

NEW MEXICO HORSE RACING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

Date: August 17, 2023, at 2:50 p.m.

Place: NMRC Boardroom; 4900 Alameda Blvd., NE, Albuquerque, NM and Zoom Video Conference – Meeting ID: 818 8056 1116

Members Present: Vice-Chairman David “Hossie” Sanchez, Commissioner John Buffington, Commissioner Billy Smith and Commissioner Margaret Branch (joined at 3:05 p.m.) and Commissioner Bob Pitre.

NMRC Staff Participating: Executive Director Ismael Trejo, In-House Counsel Richard Bustamante and Law Clerk Denise Chavez.

Also Present: Assistant Attorney General Serena Wheaton

<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>RECORDING #</i>	<i>DISCUSSIONS/CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	<i>ACTION TAKEN</i>
Public Session 1: I. Call to Order and Roll Call	0:15 – 0:55	Meeting called to order at 2:50 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Sanchez. Roll call was taken by Denise Chavez. A quorum was present. Executive Director Ismael Trejo, In-House Counsel Richard Bustamante, Law Clerk Denise Chavez, and Assistant Attorney General Serena Wheaton were also present.	No Action Taken.
II. Approval of Agenda	1:00 – 2:14	Vice-Chairman Sanchez asked if there were any changes to the agenda today. There were none.	Motion to approve the agenda made by Commissioner Smith. Commissioner Buffington second the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

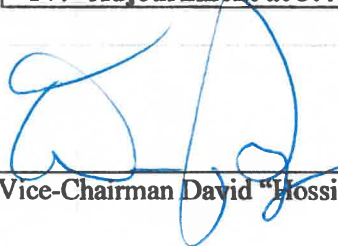
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III. Ruidoso Downs' Presentation for Enhanced Integrity Measures for All-American Weekend	2:20 – 14:06	<p>Executive Director Trejo reported the reason for this special meeting was to allow Ruidoso Downs to present to the Commission their intentions for enhanced integrity measures for All-American weekend. The goal for this afternoon is not to point fingers, but to come up with some solutions to impede catastrophic breakdowns at the racetracks. Executive Director Trejo reported that after discussions with Industrial Laboratory Representative, Ruidoso Downs' Track Management, AQHA's Janet VanBebber, and NMRC's Official Veterinarian Dr. Lowe it became clear that we are all focused on preventing all the breakdowns. We have to advocate for the horses. The solutions begin with us people in the industry. He applauded Dr. Lowe and Dr. Butler at Ruidoso Downs for really advocating for the horses. We are here today to discuss initiatives and ways to protect the horses for the upcoming races. We have contracted with Ruidoso Downs' vet to ensure that 100% pre-race exams are being done for the upcoming, big-money races. Ruidoso Downs will be setting up barns for the qualifiers of the upcoming large races to keep those horses watched very closely. They will have blood drawn and blood counts analyzed prior to racing.</p> <p>Commissioner Smith asked Executive Director Trejo how many more vets it would take to</p>	<p>No Action Taken.</p>

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	14:10 – 26:56	<p>ensure that 100% of these horses are examined before racing. Executive Director Trejo responded that for years the NM Racing Commission agency has been asking for funding to hire at least 4 vets, however, have not been assisted with additional funding for hiring more vets. The agency is having difficulty finding vets that want to come to NM to work.</p> <p>Rick Baugh of Ruidoso Downs reported that Ruidoso Downs will be implementing Detention Stalls for all of the horses that qualified for All-American races starting this weekend. The horses will be monitored for 24 hours a day and up until All-American weekend. Surveillance cameras will be installed in the barn area.</p> <p>Vice-Chair Sanchez asked Mr. Baugh what barn will Ruidoso Downs be using to set up the Detention Stalls? Mr. Baugh reported that it is a private barn. There are 3 sleeping quarters, evidence rooms and restrooms. You have to go through Ruidoso Downs' security to get to this private barn.</p> <p>Commissioner Smith asked Mr. Baugh if this is being addressed because of medication violations. Mr. Baugh reported that the recent slew of catastrophic injuries are suspected to occur because of medications given to the horses. Commissioner Smith agreed that the issue with</p>	

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	27:00 – 31:53	<p>the recent breakdowns is a HUGE problem that needs to be addressed ASAP.</p> <p>Mr. Linder of Ruidoso Downs agreed with Commissioner Smith and added the Owners of Ruidoso Downs expressed that expense is not an issue. The catastrophic breakdowns are not occurring for a lack of effort on Ruidoso Downs and the Commission's part. Whatever the vets need to meet these expectations of testing and caring for the horses will be addressed and supplied.</p> <p>Billy Blackburn, counsel for Ruidoso Downs added that he understands that the Commission cannot "approve" these detention barns, however, is asking the Commission for their "blessings" to implement the Detention Stall. Mr. Blackburn did not see any legal issues with this idea as the Nomination Blanks read: "AARD has responsibility to its patrons, horsemen, and equine athletes to reach for the highest possible standards of performance and compliance, and to maintain a safe, fair and impartial racing enterprise. AARD holds itself to those standards of ethical conduct to protect the interests, safety, and welfare of all racing participants to create an environment of fairness and safety for horses, owners, trainers and customers. In order to promote these goals and as a condition..." Mr.</p>	

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	<p>31:55 – 34:17</p> <p>34:28 – 40:40</p> <p>40:42 – 42:30</p> <p>47:43 – 49:54</p>	<p>Blackburn also pointed out “they also do these types of barns at the Breeders’ Cup.”</p> <p>Vice-Chair Sanchez asked Mr. Baugh if there will be a reporting file kept on the procedures taking place on the horses. Vice-chair Sanchez asked that Ruidoso Downs share those reports with the Governor’s office as she is concerned with this matter as well.</p> <p>Janet VanBebber of AQHA says she believes that the equine athlete’s well-being is paramount to this industry. She will continue to work with all to ensure the safety of the horses. She stands behind Ruidoso Downs’ efforts,</p> <p>Executive Director added that despite monetary restraints, all efforts by all these organizations are ensuring that great strides are being made to protect the horses.</p> <p>Commissioner Smith added that the onus is placed on the tracks to bar and keep the bad actors out of the industry and their racetrack.</p> <p>Chris McErlean spoke to his experience of the upside of implementing detention barns as Ruidoso Downs is going to do for the upcoming weekend. He said those detention barns have been effective.</p>	

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	49:58 – 51:09	State Steward, Larry Fontenot, Jr. suggested that Kentucky's practice is that if a horse is shipped in from a different track, they require verification from the vet that they have been checked and properly worked.	
	51:36 – 53:32	Commissioner Smith asked Dr. Lowe in her opinion how many vets on staff it will take to check all horses for trials. Dr. Lowe said it was just her and Dr. Butler and it was very difficult. Three vets would be helpful. Vice-Chairman Sanchez pointed out that ALL the tracks in NM need to continue this effort.	
IV. Adjournment at 3:47 PM	55:55 - end	Vice-Chairman Sanchez adjourned meeting.	


 Vice-Chairman David "Bossie" Sanchez Date 10/25/2023


 Executive Director Ismael Trejo Date 10-26-23