



ASHA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes **for 16 Mar 2020**

conducted via conference call

Attended by: Bill Andrew, Don McDougall, John Hind, , Harold Haining, Tim Lake, Kelly Crump, Rod Starkewski, and Dave Kelly. Don McNeil, and Nathan Sobey Regrets: Mike Hennessy. Also attending (no vote) Executive Director Fred Gillis, Administrative Assistant Michelle Desjardins.

Meeting called to order at 6:21 pm

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Addition of reaction and plans to the COVID-19 (Corona Virus).
- Addition of Harness Horse Alliance.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES held on Dec 20 , 2019

Moved by John Hind and seconded by Don McNeil that with no errors or omissions noted, minutes of the meeting of Dec 20th be approved.

Motion Carried

3. To set the tone of the meeting, Fred Gillis had been in conference calls for much of the day and had an industry release as follows:

“All casino managements met with the AB Government at 10:00 am this morning. The majority believe they will and should shut down very soon. It is expected that the government will announce within 72 hours or less that casinos will all be shut down [in order to prevent the spread of the virus]. Since we receive Purse Grant funding from the slots, this means that racing will also be shut down. Horses can stay on the backstretch for the foreseeable future and keep training as it is unknown at this time how long this will go on.”

The board was informed there will be another conference call on Thursday with the HRA and the Horse Racing Industry participants to keep everyone updated and seek feedback from inside the Industry. ASHA will have a conference call at some point following with the Board.

4. HRA UPDATE–John Hind reported the following from HRA from the last meeting:

- a) The findings from the Audit Committee revealed a deficit which will result a redraft of the budget.
- b) HRA is exploring options for other funding by investigating lottery models.
- c) Due to ASHA’s opposition to the 2019 HRA marketing plan, HRA funding has since been reallocated.
- d) Due to the current situation with the pandemic and provincial revenues, the current budget will require redrafting.

5. 2019 RACING

a) Financial Report – John Hind

John presented ASHA’s audited financials for 2019 explaining the more significant variances as the 2019 year was financially challenging and will continue to remain so going forward.

Moved by John Hind and seconded by Don McDougall to approve the 2019 Audited Financial Statement to be presented at the AGM.

Motion Carried

b) Handle Report– Fred Gillis

Fred presented a very tight handle report. February handle was looking very positive and funding has been received up to the end of March. The current virus situation changes everything creating a “we will see” going forward. The Stakes Schedule and Purse structure will require a complete review and revision once things return to relative normal.

c) Presidents Report – Bill Andrew

- Bill met with the Minister of Finance in Edmonton requesting more funding for racing.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a) **Breeders Report – Harold Haining**

The Breeders Committee discussed nominations for the ASHA Awards for the Breeder of the Year for 6 Mares or less category which has since been sent to the judges.

b) **Owners Committee – Don McNeil**

- Owners are raising a concern on the safety of children (playing/running around) in the paddock areas on race days.
- There have been requests for the results of the mixed sale of the Ohio mares.

c) **Drivers/Trainers Chair –Nathan Sobey**

- Track maintenance continues to remain an ongoing issue as the Century Downs track is very inconsistent. Nathan wants a meeting with Paul (Ryneveld) and Century Downs staff to resolve the situation even if there is no racing, as they still need to train.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a) **Social Media Update– Don McDougall**

The Social Media program continues with Storm Dafoe working the Harness side by providing weekly updates on various platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), also adding Podcasts. The current virus situation will add a complication for updates.

b) **Mares Acquisition Program**

The ASHA sale of the Ohio mares was unsuccessful with a loss of over \$82,000. Some of the loss was recouped through Century Group and HRA as they agreed to fund a portion of the loss. The Board discussed the variables which contributed to the lack of success. Other options for future consideration [to add mares to the harness population] were discussed.

c) **ASHA Awards Night and AGM**

The Board unanimously decided that both the 2020 ASHA awards (March 28th) and the Annual General Meeting (April 4th) are to be postponed due to the concerns surrounding the COVID-19 (Corona virus) until further notice, since this situation is controlled by Public Health and Government decisions.

d) **Canada Revenue Agency Payments**

Due to a recent issue with the bank posting a source deduction payment incorrectly, John requested that the Board approve that the payment be made directly from the ASHA office. Upon approval of the Board, John will have direct payment for Source Deductions and GST (as needed) set up to be paid online through the ASHA office.

Moved by John Hind and seconded by Don McDougall to allow online payments from the ASHA office to the CRA of Source Deductions and GST. **Motion Carried**

e) **Discussion on the Doping Indictments**

Members of the Board discussed the recent implications of the indictments of high-level persons involved in the race industry. The situation is being monitored by HRA .

f) **Effect of COVID-19 to Harness Racing**

As of the ASHA Board of Directors meeting of March 16th 2020, racing plans to continue, but as the situation with the virus continues to change moment by moment, there is a strong possibility this could change as casinos are expected to close within the province of Alberta within 72 hours. Executives of the Board, HRA and the provincial government are set to meet via conference call on Thursday for further direction.

Next meeting date TBD.
Motion to adjourn at 7:25 pm