

NEW MEXICO HORSE RACING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

Date: July 02, 2026

Place: NMRC Boardroom; 4900 Alameda Blvd., NE, Albuquerque, NM and on Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Chairman Billy Smith, Commissioner John Buffington, and Commissioner Bob Pitre.

NMRC Staff Participating: Executive Director Ismael Trejo, In-House Counsel Richard Bustamante, and Senior Paralegal David Dominguez.

<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>DISCUSSIONS/CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	<i>ACTION TAKEN</i>
Public Session 1: I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Smith. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.	No Action Taken.
II. Pledge of Allegiance		Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
III. Approval of Agenda	Chairman Smith asked if there were any changes to the agenda today. In-House Counsel Bustamante advised a motion is needed to amend the agenda, items 4 and 5. The correction is that item 4's race occurred on June 27 and item 5's race occurred on June 26. Additionally, Mr. Marquez, legal counsel for the licensees on the race reviews, requested item 5's race review be presented first, followed by item 4's race review.	Motion to approve the amended agenda made by Commissioner Buffington. Commissioner Pitre seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>DISCUSSIONS/CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	<i>ACTION TAKEN</i>
IV. Race Review Appeal of Omar Vargas regarding Race 15, conducted on June 26, 2026, at the Ruidoso Downs Race Meet at the Downs at Albuquerque	The Race Review was conducted pursuant to Commission Rule 15.2.5.13(E). The New Mexico Racing Commission heard arguments from both parties and reviewed the video of Race #15, which ran on June 26, 2026, at Ruidoso Downs in Albuquerque. The Ruidoso Downs Board of Stewards had posted an inquiry involving horses #2, #3, and #4. After reviewing the replay, the Stewards disqualified horse #2 from first place to fourth place for drifting out into the path of horse #4, causing #4 to check, alter course, lose momentum, and lose a better placing. Horse #4 was in third place at the time of the incident and lost its placing due to the actions of horse #2. Licensee Vargas, represented by attorney Daniel Marquez, was given the opportunity to present evidence and argument regarding the Stewards' decision. The Commission also heard from other participants involved in the race. Thereafter, the Commission's Board of Stewards presented its argument regarding its decision on the race.	No Action Taken.

<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>DISCUSSIONS/CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	<i>ACTION TAKEN</i>
V. Race Review Appeal of Rodolfo G. Valles regarding Race 15, conducted on June 27, 2026, at the Ruidoso Downs Race Meet at the Downs at Albuquerque	The Race Review was conducted pursuant to Commission Rule 15.2.5.13(E). The New Mexico Racing Commission heard arguments from both parties and reviewed the video of Race #15, which ran on June 27, 2026, at Ruidoso Downs in Albuquerque. The Ruidoso Downs Board of Stewards (“Stewards”) posted an inquiry concerning horses #9 and #10. Jockey of horse #9 also filed an objection against jockey of horse #10, alleging that horse #10 repeatedly came in on him throughout the race, forcing him to change lanes. After reviewing the replay several times, the Stewards disqualified horse #10 from first place to second place for drifting in throughout the race and forcing horse #9 out of his lane, causing horse #9 to steady, alter course, and lose a better placing. Licensee Valles, represented by his attorney, Daniel Marquez, was given the opportunity to present his evidence and argument regarding the disqualification by the Stewards. The Commission also heard from other participants involved in the race. Thereafter, the Commission’s Board of Stewards presented its argument regarding its decision on the race.	No Action Taken.

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VI. Executive Session: A. IMO Rodolfo G. Valles Race Review Appeal B. IMO Omar Vargas Race Review Appeal		Motion to enter into Executive Session made by Commissioner Buffington. Commissioner Pitre seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.
Public Session 2: VII. <u>Unfinished/New Business and/or Action Items:</u> A. IMO: Race Review Appeal of Rodolfo G. Valles	The Commission voted unanimously in open-session to overturn the Stewards' decision. Specifically, it determined based upon the presentations and the review of the films, that at the starting gate, the #8 horse caused the #9 horse to go into the #10 horse, resulting in the #9 horse turning inward. However, the Commission determined that, based on the rules of the race and the video, the #10 horse did not play a role in the interference with the #9 horse. At one point, there was room for the #9 horse to go through the hole. However, the jockey chose to alter course and go inside. As a result, the Commission concluded the actions by horse #10 did not play a role in the interference of the #9 horse, and did not cause it to lose ground or cost it a better place.	Motion to overturn the Ruidoso Downs Board of Stewards' Decision made by Commissioner Buffington. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pitre. Motion passed unanimously.

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B. IMO: Race Review Appeal of Omar Vargas	The Commission voted in open-session to uphold the decision of the Stewards. Specifically, it determined that, based upon the presentations and the review of the films, the #2 horse failed to maintain a straight course, continuing to drift out the entire race into the path of the #4 horse, and the #4 horse checked hard to avoid clipping heels. The interference of the #2 horse caused the #4 horse to lose ground, costing the #4 horse a better placing.	Motion to uphold the Ruidoso Board of Stewards' Decision made by Commissioner Buffington. Motion seconded by Commissioner Pitre. Motion passed unanimously.
VIII. Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned after completion of items on the agenda.	Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Buffington. Commissioner Pitre seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.


 Chairman Billy Smith


 Executive Director Ismael Trejo