



ASHA Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes for November 15, 2023
(Meeting Online via Teams)

Attended: Don McDougall, Jackson Wittup, Kelly Crump, Jacques Lambert, Jocelyn Giesbrecht, Bret Litke, John Hind, Nancy Retzlaff, Brandon Campbell, Dave Kelly, and Tim Lake

Absent:

Also attending Executive Director Fred Gillis (no vote)

Meeting called to order at 4:45 pm

1. Approval of JF Gagne on board in interim

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion Carried

Moved by Jocelyn Giesbrecht and seconded by John Hind

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES for September 8, 2023

Motion Carried

Moved by Kelly Crump and seconded by Tim Lake.

4. Review of outstanding Action Items from meeting on November 15, 2023

None.

5. Marketing/Social Media Report – Nancy Retzlaff

Nancy shared presentation to go over the 30-60-90 day plan for ASHA. Nancy has been at every race since August and she has been engaging with multiple stakeholders and owners, trainers, drivers and HRA staff to give them insight on what ASHA is striving for. It has been the essence of what she has been focusing on. Now the focus is getting the marketing plan completed and in writing and working on a framework for stakes race sponsorships. Nancy shares the PowerPoint slides with the board and goes over some specific numbers.

Nancy and Bret Litke spoke about the Oilers Nation Night and what the engagement may look like as well as the article on the Daily Hive on the Betting night/Date night at the track.

The more specific forward focus is going to be:

- 1) Meeting with HRA (marketing committee planning)
- 2) Finalize market analysis and plan
- 3) Finalize 2024 stake race sponsorship proposal, by-in from stakeholders and initiation of outreach

6. HRA UPDATE–John Hind/Don McDougall:

John Hind

As per John, there has *not* been a lot that has happened since the last meeting. There has been just a lot of business as usual for the last two months.

Slot revenue is holding quite well. Century Downs is starting to come back. The deficit compared to last year is reducing every month. A lot of people have gone down and had a look at the new casino and it is starting to come back. This is encouraging.

Don McDougall

HRA Governance/Regulatory –

For HRA, on the governance side, not very much going on other than a couple of new board members getting assigned to their committees. They're starting to get involved in the committees a little bit more.

We still need someone from our board, or from outside of our board, as John's got another six months left with HRA. At some point in time, we have to find another person to go on HRA. It doesn't necessarily have to be a board member.

I'm going to say that by our next board meeting, we should have the dates of where we are in 2024. An HRA regulatory meeting is coming up, so I will not say too much about that right now. I will give a written report on that after we have our meeting.

7. 2023 RACING

a) Financial Report by John Hind – (report included in meeting package)

John goes over the ASHA budget with the board. Sent to all members of the board. Please send John a message if you have any questions. John is still collecting money from the 2023 ASHA Yearling Sale from one consigner.

b) Handle/Purse Report by Fred Gillis

I had projected 19 races a weekend after the Super final and we're hitting 21. All this means that there is less money to carry over and makes it tighter for next year, but well within our parameters.

The Simulcast has been holding steady. Our handle, as you've seen from Nancy's graph is going to be down in November with a couple of days of 68 and 69 and just hitting 100. So, our handle percentage will be down for November. But overall, I think we're pretty solid, at least on the year.

I was hoping we would go into the year counting the HBI we carried over at around a half a million dollars. I think that we'll come out of it somewhere around 430 to 460 to carry over, which we have built into next year. All in all, I think it's steady. It's down a little bit in November, but that happens. It's an ebb and flow. Certain days we can hit 250 and then other days, we cannot hit 100.

Regarding the purse account we're doing the Century Downs and tracking two account balances. Colleen worked on it and we're meeting soon to get it done. Obviously, we can't do Century Mile until the the year is over, but everything looks pretty good. I have no concerns.

Kelly Crump and I worked on the Stakes calendar a little bit, and then Kelly, Dave, and myself on the dates. We had a meeting on the dates. I know that Jackson expressed a concern about one of them, which we can talk about. I sent everybody a copy of the BIP. I hope everybody got it, could look it over. I hope at this meeting that somebody can make a motion to approve it.

c) **Executive Director Report**

We can start with the Derby costing \$5,575. It was probably the cheapest we've done at any major event. Decorations and other décor that were purchased by Nancy and Jocelyn, they made sure the items were reusable. The pizza lunch for the backstretch went well. A lot of good comments about it from people who said they appreciated it.

Nancy, Jocelyn, and Bret did a great job on the mugs and the decals for the event. Some of the decorations and banners are again, reusable which is great.

BIP Report for Approval by the Board

Motion Carried

Moved by John Hind and seconded by Tim Lake

Donation to the Tioga Downs in New York State for \$1000 US

Motion Carried

Moved by Jackson Wittup and seconded by John Hind

d) **President's Report by Don McDougall** (Given During HRA Discussion)

- I. **Social Media Update**
- II. **Executive Com.**

e) **Race Dates 2024 and Beyond**

Still in discussion.

8. **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

a) **Breeders Committee – Kelly Crump**

Regarding the Stallion catalogue, we started on this and are in the process of collecting payments and entry forms to begin the book. Since the Stallion catalogue will be going to print soon, we need to finalize the stakes calendar. (With that Tim Lake asked the group if the board was okay with the experience of running 10 horses in a final for a stake race.)

Action Item #1:

Regarding the issue with stakes running 10 horses in a final on a mild track. Jacques Lambert to bring this item to the racing committee meeting and to bring a recommendation to the board.

b) **Owners Committee (New Events and Promotions) – Jocelyn Giesbrecht**

There is not that much to report on. Nancy covered most of it in her marketing report, and then Bret Litke is going to cover what we've been working on in promotions. I did receive a few emails just from Super Finals that the owners that attended were very happy with everything. We did have a little hiccup with the booking for the Derby. So that didn't go over well, but we handled it the night of. Other than that, there were not any major complaints at this time.

c) **Drivers/Trainers Committee – Brandon Campbell**

There is not a lot to report. I haven't heard a whole lot of complaints coming my way lately. The track's been decent. Everybody seems to be doing well and in pretty good spirits.

Brandon comments on the Flak Jackets (9. c New Business)

Some jurisdictions make us wear them, but not all jurisdictions do. In Ontario, you must wear one just to jog and warm up at the track. California is similar in that it is mandatory. It looks like this will become mandatory for us too as Thoroughbreds are pushing this and regulatory is following suit.

d) Racing Committee – Jacques Lambert

We have been busy trying to finalize the 2024 HPI program, going back and forth with the board, and with the committee. It Looks like we've come up with something. The only final change was Fred's. I think that it is ready to move forward. John brought it up for approval of HRA, so that's all good to go. We'll get him to approve this latest change. Then I'm going to work with Nancy to market and promote the program out. HPBA has done a really good job with their Facebook and Social Media, and we want to try to maybe mimic that and put it out there.

e) Promotions and Events – Bret Litke/Nancy Retzlaff

I do not have too much to add after Nancy's presentation, as she covered most of our report.

Of the things that I've been working on with Nancy, and Jocelyn as well, is that we're trying to set her up with contacts and having those important discussions.

Our Social Media continues to grow as The Oilers Nation, Dailyhive, have thousands of views on there. As well as the ASHA Facebook page, there has been lot more engagement from the community as well as those new to the industry.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Yearling Sale Review** – Fred goes over the Cost Breakdown of the 2023 ASHA Yearling Sale. This was included in the meeting packages. Please reach out to Laura Webster to get the breakdown of the expenses vs. revenue if you are interested.
- b) **Mandatory Flak Jackets** (discussed in Committee Reports 8 c)

ACTION ITEMS

New Items from November 15, 2023

8 a) Action Item #1:

Regarding the issue with stakes running 10 horses in a final on a mild track. Jacques Lambert to bring this item to the racing committee meeting and to bring a recommendation to the board.

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**REMINDER!** - **All Committee Chairs** are requested to email their reports to Laura Webster (laura@asha.ab.ca) one (1) week prior of scheduled Board Meetings so they can be sent as one package to all members of the Board