

ASHA Board of Directors Meeting Summarized Minutes



March 8, 2014

In Attendance: Norm Kennedy, Rod Starkewski, John Hind, Connie Kolthammer, Jennifer Sifert, Ryan Grundy, Rod Hennessy, Bill Andrew, Jim Rhodes, Diane Bertrand & Fred Gillis. Regrets sent from Lorne Duffield. (Also present new ASHA staff member Michelle Aschim taking minutes, no vote)

Meeting called to order at 5:06pm

1) Approval of the Agenda

Motion made to approve agenda-

Addition made by Jennifer to add under
New Business - e) for Olds College

Addition made by Fred to add under
New Business - f) for information received regarding the World's Driving Title.

***Motion to approve** the agenda made by Connie Kolthammer, seconded by Jim Rhodes. All in favour; motion carried.

2) Approval of Minutes of previous Director Meeting, held 7nd of December, 2013

Norm Kennedy brought up the following, to recap due to his absence at the last meeting:

- Agreed with Connie Kolthammer regarding splitting the Stakes money
- The discussion regarding including Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the Alberta Stakes program was a good thought, but better that we delay this until such time as there is funds.
- Concern regarding the discussion of the \$50,000 required for track maintenance.
- Due to lack of funds, the \$37,500 from HRA for Simulcasting is unlikely
- Concern with the yearling sale, as the entry fee drops so may the quality of the horses entered. Noted by Fred the sales are finally in the black regarding the financials.

***Motion to approve** the (unaudited) minutes as is made by Rod Hennessy, seconded by Ryan Grundy. All in favour; motion carried.

3) HRA Update: (Verbal report presented by Norm Kennedy)

- The chairman has been meeting with the deputy ministers and minister of agriculture trying to get the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) concerning slots renewed. Operating agreements have been signed with the tracks by HRA.
- The chairman and his staff members became concerned about the budget which was approved on October 19th because of the slot revenue and handle shortfalls. They wanted to cut marketing by \$500,000, purses by \$1,000,000, and the BIP by \$500,000 for a total of all cuts at \$2,000,000. There was a meeting with the various stakeholders, with concern there would be bias. The revenues from the (Northlands) slots were down 4.7%, and the handle was also down 4.7%. This continues to spiral downwards with no help from the recent crippling cold spell. The actual overall handle was down 6% , 5.4% in Foreign Simulcasting. At the end of the day there was a new budget drawn up which HRA approved and returned to the minister. Marketing was cut by \$300,000, the purses by \$1,000,000 and the breed improvement was cut by \$172,000. After a heads up, Fred and John have been working these new figures into the new budget.
- On the new track, at HRA, we have a new director; his name is Erwin Haitzmann; he is the co CEO Century Casinos located in Austria. It is hoped he is going to make it to some meetings, and he has assured us that would be no problem. [Fred – He is here this week]
- Question came from Diane Bertrand regarding the term length of HRA positions. Norm Kennedy clarified. Norm Kennedy did mention that there is still an issue with a director for the other breeds as they still cannot agree on one. The Paints, Quarter horses and the B Thoroughbreds community cannot come up with a recommendation, despite the request to do so. (Fred Gillis - They asked Bill Andrew to represent them.
(No further additions from other HRA members)

4) 2014 Racing:

a) Financial Report (Verbal report presented by John Hind)

2013 Audited Financials:

- We did a very good job collecting membership earlier this year than last year.
- We are sitting on about \$600,000 in cash, with about \$100,000 in payouts.
- On the revenue side, we have a \$75,000 grant from the Lacombe Simulcast grant but it'll cost is about \$82,000, so there is a \$7,000 variance.
- Salary costs are up as a new person was added into the office area part way through the year, which is a help.

- Stabling costs reflect the fact we are paying Northlands for stabling.
- We were fairly close to budget again this year.

***Motion to approve** the Financial Report made by John Hind so that it can be included at the 2014 AGM (March 9, 2014), seconded by Jennifer Sifert. All in favour; motion carried.

b) Handle Report (Presented by Fred Gillis)

- Fred Gillis introduced new administrative assistant
- Fred Gillis requested that he follow Bill Andrew after the purse grants and BIP report as his information is based on details from Bill's report.

c) Purse Grants and BIP (Presented by Bill Andrew)

- It was proposed that we take \$2,000,000 out of our pool, with a little over half from the BIP programs – originally, we would have to cut our stakes by \$350-\$400 thousand.
- The eventual decision was to remove \$1,000,000 of the marketing for HRA, and the remaining half of that out of the BIP and the purses. We believe the simulcast betting will recover and they are premature on their projections.
- We agreed to take the cuts at \$1,000,000 over the whole industry.

b) Handle Report (Presented by Fred Gillis)

- We have convinced HRA to take a wait and see approach, especially during the 1st quarter. All Breeds start back racing the first week of May so it needs to play out.
- Of the \$200,000 cut from the BIP \$80,000 impacts ASHA. A BIP report from Sharon which usually comes out in January shows the breakdowns will not get sent until April. Without the factual numbers, there isn't a good sense of where things sit, and how we can trim the budget without it affecting the stakes program.
- A decision to absorb the \$200,000 from the BIP was made between the HBPA and ASHA, at basically a sixty forty split, since if we cut the other breeds or the community Thoroughbreds any amount they simply wouldn't have funds to operate. Everything will be reassessed in April.

b) AB Bonus Report (Presented by Fred Gillis)

- We will try and maintain a 15% bonus all year.
- The stakes will stay the same as scheduled.

5) Committee Reports:

a) Breeders Committee Report (Presented by Connie Kolthammer)

- No formal report
- Concern brought up by Rod Hennessey from the backstretch regarding the Stakes payment due April 15, with the issues of taxes, lack of racing for a month and general lack of funds in conjunction with the timing of these required payments.
- Idea came across that the cheques would still be submitted to Standardbred Canada due for April 15th, but request they be held by SC for one month to give them a little breathing room, especially for the 2 year old stake races.

***Motion made by Rod Hennessey that:** "the stake payments that are due on April 15th, the cheques have to be in the office on April 15th; cashing of the cheques will be asked to be deferred until May 15th." John hind seconded. All in favour; motion carried.

b) Owners Report (Presented by Diane Bertrand)

- Issues brought up regarding stabling
- Discussion continued regarding payments up to date and where we stand with those who are still outstanding.
- Fred stated that ASHA would defer their February \$100 stall payment until they started racing at Ads in lieu of them paying the onetime \$150.00/stall rent to Bob Allan so he would have money for snow removal.
- Diane stated that membership needs to be mandatory in order to be renting stalls. It was also mentioned that in order to claim purses in other provinces, it is mandatory to be a member of the provincial Standardbred horse association. (BC, Manitoba, Ontario)
- Regarding the Balzac Stabling, Fred Gillis stated that UHA purposed a "weekend ship in" of a 130 stall barn yet to be built.
- Fred Gillis presented a proposal from the Olds Ag Society regarding a training facility for the Standardbred Racing industry, in conjunction with the College, with many possibilities benefiting both parties.
- Fred Gillis requested everyone review the copied proposal and get back to him by week's end. The board needs to approve the idea prior to exposing the idea to the general public or to the AGM. Benefits to both parties were also discussed, and Fred's question to the board was "Are we (ASHA) involved, should we be involved, and what level?"



***Motion made by Diane Bertrand that** “ASHA take an active part in looking at stabling alternatives, and Olds will be a part of that”. Jennifer Sifert seconded. All in favour; motion carried.

- Jennifer Sifert brought up the Invitation for the Old Equine Science facility Tour and Banquet being held on Wednesday, April 16th which will explain more about their program. It is open to anyone involved in the industry.
- Diane Bertrand also brought up her concerns regarding the 2014 ASHA awards.
 - 1) The age issue which we had this year would be easily resolved by holding the awards at a different venue next year.
 - 2) Concerns regarding how the winners and nominees for the awards are chosen.
 - 3) Connie Kolthammer requested that the criteria more visible.

***Motion made by Diane Bertrand that:** “we develop a committee to deal with Award criteria and post on the ASHA website”. Seconded by John Hind. All in favour; motion carried.

- Jim Rhodes (and the consensus through the board) requested there be a publication of the rules and criteria to win an award.

c) Drivers/Trainers Report (Presented by Rod Hennessy)

- Where are our new numbers for racing? Admittedly, they are in bad shape, but despite money being in the budget from the track they have yet to materialize.
- Bill Andrews volunteered to pay for it from his own pocket and ASHA to bill him for it, for the amount of approximately \$10,000 and they would belong to ASHA.

6) Racing 2013:

a) UHA – update:

- Darcy Marler to provide an update regarding the size and dimensions of the new track at Century Downs.
- Question from Ryan Grundy: is there a solid hub rail? The answer was its uncertain, but that’s a question that could be asked at the presentation at the AGM.
- Phase one is getting the track up and running to get the money generating. Phase two is putting in lights, corporate boxes, and maybe administration offices.

b) Simulcasting:

- We are not going to get any financial help from HRA, as the funding has been withdrawn.

***Motion made by Bill** “to spend up to \$85,000 for Simulcast”. Diane Bertrand seconded. All in favour; motion carried.

c) Race dates:

- There are 105 calendar dates are set. There is a possibility of dropping dates pending on funding. Century Downs could be dropped from 24 to 22 days depending on the purse grant funds.

d) Marketing:

- We’re not getting any from HRA. Jennifer wondered why we’re not getting big sponsors like Monster Energy, or Village Brewery and such to advertise for them, but maybe this will happen at Balzac.
- Fred - John and Fred have put a little money in from the budget for special dates to do special marketing (Fan Appreciation Days) for the amount of \$12,000.

7) New Business:

a) World Driving Championship

- Fred presented the information that there will be two reps from the West, two from Ontario, and two from Quebec and two from the Maritimes. Fraser Downs will host the event on the last day of racing to allow for time to market the event well.
- Question to the board for Fred, “Which three do we use – the three who were up for awards for 2013
- We still have to acquire their consent, as they must sign a form which will commit them for the race dates in the competition. They do not pay their way; it’s paid by us/Standardbred Canada. The two drivers who are a certainty are Travis Cullen and Gerry Hudon. Discussion continued for who is the third who will represent Alberta. Brandon would be the third, and Kelly Hoerdt as the alternate.

Motion to adjourn
Meeting adjourned- 8:15pm.

