Almost 7
12 percent, so kind of a good start to
13 2026.
14

15 Some of the Virginia champions --
16 let me see if I can get this now.
17 We've got, this year, the -- the
18 finals for Virginia Breeders and
19 Virginia Sired Stakes Company rose
20 from \$80,000 and \$60,000 respectively,
21 to \$100,000 finals. And that puts us
22 at a pretty good place nationally.
23 It's a great decenter program. And,
24 hopefully, that number of 100,000 is
25 going to keep drawing participation in

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the agro-business going forward.

Caviart Daisy is a great story. Was a 2-year-old champion. Set a track record this year of 1:53.1. Twice actually. Did the same mark in her elimination as she did the final, and that was in the 3-year-old Filly pace category.

The next one, winner Caviart Gemma. Scott, I think I pronounced that right. But that was Scott's horse. And he's a champion in the Filly track category.

This was a harding boy, Mike Whitacker, who you see holding the trophy. Longtime trainer at Colonial -- at Shenandoah Downs, and he's got a horse named -- Vulcan Hanover. That's why you mishear -- that's been the best driver that we've had over the 11 years. So great to see Mike after all this work in the winner circle in a \$100,000 race.

And the final one is Caviart

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1 Cadet. So that completed the
2 3-year-old competition. We do the
3 2-year-olds at the end of the fall on
4 Halloween day. But we also had the
5 Sired Stakes races, and two of them
6 are going to be shown right here. The
7 Sired Stake was held in mid-meet for
8 the 3-year-olds. And this one is
9 KNL Neely Girl. Jesse Leinbach is the
10 driver.
11

12 Jesse, in last year's Sired
13 Stakes competition, got his first
14 diving win ever at Shenandoah Downs in
15 that race. So kudos to an owner that
16 really is in the bike competing.

17 And Seminole Breeze is the colt
18 trot champion. Trained by Stacey
19 McLenaghan, who you can see on the
20 right-hand side, Stacey grew up here
21 in Providence Forge and went to the
22 New Kent school system. And she's
23 still training horses and is at
24 Shenandoah Downs, and she's been --
25 Scott, the family's been here from day

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2 one, from '98.

3 MR. SCOTT WOOGEN: I think her
4 father, Ron McLenaghan, was on the
5 board for years. He was a builder and
6 a horseman from Canada. Came down
7 from Canada. So their family, I
8 think, has been involved for three
9 generations.

10 MR. WOOD: Yeah. So kind of neat
11 to see that all the way through the --
12 the tech age that Stacey is still
13 competing and winning.

14 Horse of the Meet. Lou's Starr,
15 this is a great story owned by
16 Dan Chansky, who has appeared before
17 The Commission before because --
18 remember, maybe two years ago, but had
19 some ideas on how to grow ownership in
20 the sport. Dan is based in Richmond.
21 His horse won five for five this meet.
22 Debbie's husband, Scott, was the
23 trainer up at Debbie Warnick's. The
24 horse competed in the Little Brown Jug
25 last year. That's probably the most

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prestigious pacing event in the country.

So we had that quality of a -- of a champion at Shenandoah Downs and the horse went five for five. So great meet for Lou's.

Leading driver and trainer, Fern Paquet, has been a regular for years. This is probably his sixth driving title. And on the right is Scott Warnick, and that's Debbie's husband, who had a great meet as well.

Just wanted to recognize a few of the kind of unsung heroes, so to speak. People that work behind the scenes. Pat Mouw is 73 years old. Lives in Chicago. Drives up in a trailer, which she stays in throughout the meet. She is the racing office point person on site, and she's also the paddock judge and just a great woman and we are thankful to have her.

On the right are two of our main stall cleaners, Jaelyn and Noah. But

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2 they are local people. They go to
3 high school. They come after school
4 and clean the stalls to get horse --
5 or to get the stalls ready for the
6 next weekend. So great people.

7 Our outriders, Richard Chandler,
8 works at Rosecroft Raceway. He comes
9 down most weekends. Chrissy Johnson
10 on the right, she comes from
11 Northfield Park in Cleveland. That's
12 how hard it is to find outriders to --
13 to provide the safety element during
14 racing.

15 Chrissy, by the way, is going to
16 represent the U.S. in an international
17 female drivers competition in Wales in
18 August. So kind of a neat little
19 aside.

20 Our starting crew is a -- a huge
21 safety element. Charlie Heishman on
22 the left is the driver. Clarence
23 Martin on the right is a starter.
24 Clarence supplies our starting gates.
25 He comes down from Pennsylvania every

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weekend, and he owns the gates. He's a great starter. I don't think we've ever had an incident with Clarence at the helm.

We have three well-known horses and participants come down to visit this week. JL Cruze is a \$2-million winning horse. We brought him down on Kentucky Derby Day to meet the public, and we had a whole lot of James Madison University there that day that got their selfies taken with a harness horse that's a -- that's a super star.

George Teague in the middle is a well-known Virginia -- Virginia-born. Now competes in Delaware, but he's a two-horse of the years over the decades, and he was able to come up and receive an award for his service in the business as a Virginia-born resident. And then on the right, is Randy Waples, who is a -- Ron Waples, who is a hall-of-fame driver that just came by one morning, announced, and

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2 wanted to see the track and experience
3 some of the buzz that's -- that's
4 happening.

5 And I think we're going to turn
6 it over to Aidan for the dailies.

7 MR. TURNAGE-BARNEY: Good
8 afternoon, commissioners. My name is
9 Aidan Turnage-Barney, and I work with
10 Derrell on the Virginia Equine
11 Alliance to put on the Shenandoah
12 Downs meet. I'm going to a little bit
13 about some of the cool things we're
14 doing up there and from the spring
15 meet.

16 So first up, we've got William
17 Carter, a 21-year-old rising star
18 throughout the sport. William got his
19 first win ever at the Shenandoah Downs
20 County Fair races in 2021, and has
21 been among the most successful drivers
22 on the grounds since. He got his
23 500th career win driving at
24 Shenandoah Downs on June 15th.

25 Roger Hammer is an iconic trainer

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2 from Bedford, Pennsylvania, who has
3 supported Virginia racing for over 20
4 years competing at both Colonial and
5 Shenandoah.

6 Next slide. We celebrated his
7 80th birthday with a T-shirt giveaway
8 and birthday cake on opening day.

9 Shenandoah Downs represents a
10 diverse group of horsemen from 14
11 states and Canada. Jerry Longo and
12 Nick Roland pictured here are examples
13 of trainers who compete cross-country
14 from Minnesota to Virginia.

15 John's Dream is a 13-year-old
16 pacer owned by Chuck Perry of Suffolk,
17 Virginia, who is the winningest
18 harness horse of Virginia history with
19 35 wins. He has won \$410,000
20 throughout his -- throughout his
21 career, and we will be opening the
22 fall meet with a John's Dream shirt
23 giveaway.

24 Publicity. So at
25 Shenandoah Downs, we market the

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1 harness races product via paid media
2 throughout the entire Shenandoah
3 Valley. So listed there are a couple
4 of examples of radio stations, TV
5 groups, newspapers that we utilize to
6 get promotion out across the valley
7 during a spring racing meet.
8

9 Just an example. The Mountain
10 Courier did an article on us. The
11 reporter came out for three days and
12 actually wrote a five-page article
13 that was right on the front cover of
14 the magazine.

15 This was a really cool one. So
16 this guy, JB Demers, came -- started a
17 website called harnesselite.com, and
18 he came out to the track for several
19 days. We didn't know he was there.
20 But in his article, the next slide has
21 a quote from him that I think was
22 really awesome.

23 "Racing desperately needs younger
24 fans. Discovering that a day at the
25 track can be social, exciting, and

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2 genuinely fun. That may ultimately be
3 what impressed me most about the
4 Shenandoah Downs. They seem to
5 understand something important. The
6 future of racing is not about
7 wagering, it's about creating
8 experiences that make people want to
9 come back."

10 And I think that quote really
11 just embodies what we're all about
12 there at Shenandoah.

13 Promotions. At Shenandoah, we
14 take pride in trying to offer a
15 promotion. Every single race day, we
16 got -- you know, often several a day.
17 So throughout the 14 days, if you
18 come, there's always something going
19 to be going on.

20 We did the own-a-horse
21 promotion -- sorry, if you'll go.

22 We have the own-a-horse promotor
23 in collaboration with the VHHA.
24 Throughout the duration of the meet,
25 24 fans had a chance to come out and

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own a horse for a day. So what that means is they get to come in and have the experience of, you know, going down to the paddock, meeting their connection, seeing their horse, talking to the drivers. And then VHHA helps us out by doubling the purses for those races. So they actually get a chance to earn the winnings of the owner who owns the winning horse in the real race.

So that's a really cool experience. And over the last couple of years, I believe we have four trainers who have gone through this -- won this contest, gone through the program, and have now full-time changed their careers and are training the standardbreds full time.

The Purina Horse Feed Rockingham Co-op. This is a very cool promotion we do with the -- the Rockingham Co-op, kind of a farm equipment store in Woodstock. And Purina, their --

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their client.

So, basically, we promote them throughout our program, we put it on social media every week, and we name a race every race day. And then right after the race, the winner -- I go down with a bag of horse feed and they get the bag for free and we take a picture of them.

Corgi Dog Derby. Not much to say about it. We do the Corgis in the spring, Weiners in the fall. Always a big hit. We try to go somewhere 40 and 50 dogs, and it's always full. And very cool this year. They had the NFL Corgi dog champion. So there was a champion from every NFL stadium who went to San Francisco during the Superbowl halftime show and did a race. And we had the representatives at Shenandoah from the Eagles, the Giants, the Ravens, the Bills, maybe the Commanders as well.

Grateful fans. So we created a

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new VIP experience for fans this year. Entering an online contest, they got a chance to come out to the track, get a named race, a winner circle presentation, a ride in the starter's car, and a four-pack of Shenandoah Downs Grateful Dad T-shirts.

Clash of the holidays. So on a closing weekend, we had a beach towel giveaway. Trying something new there. And with it being close to Memorial Day, we decided to have a little of a clash of the holidays promotion. So Santa came in and brought the towels for everybody.

Secretary of Agriculture Katie Frazier came to visit twice at the track. That was very cool to see her coming out and jumping right in.

Delegate senators and their staff members came out for tours of the racetrack, which often included a double-seater jot car race. Shoutout

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2 to Mike Pearson for helping get
3 everybody out.

4 Yes. So the JMU students. So we
5 really try to focus on developing
6 those young fans. And, you know,
7 Harrisonburg is only half an hour from
8 the track. So these kids come out.
9 And, you know, historically, we've
10 always had a good presence with them
11 in the fall. But last spring, they
12 didn't come out a single weekend.

13 So it was very cool to see that
14 this year they came out five out of
15 seven weekends. Sometimes both days.
16 And really just through a continued
17 relationships with the fraternity
18 network there, The Breeze student
19 newspaper, just continuing to try to
20 grow that younger fan awareness, and
21 we're really seeing the results with
22 the amount of them that are coming out
23 to the track on a weekly basis.

24 We will be returning in the fall.
25 Racing Saturdays and Sundays again

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2 from September 19th to November 1st.
3 Post times are always 1:05 daily, and
4 we look forward to welcoming everybody
5 back in the fall.

6 And any questions, I'd be happy
7 to take.

8 CHAIR TANNER: Thank you, Aidan.
9 I have a question about the Superbowl,
10 did we win?

11 MR. TURNAGE-BARNEY: Yes, I
12 believe --

13 CHAIR TANNER: No?

14 MR. TURNAGE-BARNEY: The
15 bigger -- the bigger ones didn't show
16 up to the NFL show.

17 CHAIR TANNER: All right. Thank
18 you.

19 Next -- go ahead.

20 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: I was
21 just -- I really approve of you
22 getting young people in here.

23 Are you able to give them entry
24 to working on the back side or getting
25 involved with farms as well as seeing

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2 the races?

3 MR. TURNAGE-BARNEY: So we do do
4 a Harness Horse Youth Foundation Day,
5 which typically comes in the fall. So
6 we have an opportunity there for young
7 folks who are interested to come and
8 learn a little bit more about the
9 harness industry. And the other thing
10 that I would say is a great example of
11 that is the own-a-horse program. And
12 so, we've had own-a-horse days where
13 we specifically target JMU kids. So
14 they get to go to the back side. They
15 get to see kind of how the meat and
16 potatoes is made.

17 And yeah, I think -- I think that
18 there's been quite a few young people.
19 Noah and Jaelyn being great examples
20 who are coming up in the area or at
21 Harrisonburg who have, you know,
22 really shown an interest in the
23 industry and can potentially develop a
24 new -- a new career.

25 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: You

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2 mentioned that you cut races by one
3 from eight to seven, but yet you had
4 an increase in revenues.

5 Did you add days? What was the
6 reasoning --

7 MR. TURNAGE-BARNEY: No.

8 Actually, as a matter of fact, we ran
9 less days than we did in comparison to
10 last year because of the half day we
11 had to cancel because of the rain.

12 So, yes, we were -- we were
13 anticipating a small drop due to, you
14 know, the lower betting options going
15 from eight to seven-horse fields. But
16 really, what I think we're seeing, is
17 the spreading of the awareness. There
18 are people across the country who are
19 following Shenandoah Downs who weren't
20 last year. And we are getting to see
21 it in the handles. So we believe what
22 we're doing is working.

23 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Okay.

24 CHAIR TANNER: Great. Thank you
25 so much.

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2 MR. TURNAGE-BARNEY: Thank you
3 all very much.

4 CHAIR TANNER: At this time,
5 we'll hear a preview of the
6 Colonial Downs 2026 Summer Live Racing
7 Meet. Frank.

8 MR. HOPF: Good afternoon, Mr.
9 Chair, commissioners. Welcome, new
10 commissioners.

11 My name is Frank Hopf, senior
12 director of racing here at Colonial
13 Downs. We are less than 24 hours away
14 from our 2026 summer season. So we're
15 looking forward to it. Getting lots
16 of last minute stuff getting worked
17 out right now.

18 First slide right here is just
19 going to go over our calendar. We
20 start tomorrow. We'll end on Labor
21 Day, September 7th. New racing
22 schedule this year is going to be
23 Thursday through Sunday. Post time
24 will be 12:30 each day. We do have a
25 handful of 12:00 o'clock starts that

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will be the Festival of Racing, which will be August 1st this year. And then on Labor Day, 12:00 o'clock post, and we'll wrap up the season with the Old Dominion Derby this year.

So we'll start -- start quickly with Corgi dog racing this weekend. And then middle of the season with the festival, and then wrapping up the season with Old Dominion Derby Day.

Mentioned the post times. Plan is to run eight races Thursday and Friday. Saturday, nine races. If entry goes well, we'll get to ten. And the Sunday's plan is to go eight races to nine, all depending on how entries go.

Monday, June 29th, this coming Monday, we will be running an all-jump-day card. First post will be 12 -- I mean, 10:45, I apologize, we'll have nine jump races on the card. So this will be a specifically jump card only here at Colonial Downs.

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Hopefully, spotlight the races. They will be available for full wagering around the country. So we're excited to see how that will work itself out. So yeah, we're going to give the jumps a full day to themselves, and then we'll run three additional dates with three races as we've had the last couple of years during the season.

As I mentioned, festival racing will be August 1st. First post at 12:00 o'clock. This year -- the second addition of the Claiming Crown Showcase, thanks to the VHPBA for bringing these races to Colonial Downs. This year, the races will be on a Saturday and they will be held on August 22nd. I'm looking forward to having those races back. And then as I mentioned, Old Dominion Derby Day will be on our closing day on September 7th. The post time will be 12:00 o'clock.

Some other promotions that we're

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going to do each day of racing. On Thursdays -- I think my vision is starting to fail me a little bit. \$5 tacos and \$5 Modelos. On Fridays, we'll do \$4 Frose and \$4 domestic beers. Saturdays, \$6 Colonial lemonades. And then on Sundays with the Sunday racing now we will do some \$6 Bloody Marys, Mimosas, and a \$2 kid drinks, which will be Capri-Suns. So we are going to focus a lot of Sundays with kid activities.

Promotions that we've got. Corgi dog racing this Saturday. We have 64 dogs ready to run on the track with figuring out who the champion will be.

July 25th, we have been working with VCU the last season or so promoting the Virginia Derby Day. And so, this year is a group partnership. We will have a VCU day here that they are actually going to be reaching out to about 100,000 of their alumni and undergrads to come out to the track.

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We've got some promotions for them.

The basketball team will be out here. The head coach will be out here. And we are finalizing some details of having some distinguished members of VCU out here as well, maybe talking to the group out here as well. So more to come with that. But we're excited about that partnership and really building upon having VCU in our backyard.

In addition to that, we're having conversations with William & Mary, University of Virginia. So we are still working with some of those ideas down the road as well. Similar concepts were the partnership is really driving awareness and, obviously, getting people out here to the track.

August 1st, the festival racing, we'll have our live music. We'll have more entertainment that we're finalizing now that will certainly

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make the importance of festival racing for us and promoted pretty heavily this year. That's an important day, so we want to make sure that we target that heavily this season.

August 15th, Wiener dog racing. And September -- is it September 5th? September 5th, we will -- the last Saturday, we'll have a college day here as well. Again, trying to drive the local schools, since they're back in school, out to the track for a day of racing.

Sundays being our new racing race day for this season. Focused a lot of -- more appreciation type days. Family days. July 19th will be Military Appreciation Day. And with these appreciation days, what we are doing is offering tickets, free tickets to the jockey club for teachers, military, first responders to enjoy a day of racing out here at the track. And we'll have some

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additional promotions tied to these days.

July 26th, the Autism Society of Central Virginia will be out here in the jockey club. I believe we have a couple of hundred people signed up. Children and their families coming out to the day of racing. So we got some things worked out with -- with that group and to enjoy a little horse race. We've had them out here the last couple of years in smaller groups, but we're able to reach out to them and get a bigger event out here at the track for a day of racing.

Teacher Appreciation Day will be August 2nd. We're also doing a teacher supply drive for that day. So if you bring supplies to us, then we'll be giving away some items to those people who bring supplies to the teachers here at New Kent. It is open to all teachers in the surrounding districts and counties here in

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Central Virginia.

August 16th, a little different.

We're going to do some princess and tractor days. So again, tied with the kids. We are going to have some princesses out here. We'll have some tractors out here so everyone can kind of just get dressed up and have some fun out on the track with the kids.

And then August 30th will be First Responders Day, working with New Kent County to have fire trucks and first responder vehicles here on site along with the fire chief and stuff like that interacting with the guests there.

Also on every Sunday, we'll have a petting zoo, as we have in the past, along with the Junior Jockey Club. So we've been working on signing up kids to get a season pass, to come out, get free tickets out to the track. After the fourth race, we will be doing a stick pony horse race every Sunday

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2 with the kids who are here. So just
3 trying to really build the family fun
4 days we've had the last couple of
5 years and just moving those to Sunday.

6 If you don't mind going back to
7 that previous slide.

8 So looking at our marketing. You
9 know, we've been really working hard.
10 The team here has been working hard
11 since last October getting ready for
12 not only the March meet, but this --
13 our summer meet. And so, we've been
14 working on a lot of different avenues
15 with our marketing in particular. We
16 have been able to kind of separate a
17 little bit from the Rosie's marketing
18 as has been in the past. We have our
19 own social media channels now that are
20 separate for Colonial Downs, along
21 with how we kind of spend some of our
22 marketing using -- utilizing our true
23 media partners that actually go and do
24 the buy for us.

25 So one of the things that we've

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done this year is we've partnered with World Horse Racing. If -- those who may not know who they are, they are, obviously, very large over there in Europe. And what our goal is with that is to help promote Colonial Downs along with the festival of racing. If you -- so we did -- they did a video for us.

If you can take it out of presentation mode, I think we should be able to play this video. If you'll go back to that other slide again. I think if you take it out of presentation mode, it could -- it should play the video. Probably not going to show the video? Okay.

So anyway, I apologize for that. So we had Charlie Applebee who's shown. It's about a 90-second video and they are talking about bringing nations' pride out here back in '23 and winning the Arlington million and their experience here at

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2 Colonial Downs along with some other
3 people as well.

4 So we posted that. They will be
5 on site on August 1st as well, leading
6 up -- and leading up to festival
7 promoting racing here at
8 Colonial Downs. So those races
9 certainly have and always had a strong
10 international flavor, so we want to
11 make sure that we continue that
12 tradition here at Colonial Downs.

13 Now you can move off on that
14 slide, thank you.

15 Other things we've been working
16 on is pushing our suites. So we've
17 been doing a variety of marketing
18 campaigns, a lot of it on digital and
19 social promoting our suites and trying
20 to drive more event sales out here,
21 especially with the new schedule. We
22 are seeing some positive results.
23 We've done, you know, Black Friday
24 specials back in November, and a
25 variety of kind of promotions

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2 dedicated to previous purchasers from
3 the last couple of years and getting
4 some new -- some new and some
5 returning business back here. So
6 we're excited to continue pushing our
7 events here at the track.

8 Racing ticketing. We've
9 certainly put a lot of push into
10 selling tickets. We looked at our
11 pricing from last year and kind of
12 revamped it a little bit, and we are
13 pushing a lot of different elements
14 through our social platforms that you
15 guys hopefully have seen, if you're
16 following Colonial Downs.

17 So, yeah, these are just some
18 examples or T-shirt giveaway for
19 July 4th, since it's our 250th
20 birthday here in America. We did do a
21 special 250 T-shirt that will be given
22 out to the first 500 customers on next
23 Saturday.

24 Again, just promoting Teacher
25 Appreciation Day, and then our

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2 Corgi -- Corgi dog day promotions.

3 Looking at some of the
4 improvements that we've done headed
5 into this season. I think hopefully
6 one area that this group has seen is
7 probably the saddling paddock. We did
8 get the pavers fixed and replaced. So
9 now the pavers are -- completely
10 enclosed the circle, the stalls, along
11 with the path down to the track. So I
12 thought that turned out pretty well.
13 Excited to have that there.

14 So we replaced the HVAC system in
15 the jockeys room. That was in need of
16 some replacements. So that has been
17 completed. We were able to get a few
18 more pieces of equipment for the
19 track. A turf tractor and a couple of
20 harrows and mowers so we can keep
21 moving forward with keeping the track
22 to the level that we want it to be at.

23 And then we are finally final
24 with the turf track irrigation project
25 that had been going on prior to my

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2 arrival. So wrapping up that project.

3 So continue to -- continue to
4 build upon our existing operation
5 here. So excited to have these
6 improvements done.

7 Again, this is where my eyes are
8 failing on me here. Oh, yeah. So
9 facility operations layout. We are
10 looking at doing some different things
11 with the -- the apron area. If you
12 haven't been able to go down there yet
13 at this point, we moved the mutuel
14 lines along the brick wall closer to
15 the betting public. Felt that the
16 lines were a little bit tucked away.

17 So we moved tellers closer along
18 where the mutuel machines had been
19 close to -- to the -- to our customers
20 along with a dedicated concession
21 stand area. So there's a new 20-by-20
22 tent out there right now that will
23 serve as our concession stand. And
24 that should help getting customers
25 food in a more efficient way than kind

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2 of where the layout had been the last
3 couple of seasons.

4 The center tent by the finish
5 line, we're going to turn that into a
6 little bit of a bar area. So we've
7 got a new built-out bar down there and
8 we're going to put bar highs out there
9 and kind of make that more a
10 lounge-ish bar type area so people can
11 enjoy the races and get a cold
12 beverage and enjoy the day.

13 Again, we've got more merchandise
14 this year. We really started to kind
15 of ramp that up last year. Bella and
16 Emily have been certainly buying a lot
17 of merchandise for us to offer to our
18 customers. So we're excited about
19 that.

20 Again, we've been talking about
21 and looking at our ticketing and food
22 pricing. So we've made some changes
23 there that we feel that are far more
24 customer friendly to get people out
25 here to the track. So we're going to

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2 continue to monitor how that plays
3 itself out this season.

4 And then our website. So if
5 anyone has been on the website the
6 last few months, you'll see a lot more
7 information there regarding to racing.
8 The biggest for me is to make sure
9 that customers can find as much
10 information about a race day as they
11 can when they go to the website so
12 they're not making phone call, phone
13 call, phone call to everybody.

14 So there's been a tremendous
15 amount of improvement to our website.
16 Each race day has a -- there's a
17 calendar. Each race day will list
18 post times, gates opening, and general
19 information on the race day to help
20 those customers have an idea on what
21 we're doing that particular day
22 they're looking to come out to the
23 track.

24 Racing office and staff.
25 Dan Bork is coming back for his third

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1
2 race season. Obviously, March counts
3 as race season. So we're excited to
4 have Dan back. He's, you know,
5 obviously, one of the best in the
6 country at that. When I did this
7 presentation, we were at over 1,400
8 stall applications. We will have a
9 very full barn area this racing
10 season. So that's obviously a
11 positive.

12 For track operations, Roy Smith,
13 who is 40-plus years in -- in roles of
14 overseeing the track -- dirt track
15 operations will be our track
16 superintendent this summer. And then,
17 as I mentioned with -- with wagering,
18 we've done -- sorry. Just getting
19 something here. We've added a \$3
20 late Pick 3 at a 15-percent takeout.
21 That's something that's become a
22 little bit more trendy in the
23 industry. So a lot of tracks offer
24 that as a \$3 turf Pick 3, but since we
25 will always be a turf Pick 3 here at

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Colonial, we're just going to call it a late \$3 Pick 3.

And then a couple of other things we've been working on is some how-to videos on how to wager here at Colonial, trying to help new customers that are coming out or those who are just not comfortable with how to make a wager with the tellers or at the machines.

So we've got some videos that we'll be playing during the racing. It's on the website. When we send out Know-Before-You-Go e-Mails, we'll link that too as well. So we're trying to help customers, when they get here, feel more comfortable making wagers. And, obviously, we've hired a lot more guest ambassadors this upcoming season and all of them have been trained and will continue to be taught on how to assist customers when they have questions regarding wagering in their day here at Colonial Downs.

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2 And I believe that's it. Okay.
3 So that's a quick recap of our summer
4 season that starts in 23 hours. I'm
5 happy to answer any questions.

6 CHAIR TANNER: I think it's 22
7 now.

8 Any questions?

9 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Yes.

10 CHAIR TANNER: Mr. Siegel.

11 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Thank you.

12 I think it's pretty impressive
13 what you're doing to market to these
14 people when they're here. It seems
15 like you have something going on every
16 day. I'm interested in your
17 advertising and marketing budget and
18 how that might increase to get more
19 people to attend. Once they're here,
20 you're certainly going to retain them.
21 What are you doing to try to get more
22 of them out?

23 MR. HOPF: A few other things.
24 Obviously, a lot of it is -- we have a
25 partnership with CBS6 that we've done

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the last couple of years with commercials there and having their live show out here on the track.

Friday, they will be on track.

They've gotten some tape segments that will kind of promote the experience here at Colonial Downs on what a day looks like. A lot of our marketing's been through our true media partner. It's -- it's -- really a lot of it is on the digital side of the spend, and they work on, you know, advertising through Hulu and those types of -- those avenues as well. So it's pretty widespread. This is our first season with them.

So the one thing that -- in conversation with them each is that we're really going to drill down on what is working with our spend. Our spend has not changed in the last couple of years for marketing. But again, it's really driving, not just only impressions for us, but who's

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1 actually driving and coming and
2 actually clicking through, going on
3 our website, who is purchasing
4 tickets.
5

6 Because it's important for us to
7 understand how we spend our money,
8 being more efficient with it than just
9 adding more money to -- to certain
10 situations.

11 So, obviously, we've done some
12 things with the airport this year. If
13 you've flown out of Richmond,
14 hopefully, you've seen a lot of our
15 marketing slides or calendar at the --
16 at all locations there. Our event
17 with VCU with the -- before March and
18 continuing with that. So, yeah, we're
19 trying to really -- trying to spread
20 out the spend as best we can, but
21 being more efficient with trying to
22 get people who are going to come and
23 understanding where our marketing is
24 really coming from as well.

25 CHAIR TANNER: Commissioner

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2 Gordon-Moore.

3 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Will
4 the steeplechase racing day be
5 telecast?

6 MR. HOPF: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: And
8 what happens when FanDuel goes out of
9 commission in the middle of July?

10 MR. HOPF: It's a good question.
11 So, obviously, FanDuel, last day I
12 believe on air is June 30th. I'm
13 not -- I'm not aware of anything else
14 changing.

15 Jill, are you aware of anything?
16 I'm not. I mean, so -- yeah. I'm not
17 sure. I know NYRA does their thing
18 with Fox Sports. Obviously, we'll
19 probably be a lot more -- hopefully,
20 shown on TwinSpires and whatever
21 platforms they're using, but right
22 now, I'm not -- I don't have a real
23 good answer of what replaces FanDuel
24 TVG TV.

25 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Is

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2 there a place to see race recaps?

3 MR. HOPF: On site?

4 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Well,
5 online. Is there somewhere --

6 MR. HOPF: Through the betting
7 platforms, yes, you could be able to
8 watch --

9 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Only
10 through the betting platforms, not
11 through Colonial Downs? Like, videos
12 on YouTube like Maryland does, they
13 post the YouTube videos after the
14 races.

15 SPEAKER: They're on our website.

16 MR. HOPF: They're on the
17 website, through Roberts?

18 SPEAKER: Yeah.

19 MR. HOPF: Okay. So Roberts,
20 through our website, I guess has it.
21 I wasn't -- are you sure about that?

22 Okay. Okay. I guess through
23 Equibase. Definitely we can go to
24 Equibase, you can watch the replays on
25 there if you have an account with

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2 them.

3 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Yeah.
4 I was just looking for where people
5 who might not have an account who have
6 an interest could find something. The
7 general public.

8 MR. HOPF: Yeah.

9 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: So
10 you're saying on the website?

11 MR. HOPF: Yes. If you -- if you
12 go -- I know Equibase shows replays on
13 their -- on their platform. So you
14 can find that on our website. It will
15 take you to web -- Equibase and
16 through the results.

17 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: One
18 more thing. I really like your junior
19 jockey club idea. That's a great
20 idea. Get kids involved. One more
21 thing, anybody reaching out to the
22 Navy?

23 A lot of people down there that
24 might enjoy racing.

25 MR. HOPF: Yes, Mr. Patrolo, who

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2 is here, has been working closely
3 trying to get the military out here.
4 Obviously, with foreign events going
5 on along with the 250 celebrations
6 where it's been a little trickier than
7 we probably hoped for, but we are
8 working with everyone we can here in
9 the Commonwealth to get out here and
10 market to as well.

11 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIR TANNER: Any others?

14 All right. So we'll move along
15 then to -- thank you, Frank.

16 We'll move along to the Virginia
17 Gold Cup report.

18 MR. GRIFFIN: Chair Tanner,
19 commissioners, my name is Allen
20 Griffin and I'm chairman of the
21 Virginia Gold Cup Association. I'm
22 here to talk about the 101st running
23 of the Virginia Gold Cup held on the
24 first Saturday in May, same Saturday
25 as another race meet down in Kentucky

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somewhere.

If you go next slide. From a racing perspective, we ran seven races over hurdles and timber for the total purse structure of \$405,000. I will tell you that they were the best race course conditions we've ever had, according to the horsemen with this past -- past race meet, and I'm glad to report that the relationship between Great Meadow and the race course and the Virginia Gold Cup Association has never been better. They were very, on both sides, excited about the future in that regard.

Next, please. We had probably the largest crowd we've had pre-COVID -- since the pre-COVID era. There was a lot of work done along those lines, including, interestingly, we advertised a lot in Norfolk, Williamsburg, and Lynchburg, and saw a significant increase in sales from that distance away. So we drew a

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2 fairly large range of people from
3 across the Commonwealth.

4 Next, please. Also, we upgraded
5 our Wi-Fi at Gold Cup and it allows us
6 to then highlight the opportunity to
7 bet on the TwinSpires app. And to the
8 end, the VEA Jill Byrne put together a
9 really nice little video that we send
10 out to all of the attendees
11 instructing them on how to download
12 the TwinSpires app and then how to use
13 it. And that led to the largest
14 handle, one day we handled -- we've
15 ever had at Gold Cup. A little over
16 \$200,000 for the day. And so, we were
17 very pleased with that.

18 And our next move, we've been in
19 discussion with some opportunities to
20 explore our signal to England and
21 Ireland since half -- over half the
22 horses are from Ireland that run, that
23 we're looking forward to maybe
24 expanding that a little bit forward,
25 too.

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2 Next, please. To the
3 uninitiated. Virginia Gold Cup
4 Association, like other NSA-sanctioned
5 steeplechase meets, they're really
6 community events. And in addition to
7 the multigenerational attendees there,
8 you know, my children and
9 grandchildren attended their first
10 Gold Cup in utero.

11 But I will tell you that you'll
12 see four generations at the different
13 tailgates there. Also, it's also a
14 gift back to the community. The
15 reason why we have such community
16 buy-in is because each steeplechase
17 race meet gives back to the community.

18 For instance, local recent
19 charities, The Fauquier Mental Health
20 Association, The Fauquier Free Clinic,
21 some of the different booths are clubs
22 at the high schools, they all
23 participate and gain funding that way.
24 Also, we have -- this year, we had the
25 Northern Virginia Veterans Association

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2 run a little raffle that day and they
3 picked up \$15,000 for a very worthy
4 cause.

5 So I think that the high
6 attendance we get and the
7 cross-sectional enthusiasm also has a
8 lot to do with the way that
9 steeplechase meets really are
10 integrated into the community itself.

11 Next, please. The Virginia --
12 The Virginia Racing Commission
13 initiated a series of exercises,
14 especially the one basically after the
15 race. Let's -- let's debrief and see
16 where we are. I will tell you that we
17 gained a lot from that. I'd like to
18 thank Barb Shannon, especially, for
19 all the work she put in on -- on our
20 end at Gold Cup, the long hours.

21 But it really paid off in terms
22 of the improvement and the interaction
23 between the different race officials,
24 the veterinarians, the medical staff,
25 the racing commission itself, and also

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our horsemen. I think it added clarity and we look forward to the continuation of those exercises.

Next, please. You know, it's not just Virginia Gold Cup. The pari-mutuel steeplechasing is growing significantly in America. We have an enhanced presence. I was just over at Laurel last Sunday where we had two jump meets. Talked to Bill Noff about increasing the Laurel presence there also. He offered us three days at Fair Hill with -- I'm excited about a hybrid scenario where we'd have four race meets -- eight horse -- eight race meets -- eight races with four jump meets and four jump races and four flat races. We're going to do that three days and I think it's a great model.

We've also been offered the opportunity to run at Kentucky Downs next year with a jump only race meet and upwards of \$600,000 in purses. Of

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1 course, we got a great opportunity at
2 Colonial Downs. We're very much
3 looking forward to next Monday. And
4 then -- and NYRA has also asked for an
5 enhanced opportunity. I have to think
6 that the greatest push on that is what
7 Virginia has done here.

8 I want to tell you, I want to
9 thank the VHPBA because they really
10 have carried us there. What -- Marina
11 and I go to Laurel every race meet,
12 every weekend we're at a different
13 race meet, and the different states
14 all ask us, what is the Virginia model
15 all about? And the first place we
16 started is the relationship that we
17 have with VHPBA and the fact that
18 they've been so supportive for us over
19 this long period of time. It's really
20 paid off, and to that end, thank you.

21 Next, please, and last. After 21
22 years at the helm, Dr. Will Allison
23 has chosen the "Emeritus" title at
24 Gold Cup. Will -- Will has been my
25

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mentor and friend professionally, but at the Gold Cup for -- I've been -- we've been co-chairs for the last ten years. Will is a wonderful man. He's my hero. And when you see him at the races in the chairman's tent, please tell him that you appreciate all that he's done for the sport.

At this point, I'd like to take any questions and -- that y'all might have.

CHAIR TANNER: Does anyone have any questions for Dr. Griffin? No.

All right. Looks like you're off the hook. Thank you.

At this point, I'd like to go a little bit off of the agenda and recognize the deputy director -- I'm going to get this wrong, guys. My apologies. Deputy Secretary of the Department of Ag and Forestry, Ben Rowe.

MR. ROWE: Yeah. Thank you.
Thank you, Chairman Tanner,

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commissioners and Waqas for having me here. My name is Ben Rowe. I'm deputy secretary of agriculture and forestry. It's an honor to work alongside Secretary Katie Frazier to represent Virginia's first and third largest industries of agriculture and forestry of which the equine industry, including racing, standard-bred, thoroughbred horse racing is a very large part. I've been very happy about some of the things we've been able to accomplish with the Racing Commission the first half of this year and look forward to continued success.

It's really optimistic to hear everything positive that's happening in the industry and all of the growth that's happening and please note that we stand alongside you to support that and help make sure that your industry is a success. Please feel free to reach out to us anytime if we could ever be of assistance to you. Our

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secretary also, in addition to The Virginia Racing Commission, works with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Virginia Department of Forestry and work together to ensure that ag and forestry can be a success here in the Commonwealth. Thank you.

CHAIR TANNER: Thank you, sir.

We'll now take up items of new business. The first of which the request for approval of the 2026 Virginia Horsemen's Benevolence And Protective Association Benevolence Budget. Mr. Ahmed, would you summarize the staff assessment?

MR. AHMED: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia, 30 percent of the breakage from each pari-mutuel pool is deposited into the Racing Benevolence Fund for each meet. Those funds are disbursed with commission approval for gambling

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addiction and substance abuse counseling, recreational and educational programs, or other related purposes.

The Virginia HBPA has submitted a proposed 2026 budget of \$220,920. The proposed budget exceeds available funds by about \$14,000. However, Virginia HBPA has confirmed in writing that any expenditures exceeding available fund balances will be covered directly by the Virginia HBPA. And this is a practice that they have been following for the last couple of years.

Although these are non-state-owned restricted funds, they are tracked and independently audited annually and the HBPA is required to submit that audit to the VRC. I'd note for The Commission that staff followed up with the HBPA on several line items that showed meaningful variance between last year's budgeted

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and actual figures.

HBPA has provided explanations.

The biggest one, the miscellaneous category increase from \$28,000 budgeted last year to 50,000 proposed this year reflects the expansion of the meet from 44 race dates in 2025 to 49 this year, and encompasses dormitory items such as bed frames, fans, washers, dryers, and recreational equipment for the backstretch community.

On the dental, medical, and optical line, cost came in well below prior -- prior year budget due to a provider change and enhanced controls implemented by the Virginia HBPA, and I'll compliment Mr. Glen Burman on doing that.

So representatives from the HBPA are here to answer any questions.

CHAIR TANNER: Are there any questions for either the staff or the HBPA?

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2 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: In
3 looking at this, the miscellaneous
4 category has now become the largest
5 category in the budget. And so, has
6 there been any thought given to
7 breaking that down a little bit so
8 that the large budget category is not
9 miscellaneous?

10 MR. BERMAN: Good afternoon.

11 Glen Berman for the HBPA.

12 It's the way the categories has
13 always been, so we kind of just left
14 it the same. We never know what
15 requests are going to come in.
16 They're all kinds. As Mr. Ahmed
17 mentioned, it's anything from, you
18 know, bed frames and bed mattresses to
19 washing machines to who knows what is
20 going to happen. And people walk in
21 the door and "I got this problem, I
22 got that problem, can you help us take
23 care of it?"

24 So we tend to do. And so, we
25 could -- I mean, I -- we can show you

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2 every check we write and then make a
3 category for each item, and if you'd
4 like a better breakdown, you know, we
5 can do that.

6 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: From what
7 you're saying then it's not that
8 you're planning to pay -- I'm just
9 going to throw some numbers out --
10 2,000 for bed frames and, you know,
11 6,000 for something else. You have a
12 category of 50,000 as needs come up
13 with these different things. You --

14 MR. BERMAN: We -- we -- we
15 showed -- we showed up this year and
16 they'll tell us we got 20 beds that
17 are -- mattresses that are moldy and
18 need to be replaced. We didn't know
19 that until we walked in the door in
20 June.

21 The washing machines all had to
22 be replaced. So we bought 14 washing
23 machines. Didn't know that before we
24 showed up here. Didn't know that when
25 we made the budget, but they needed to

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2 be replaced.

3 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: And next
4 year, there may be something else. I
5 see what you're doing then.

6 MR. BERMAN: And so, that's the
7 kind of -- that's the kind of thing
8 that happens. And so, we just handle
9 it as it comes.

10 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: It's
11 routine, but different routine each
12 year.

13 MR. BERMAN: Similar stuff, but
14 you never know what it's going to be
15 or how much it's going to be, and
16 we -- we want to -- I'm sorry.

17 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: What did
18 you spend last year in that category?

19 MR. BERMAN: It looks like
20 42,000. And we got, you know, some
21 more days this year. And it's going
22 to be a bigger -- more people here, I
23 think, this year.

24 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Thank
25 you.

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2 CHAIR TANNER: Other questions?

3 It seems to me the washers seem
4 to be a recurring problem. That may
5 be a category where we take a look at
6 figuring how we can better prepare for
7 that. But whether it goes under
8 miscellaneous or equipment whatever.

9 MR. BERMAN: And there's always
10 these -- always a question of who
11 should be paying for that.

12 CHAIR TANNER: Yeah.

13 MR. BERMAN: And so --

14 CHAIR TANNER: And why they need
15 to be replaced so often and you're all
16 going to do that.

17 MR. BERMAN: Yeah. Well, we do
18 the best we can with it. We store
19 parts in our office of the most
20 commonly, you know, the lock latch
21 that breaks all the time and certain
22 parts of the panel tend to break all
23 the time. So we store them. And
24 then -- and then it's a job of
25 training someone who knows how to fix

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2 it.

3 This year, I think we have a
4 groom that we know is good at it, so
5 we'll use that ourselves. It won't
6 cost us anything.

7 CHAIR TANNER: That's good.
8 Thank you.

9 All right. Is there a motion to
10 approve the -- I'm sorry?

11 Is there a motion to approve the
12 2026 VHBPA benevolence budget in the
13 amount of \$220,920 as presented with
14 the understanding that any
15 expenditures exceeding available
16 Racing Benevolence Fund balances will
17 be funded directly by the VHBPA?

18 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: So moved.

19 CHAIR TANNER: Is there a second?

20 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: I'll
21 second it.

22 CHAIR TANNER: Okay. The motion
23 has been moved and seconded. All in
24 favor please say aye.

25 (Ayes).

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 Any opposed? Same sign.

3 The motion carries.

4 Next on the agenda is a request
5 for approval of pari-mutuel retainage
6 percentages.

7 Is this going in and out? Can
8 you all hear it okay?

9 Okay. So next is a request for
10 approval of pari-mutuel retainage
11 percentages submitted by Colonial
12 Downs with the agreement of VHBPA for
13 the 2026 summer live racing meet.

14 Mr. Ahmed, would you please
15 summarize that staff's request or
16 status assessment?

17 MR. AHMED: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman.

19 Staff has no concerns with the
20 rates, and I believe Frank went over
21 those rates in his presentation. But
22 just as a reminder, the early Pick 5
23 pool will be 12 percent takeout with a
24 carryover. Late Pick 5, also 12
25 percent takeover with a carryover.

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2 Late Pick 3 is a 15 percent takeout
3 with a \$3 minimum. And Pick 6 is 15
4 percent takeout with a carryover.

5 These rates are consistent with
6 prior commission approval and staff
7 recommends approval.

8 CHAIR TANNER: Thank you.

9 Are there any questions?

10 Is there a motion to approve the
11 pari-mutual retainage percentages for
12 the 2026 Colonial Downs summer meet as
13 submitted by the Colonial Downs and
14 agreed to by the VHBPA?

15 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: So moved.

16 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE:
17 Second.

18 CHAIR TANNER: Motion's been
19 moved and seconded. All in favor
20 please say aye.

21 (Ayes).

22 Opposed? Same sign.

23 The motion carries.

24 Next. The final item in new
25 items is the review of staff

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recommendations concerning corrections
to the 2025 Virginia Breeders Fund
distribution.

Mr. Ahmed, would you please
present the staff position?

MR. AHMED: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

I am happy to present this item.
I think it shows the collaboration
between the partners in the industry
as well as the regulators shows our
controls are working.

So as a brief background, the
Virginia Breeders Fund in a
non-general fund special revenue fund
under the VRC. Oversight of the
day-to-day promotion and distribution
functions are under the VRC umbrella.
However, the VRC has historically
delegated this to the Virginia
Thoroughbred Association for the
thoroughbred side of the fund due to
their expertise and involvement in the
industry.

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2 Earlier this year, or last month,
3 VTA self-reported an administrative
4 error in the 2025 distribution that
5 resulted in overpayments to certain
6 participants and the exclusion or
7 underpayment of two individuals
8 participating in the fund.

9 I want to acknowledge Virginia
10 Thoroughbred Association for surfacing
11 this issue promptly. That kind of
12 transparency is the foundation of
13 effective oversight that our two
14 organizations have spoken about and is
15 exactly how these situations should be
16 handled.

17 After consulting with VTA, our
18 legal counsel and staff, I'm
19 recommending the following corrective
20 path for The Commission for its
21 approval.

22 First, the VTA will advance the
23 owned funds, which total approximately
24 \$21,000. Just for perspective,
25 \$2 million was the original amount

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1
2 that we were talking about of that
3 \$21,000 will need to be advanced by
4 VTA from its own operating capital to
5 immediately pay the individuals who
6 were excluded or underpaid. These
7 stakeholders will be made whole
8 without delay.

9 Second, VTA will issue formal
10 written communications that VRC staff
11 will work with them on to all
12 individuals who received owner
13 payments explaining the administrative
14 error and requesting return of the
15 excess funds. VRC staff and VTA are
16 collaborating on that language and
17 we'll send it to the commissioners
18 once this is approved just for your
19 information.

20 Third, any decisions regarding
21 the funds that are made today or any
22 decisions regarding funds that are not
23 successfully returned will be deferred
24 until after the initial recruitment
25 effort is complete and we have a full

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 accounting. We'll return to The
3 Commission with a recommendation at
4 that stage.

5 I recommend The Commission
6 approve the correct distribution and
7 we're available to answer any
8 questions.

9 CHAIR TANNER: Thank you.

10 Again, I would like to
11 acknowledge -- okay. All right. I
12 want to acknowledge the VTA
13 self-reporting of this error. I also
14 appreciate the staff and the VTA
15 working together on this. It's really
16 an example, like Waqas said, of how we
17 should be working together.

18 Is there a motion to approve --

19 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: I have a
20 question.

21 CHAIR TANNER: Certainly.

22 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So in
23 terms of the recruitment efforts, what
24 exactly is envisioned there?

25 MS. MYERS: I guess I will take

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2 that.

3 Again, we -- we have not focused
4 on a new hypothetical, what if an
5 individual owes us \$25 and we can't
6 get it back, or what if an individual
7 owes \$250 and we can't get it back, et
8 cetera? But eventually, that would
9 come down to myself and counsel to VTA
10 determining when an amount that is --
11 should be paid back, but that the
12 individual has not responded, is not
13 willing to -- to work with the VTA
14 to -- to pay it back, we would
15 determine when that amount is de
16 minimis and essentially a bad debt
17 that VTA would write off essentially.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So will
19 there be any incentive provided in
20 the -- in the communication that goes
21 out that would say, really, "Pony up
22 the money"? No pun intended. But,
23 you know.

24 MS. MYERS: Well, certainly what
25 could next could happen is next year's

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2 distribution would be -- could be any
3 amount that they were overpaid this
4 year could be subtracted from next
5 year's distribution.

6 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: So that
7 would be an option?

8 MS. MYERS: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: And they
10 would be made aware of that in advance
11 at the time of the initial --

12 MS. MYERS: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: --
14 communication? So in other words,
15 right off the bat, there's an incentive
16 that's provided.

17 MS. MYERS: Correct.

18 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Okay.

19 CHAIR TANNER: Any other
20 questions?

21 Okay. I want to note, for the
22 record, that any approval today is
23 non-precedential and does not limit
24 The Commission's authority to require
25 additional documentation or take

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2 further action as this matter
3 develops.

4 Is there a motion to approve the
5 new distribution and authorize the
6 executive secretary to issue
7 corrective guidance to the Virginia
8 Thoroughbred Association?

9 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: So moved.

10 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Second.

11 CHAIR TANNER: We have a motion
12 and a second.

13 All in favor, please indicate by
14 saying aye.

15 (Ayes).

16 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: I'll
17 recuse myself from this vote.

18 CHAIR TANNER: Any opposed?

19 The motion carries.

20 We will now open the floor for a
21 second period of public comment. Each
22 speaker is, again, limited to three
23 minutes. Please be sure to state your
24 name and organization.

25 MR. SCOTT WOOGEN: I'm Scott

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 Woogen. I'm the president of the
3 Virginia Harness Horse Association. I
4 haven't had the opportunity to come to
5 too many meetings due to work
6 considerations. But due to my
7 advancing age and retirement, you'll
8 be seeing me more. In any event, your
9 question about seven-horse fields
10 versus eight-horse fields,
11 historically, harness racing is raced
12 on half-mile ovals for a distance of a
13 mile.

14 And the postposition is critical.
15 A horse that travels one horse length
16 further out than the rail position
17 travels 88 feet more through that
18 mile. So traveling towards the rail
19 is critical. It means that the eighth
20 horse in an eight-horse field is at a
21 tremendous disadvantage. The seventh
22 horse a little less so. But for the
23 betting public, it's a better
24 opportunity not to bet on horses that
25 have limited opportunities to win.

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2 And I think it's reflected itself in
3 the fact that we're increasing our
4 annual.

5 It doesn't mean we have less
6 races. We actually -- to support the
7 horsemen, we make sure we have more
8 races with seven horses rather than
9 less races with eight horses. So it
10 provides everyone the opportunity to
11 race and the betters and the gamblers
12 an opportunity to be more successful.
13 And to the horse owners and trainers,
14 we pay, historically, in harness
15 racing, the first five positions. So
16 two horses rather than three horses
17 fall out of the money in each race.
18 We do support an entry to give them an
19 additional fee for their expenses.
20 But certainly, everyone wants to earn
21 those first five positions.

22 CHAIR TANNER: Thank you.

23 MR. SCOTT WOOGEN: Thank you.

24 CHAIR TANNER: That was very
25 helpful. Thank you.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 Any other comments? Okay.

3 Seeing no further speakers, public
4 comment is closed.

5 The Commission has business that
6 requires us to enter a closed session.

7 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: I
8 move that we go into a closed meeting
9 in accordance with the Virginia
10 Freedom of Information Act. The
11 purpose of this closed session is
12 discussion of personal matters and
13 discussion of ongoing regulatory
14 investigation. The subject of this
15 closed session is the terms of the
16 executive secretary's employment
17 agreement and specific ongoing
18 regulatory investigations regarding
19 licensees and permittees. The
20 applicable exemptions from open
21 meeting requirements under the Freedom
22 Of Information Act are 2.2-3711(A)1
23 and the 2.2-3711(A)7.

24 CHAIR TANNER: Do I have a
25 second?

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2 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Second.

3 CHAIR TANNER: All in favor of
4 entering executive session say aye.
5 (Ayes).

6 All right. At this point, we
7 will adjourn to executive session.

8 You all can stay. We will
9 adjourn.

10
11 NOTE: Whereupon the hearing is
12 held in closed session and reconvenes
13 as follows:

14
15 CHAIR TANNER: All right. I move
16 that we move on and record our
17 certification that to the best of each
18 members' knowledge, only public
19 business matters lawfully exempted
20 from open meeting requirements under
21 this chapter and only such public
22 business matters as were identified in
23 the motion by which the closed meeting
24 was convened were heard, discussed, or
25 considered in a closed meeting.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 Executive Secretary Ahmed, please
3 call a roll call.

4 MR. AHMED: Commissioner Tanner.

5 CHAIR TANNER: Aye.

6 MR. AHMED: Commissioner
7 Gordon-Moore.

8 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: Aye.

9 MR. AHMED: Commissioner
10 Williams.

11 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Aye.

12 MR. AHMED: Commissioner
13 Mavredes.

14 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Aye.

15 MR. AHMED: Commissioner Siegel.

16 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Aye.

17 CHAIR TANNER: The motion -- the
18 certification is adopted.

19 I will entertain a motion to
20 authorize the executive secretary to
21 act as directed in the matter of
22 investigative file VRC-26-001 in
23 closed session.

24 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: So moved.

25 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: Second.

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2 CHAIR TANNER: All right. It's
3 been made and seconded. All in favor
4 please say aye.

5 (Ayes).

6 Any opposed same sign.

7 Motion carries.

8 I will entertain a motion to
9 direct the department of human
10 resource management to increase the
11 salary of the executive secretary to
12 the midpoint of a Level 3 range
13 designated for agency heads, state
14 budget effective July 1, 2026.

15 Do I have a motion?

16 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE: So
17 moved.

18 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Second.

19 CHAIR TANNER: It's been moved
20 and seconded. All in favor please say
21 aye.

22 (Ayes).

23 Opposed same sign.

24 Motion carries.

25 I will entertain a motion to

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2 designate Commissioner Siegel and
3 Williams to develop and implement an
4 employment agreement for Executive
5 Secretary Waqas Ahmed.

6 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Moved.

7 COMMISSIONER GORDON-MOORE:

8 Second.

9 CHAIR TANNER: It's been moved
10 and seconded. All in favor please say
11 aye.

12 (Ayes).

13 Opposed same sign.

14 Okay. The motion carries.

15 Is there any further business to
16 come before The Commission?

17 Hearing none. Is there a motion
18 to adjourn?

19 COMMISSIONER SIEGEL: So moved.

20 COMMISSIONER MAVREDES: Second.

21 CHAIR TANNER: All in favor say
22 aye.

23 (Ayes).

24 All opposed? Clean up.

25 Motion carries. We're adjourned.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2
3 STATE OF VIRGINIA)

4 : ss.

5 COUNTY OF NEW KENT)

6 I, JUAN ORTEGA, a Notary Public
7 within and for the State of Virginia,
8 do hereby certify:9 THAT SAID PROCEEDINGS is a
10 transcript of the Virginia Racing
11 Commission Public Hearing, when held on
12 June 24, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. in
13 New Kent, Virginia.14 I further certify this is a true
15 and accurate transcript to the best of
16 my ability to hear and understand the
17 proceedings and other incidents of the
18 hearing herein as set down to the best
19 of my ability.20 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
21 set my hand this 8th day of July 2026.22
23 _____

24 JUAN ORTEGA, CCR

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