



WHRC Commission Meeting

Location: Emerald Downs, 2300 Ron Crockett Drive, Auburn WA 98001, 5th Floor Tribal Council Room and Zoom Video Conference

Date: November 9, 2023

Call to Order: 9:30 am (PT)

Adjourned: 10:09 am (PT)

Attendees: Chair Robert Lopez, Commissioner Douglas Moore, Commissioner Dr. Claude Ragle (via Zoom), Ex Officio Representative Joe Schmick (via Zoom), WHRC Executive Secretary Amanda Benton, Deputy Secretary Ann-Kathrin Zemann, Confidential Secretary Melanie Bowdish

Agenda items

1. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2023

Commissioner Doug Moore moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2023. Commissioner Dr. Ragle seconded. It was moved and seconded that the commission approved the Meeting Minutes of October 13, 2023.

2. Commissioners' Reports

Chair Robert Lopez had nothing to report.

Commissioner Moore reported on the planning of the Stewards Continues Education this coming Monday and Tuesday, November 13 and 14, 2023. It will be held in person at Emerald Downs racetrack, and there will also be a Zoom option. Over 50 people are registered to participate. Participants are from Florida, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, *inter alia*.

Commissioner Dr. Ragle had nothing to report.

3. Industry Reports

a) Emerald Downs

Phil Ziegler gave the industry report for Emerald Downs. Breeder's Cup Handle was down 10% nationally. Emerald Downs' handle for Breeder's Cup was down about the same amount. This follows the continuous trend of decreasing handle within the last five to six months. The Breeder's Cup weekend at Emerald Downs was well attended, though.

b) WHBPA

WHBPA Executive Director MaryAnn O'Connell gave the report for the WHBPA. O'Connell attended a two-day National HBPA meeting in Lexington, Kentucky at the end of October. One of the main topics was the HISA/HIWU regulations. One topic that was also discussed was that payments to HIWU seem to be negotiated on a track-by-track basis. Some tracks have negotiated those rates and some horsemen's groups are refusing to pay.

WHBPA President Pat LePley is concerned that the industry is losing a lot of owners because of the HISA/HIWU regulations.

c) WTBOA

WTBOA President Dana Halvorson gave the industry report for the Washington Thoroughbred Breeders and Owners Association. The WTBOA is currently acquiring stallion seasons for their upcoming annual Stallion Season Auction in the third week of December.

4. Stewards End of Meet Report 2023 – Ken Doll, Presiding Steward

Chair Robert Lopez was inquiring about the amount of workload that is added to the Stewards' tasks by working with HIWU/HISA regulations. Presiding Stewart Ken Doll reported that the Board of Stewards need at least twice as much time for every crop violation. The Stewards must go through every race and count the crop strikes for every jockey. HISA allows six strikes with the crop on a horse's hindquarters. Furthermore, HISA at times informs the owner/trainer of a violation before the Stewards are being notified.

5. Emerald Downs 2024 Date Request

Emerald Downs is requesting a 55-day race meet, from Saturday, May 4 2024 to Sunday, September 15, 2024. Post times are tentative. The annual fireworks night will be on July 3, 2024, with a post time of 5 p.m.

Chair Robert Lopez entertained a motion to approve the date request for the 2024 live race meet at Emerald Downs. Commissioner Dr. Ragle made a motion; Commissioner Moore seconded the motion. It was moved and seconded that the WHRC approves the race dates for 2024 meet.

6. 2024 HISA Assessment Fee

For 2024 Washington's gross assessment is \$713,340, an increase of 22.1% to the 2023 gross assessment for Washington. There are potential credits of \$221,000 for HIWU authorized collection personnel in the test barn of Emerald Downs, with an additional \$34,000 in credits for any sample collections not collected as a race day sample. That could reduce Washington's obligation to \$458,340. The credits for 2023 totaled \$265,000. The credits that HISA is offering decreased \$10,000 from last year.

The commission did not pay the assessment in either 2022 or 2023, due to several factors which have not changed.

Commissioner Moore moved that the commission declines to pay the 2024 HISA assessment fees; Commissioner Dr. Ragle seconded the motion. It was moved and seconded that the WHRC is not going to pay the HISA assessment fee for 2024. Motion carried.

7. Executive Secretary's Report

a. Wagering Recap (October 2023) and

Wagering was down in September 21.9% compared to with 2022. The amount distributed to the WHRC was \$36,594.07. The advanced deposit wagering was also down in September. The total wagered was \$8,617,971.17.

b. Monthly Financial Statement (September 2023)

The actual revenue for September came in \$98,565 more than expected, due to a source market fee payment that had not been paid earlier in the year.

The expenses for September came in at \$2,155 less than expected.

The fund balance at the end of September was \$1,498,770 with a projected ending balance for fiscal year 2024 of \$1,227,540 and the projected ending balance for fiscal year 2025, which is the end of the biennium, \$625, 820.

8. Discussion Items – Commissioners

Chair Robert Lopez and Executive Secretary Amanda Benton will attend the upcoming HISA zoom meeting.

Commissioner Doug Moore was inquiring about attending the ARCI conference in March. The dates for the ARCI conference are March 6-8, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio. Travel dates would be March 5-9, 2024. Commissioner Dr. Ragle made a motion to approve the travel dates for Commissioner Doug Moore and Executive Secretary Amanda Benton, as well as the option for other Commissioners to attend as well; Commissioner Doug Moore seconded the motion. Motion carried.

It was also moved and seconded that Commissioner Doug Moore will work on the legislation.

9. Any other business that may be properly brought before the Commission

Nothing to report.

There will be no meeting of the Washington Horse Racing Commission in December.

The next meeting of the Washington Horse Racing Commission will be held on January 12, 2024, at 9:30 am at Emerald Downs and via Zoom.



Amanda Benton, Executive Secretary