

MINUTES
WV RACING COMMISSION
Thursday, April 18th, 2024

WV Racing Commission Conference Room

The WV Racing Commission met on April 18th, 2024, to conduct business and consider administrative matters. Roll call was taken, and present were Chairman Ken Lowe Jr. and Commissioner Chip Urling.

Agenda Item #1 – Approval of February 22nd meeting minutes

The minutes for the last meeting are approved
Motion made by Commissioner Urling, seconded by Chairman Lowe.
Motion passed.

Agenda Item #2 – Executive Director's Report

Mr. Moore provided an update on the strangles outbreak that originated at Mahoning valley. The racing commission have processes in place that were discussed last meeting and the outbreak has been mitigated at Mountaineer park. There have been struggles but the commission would like to thank the horsemen, staff and Dr. Bohenko. With the virus slowing we will look to loosen requirements for the start of racing that will begin on Sunday. The text message system was utilized to update procedures and requirements during the outbreak to update staff and horsemen with ongoing information. The updated requirements for the start of the season are on the racing commission website for reference.

Dr. Bohenko reported that 600 horses have been tested with 9 positive cases found and in protocol. Mr. Moore also discussed the flooding issue at Wheeling Island, we have lost two and a half weeks of racing. The unofficial schooling will resume this weekend with the intent to start racing next Friday. The casino we allowed to operate twice without the racing due to power issues in the simulcast part of the building.

Mr. Moore updated on the vacant positions and we are in the process of scheduling interviews. WVGC to amend the greyhound rule so we will be address in a committee the potential change, so it can go through legislative committee.

Chairman Lowe was happy to discuss the event on April 12th in Charles Town to honor the first black woman to train a thoroughbred horse and the first black woman to win a thoroughbred race Ms. Sylvia Bishop. A plaque was place in Charles Town in her honor. She began working in 1920 at the age of 14 and in 1940 became the first black woman horse trainer in the United States. She was inducted in the Charles Town racing Hall of Fame in 2008. Commissioner Urling would like to suggest the commission adopt a resolution to honor Ms. Bishop and would also like to look into a nomination to honor her as a distinguished West Virginian.

Agenda Item #3 – Legal Update

Mr. Eates has informed the commission that there were no updates

Agenda Item #4 – Occupational Permit Request – Julia Flick

Ms. Flick is requesting an owner trainer permit at Charles Town. She does have a felony record but after interviews with the stewards they recommend approval. Mr. Moore has reviewed the background reports and they are in line with previous approvals so he would like to move to recommend approval of the permit. Ms. Flick spoke and said she has worked hard to get where she is and is excited to race.

Motion made by Commissioner Urling, seconded by Chairman Lowe.

Motion passed

Agenda Item #5 – Determine Effective Date of Revised Thoroughbred Racing Rule

The commission made changes to the racing rules that ran through the 2024 legislative session. Now they will consider the date they will be come effective. Mr. Eades informs the commission that the window to become effective can be from 30 to 90 days after final filing. He would recommend that we go with the 90 day window. The final filling should be on Monday April 22nd 2024. Past changes have used the 90 day window. Mr. Moore agrees that the 90 days will give the horsemen ample time to digest and follow the new rules, so with this the rule would start at the end of July. Chairman Lowe ask if the horsemen have made comment Mr. Moore says they have not. Chairman Lowe ask if anyone on the call has any questions and Jamie states that he is in agreement with 90 days.

Motion made by Commissioner Urling to use 90 days from April 22 to July 22, seconded by Chairman Lowe.

Motion passed

Agenda Item #6 – Mountaineer Requests Approval of 2024 Stakes Schedule

Mr. Moore bring the request forward for funding of the Grade 3 WV Derby with a five hundred thousand purse and the Grade 3 Governors Stakes Race for two hundred thousand. Funding usually comes from the WV Media lottery fund but as in recent years they have not meet the funding. There has been an agreement like in past years to make up the shortfall in the general purse fund. Jim comments that this is the same process as in previous years and they only chose the two races because the uncertainty with HISA. Jamie also commented that he thanks everyone for working with the horsemen.

Motion made by Commissioner Urling, seconded by Chairman Lowe.

Motion passed.

Agenda Item #7 – Mountaineer Requests Capital Reinvestment Project – Text Message System

Mr. Moore presents the request even though he says it is out of the lines of the typical capital improvement request to the commission. For the text message system. The background was in the meeting at Mountaineer Park when they were discussing how to get the changing protocols out during the strangles outbreak. One of the products discussed was the text messaging system. The park decided to go forward and it was utilized during the outbreak to get information out as quickly as possible. Mr. Moore revived Positive comments about the system and Mountaineer Park request reimbursement from its capital improvement fund. Mr. Moore request approval of the 1,190 dollars for the 2024 racing year with the stipulation that if the horsemen find merit in the system they will not request reimbursement in future years and find funding outside the racing commission. Charles Town currently uses the system and the track pays for the system Greg says it is invaluable when it comes to getting alerts out to horsemen and racing officials. Marie agrees it is very useful on many topics from general alerts to track closures. Chairman Lowe ask how many people get the text, Greg says from 400 to 500 total. Jim said they will use it and re evaluate at the end of the year. Commissioner Urling says it does sound like a valuable tool.

*Motion made by Commissioner Urling to move forward the second year the track and horsemen will resolve, seconded by Chairman Lowe.
Motion passed.*

Agenda Item #8 – Wheeling Island Requests Capital Reinvestment – Kennel Fire & Electrical Systems

Mr. Moore presents the request for reimbursement for the upgrade for kennel fire and electrical systems at a cost of 175,099.25. Bids were put out and funds are available. Mr. Moore recommends the approval of the request. Commissioner Urling has a question if the vendor is not the contractual vendor typically used by the track and it is clarified that the vendor for the project is under contract with no issues foreseeable in the bid.

*Motion made by Commissioner Urling, seconded by Chairman Lowe.
Motion passed.*

Agenda Item #9 – Wheeling Island Requests Approval of Promotional Giveaway *Item removed from Agenda.*

Agenda Item #10 – Public Comments

No Public Comments

Agenda Item #11 – Adjournment

*Motion to adjourn made by Chairman Lowe
Motion passes.*