



ASHA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes **for November 7th, 2020** **held at Century Downs Casino, Balzac AB**

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

Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by John Hind and seconded by Don McNeil to approve the Agenda for the meeting of November 7th, 2020.

Motion Carried

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES held on June 22, and Conference Calls of Sept 15th, and Oct 19th, 2020

Moved by Dave Kelly and seconded by Nathan Sobey that with no errors or omissions noted, minutes of the meeting of June 22, and conference calls of Sept 15th and Oct 9th, 2020 be approved.

Motion Carried

3. HRA UPDATE–John Hind

- a) As the Chairman of audit and finance, John insisted to have a member of HRA from the Thoroughbreds as Allen Goodsell.
- b) John updated the board on the status of the contracts for the tracks, performance metrics, support to the racetrack during the pandemic shutdown, and slot revenues.
- c) The HRA approved ASHA's 2021 race dates and calendar. The Stakes Schedule remains under review for revisions to names of the stakes.

4. 2020 RACING

a) Financial Report – John Hind

- i. John reviewed the numbers on the budget with the board, and the finances are on track and well managed due to revenues along with expenses decreasing at comparatively the same rate.

b) Handle Report– Fred Gillis

- i. There is a little carry over for the handle, which is better than projected.
- ii. Despite the debt which the purses started with at the beginning of the year, they are currently at a surplus and the funds are carefully under review for future allocation to 2021.

c) Presidents Report – Bill Andrew

- i. Recent cobalt testing results are a very high concern currently and Bill had been dealing with this through HRA, since as an Association, ASHA cannot deal with it, since it is a regulatory issue. The Board is wanting to apply pressure to HRA stewards to guarantee these issues are dealt with in a timely manner.
- ii. The Board was reminded that with the move North to Leduc, and there is a strong possibility that AHS will visit, so a reminder to the horsemen not to let up on protocols to keep the COVID pandemic out of racing.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

a) Breeders Report – Harold Haining

- i. Harold presented the race calendar and schedule. The dates have been approved but the schedule still needs tweaking with some names of stakes changing depending on sponsorships. The proposed date for the Yearling Sale is the 25th of September 2020.

Moved by Harold Haining and seconded by John Hind to approve the Yearling Sale date as September 25th, 2021.

Motion Carried

Moved by Harold Haining and seconded by Dave Kelly to approve the Race Schedule for 2021.

Motion Carried

- ii. The Breeders committee also is looking into yearling nomination payments for the new Alberta Foaled Stakes.
- iii. Colleen put in a request for review of a program to create an independent 4-H group for the sole purpose of qualifying youth for the 4-H program. Fred is to discuss it with her to find out if she has enough time to put into it.

b) Owners Committee – Don McNeil

- i. Don reported on the feelings from the owners regarding access to their horses, and regarding the situation of the positive drug test and how it impacts the owners in the industry.

- ii. The small owners are really struggling to stay invested in the industry as well it has become difficult to obtain interest of new owners to the business currently. The board discussed better marketing to attempt to attract, but it is up to HRA and the previous years marketing has not really favoured Harness Racing.
- c) **Drivers/Trainers Chair –Nathan Sobey**
 - i. Nathan reported that the horse men are looking forward to racing at the Mile and hope the track at Century Downs will improve over the down time.
 - ii. The hub rail was addressed, and it should not be an issue. The hub rail is there, but there will be pilons 10 feet out.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Social Media Update– Don McDougall**
Don McDougall spoke on having Storm continue new ideas with HRA, given the limitations with the current pandemic.
- b) **AGM 2021**
Earlier in the year, the committee had decided the only solution was to have the Board maintain their current positions for the year, while they research how to move forward for the 2021 AGM. John had some very positive experiences with some on-live voting which will make the AGM possible. Other concerns were addressed, such as nominations for Board positions.
- c) **ASHA Awards Night 2021**
Fred reminded the Board of the positive drug results which will render a significant number of ineligibilities for Awards for 2021. Plans should be initiated for booking a venue with the understanding that it could be cancelled should the current pandemic situation become worse, considering that we are heading into the second wave. The final decision would be made at the Board meeting in January. Board members believe the individual mentions of winners should be maintained at Century as it allows for more exposure to the public.
- d) **Update on the requirements of HBPA and Century**
A three-way agreement between Harness, Century and HPBA wish to meet early in the new year to agree on a long-term deal that the Standardbreds would race in warm weather at both tracks. There will also be changes to the race-track superintendent; to hire a suitable person to assist the current superintendent and take over eventually. There are also feasibility studies underway to determine track restructuring. Any restructuring, should it be found possible, will not be completed next year, most likely 2022.
- e) **Administration of Owners Bonus**
(Discussed earlier in the meeting) The return of the Owners Bonus was discussed with anticipation it should roll out hopefully in March 2021. How it is to be administered is still under consideration, with the breeders committee deciding who will qualify to receive the bonus, determined by Alberta Foaled (primarily), Alberta Sired, or both, with the bonus will not going on the horses earnings.
- f) **Century's stance on Class 1-2 Positives**
In a letter Fred received from Paul Ryneveld of Century, it stated that any trainer receiving a Class 1 Positive would be *barred for life* from Century tracks beginning January 1st, 2021. John stated it was a disappointment for receiving this information through an email instead of a discussion before the decision.
- g) **Retention for two-year olds**
In a previous Board meeting, it was decided that *all* horses in a stake over \$50 K will be in retention. HRA will be reminded through a letter from ASHA.
- h) **Letter from AGLC**
The Board was notified that Cash Casino has intention despite numerous objections to move their Casino to Deerfoot North YYC Global Logistics Park (Calgary International Airport).
- i) **Presentation**
Fred presented Bill Andrew with the ASHA Staff Director's Award with many thanks from the ASHA staff.

Next meeting date TBD.
Motion to adjourn at 7:22 pm