

NEBRASKA RACING & GAMING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

DATE: January 31, 2025
TIME: 1:30 PM
LOCATION: NRGC Main Office
3401 Village Drive, Suite 100
Lincoln, Nebraska 68516

PRESENT COMMISSIONERS:

*Dennis P. Lee Chairman
*Shane Greckel Vice Chairperson
*Janell Beveridge Commissioner
*Tony Fulton Commissioner
*Jeffrey Galyen Commissioner
*Chris Stinson Commissioner
*Helen Feller Commissioner

ABSENT:

Chairman Lee convened the meeting at 1:34 pm in compliance with the provision of Neb. Rev. Stat. 84-1411. Notice of the meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on January 22nd, 2025. In addition, copies of such notice were sent to those on the Racing and Gaming Commission agenda mailing list. A notification was given to the public of the open meetings law and notification of its location for public view.

ELECTION OF COMMISSION OFFICERS

Beveridge moved, seconded by Galyen to nominate Lee as Chairman.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

Galyen moved, seconded by Fulton to nominate Greckel as Vice Chairman

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

NEW NRGC STAFF

Introduction of Licensing Specialist Seena Rashidi and Director of Compliance Samantha Lowery.

APPROVAL OF NRGC STAFF

Casey reintroduced all NRGC staff for approval.

Galyen moved, seconded by Fulton to approve all NRGC staff positions.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES AND FINANCIAL REPORTS

Feller moved, seconded by Greckel to approve the November 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Beveridge, Greckel, Feller, Lee

Abstained: Galyen Motion carried.

Beveridge moved, seconded by Fulton to approve the November and December 2024 Financial Reports.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

HBPA NAME CHANGE RATIFICATION

Speaking on behalf of the HBPA, HBPA CEO Lynne McNally spoke on the request to change Horsemen's Park and Legacy Downs' Live Race & Simulcasting Applications to Horsemen's Exposition and Racing (HER).

Lee moved, seconded by Feller to ratify the approval of the HBPA name change.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY SIMULCAST AGREEMENTS

Speaking on behalf of Horsemen's Park and Legacy Downs, HBPA Representative Lynne McNalley changed the percentage of their simulcasting funds to include the horsemen's purses. NRGC received amendments for this change. No other changes were made.

Lee moved, seconded by Stinson to approve all simulcast agreements.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

FONNER PARK

No changes were needed.

Fulton moved, seconded by Feller to approve the officials.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

Lee moved, seconded by Beveridge to amend the approval to include the board of stewards.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

NRGC Executive Director Casey Ricketts requested updates be made to the NRGC Staff list to reflect current staff.

APRIL COMMISSION MEETING DATE CHANGE-HOLIDAY

Chairman Lee confirmed there will be no commission meeting in February. The next commission meeting will be on Friday, March 7th at 1:30pm located at Fonner Park. The following meeting will be on Friday, April 18th at 1:30pm with a to be determined location.

Informational purposes only, no motion carried.

MEETINGS WITH ASSOCIATIONS

Speaker on behalf of The Nebraska Thoroughbred Breeders Association, Kevin Hulse and Annie Hines spoke on the updates of industry contracts and contributions. Also notified the commission on the NTBA award dinner open to the public on February 22nd at 6:30pm.

Speaker on behalf of The Nebraska Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association, Lynne McNally spoke on the Florida decoupling issues and how it affects Nebraska.

Speaker on behalf of The Nebraska Quarter Horse Racing Association and Breeders' Association Ed Ziemba spoke on updates to their database and forms. The updated forms will be sent to NRGC Executive Director Casey Ricketts for approval.

The Thoroughbred Racing Association in Nebraska had no update.

Informational purposes only, no motion carried.

DIRECTORS UPDATE

NRGC Executive Director Casey Ricketts spoke on preparations for the upcoming racing season at Fonner Park. Updates include the availability of 2 veterinarians at all times for all races and new test barn staff, including interns from the School of Veterinary Medicine.

She also spoke on NRGC updates including a new website, retention schedule and annual report.

NRGC Deputy Director Laurie Holman spoke on the legislative report and provided a bill summary list to the commissioners that directly affect the agency. NRGC Executive Director Casey Ricketts spoke at the hearing on Monday, January 27th. Updates to statutes include licensing racetrack enclosures, language addressing fingerprinting, AGO payments, and combining the Racing and Gaming bank accounts.

Commissioner Galyen commented on a possible amendment to up to 3 years of licensure instead of the 3-year license. The commissioners agreed and Laurie will work on getting the request submitted to the General Affairs Committee.

Laurie also spoke on bill 280, which would allow the State Auditor to directly audit casinos. HBPA and WarHorse representative Lynne McNally indicated their strong opposition to the bill.

Galyen moved, seconded by Beveridge to allow an executive committee meeting on whether the Executive Director should testify this bill.

Voting Aye: Stinson, Fulton, Galyen, Beveridge, Feller, Greckel, Lee Motion carried.

Laurie then spoke on bill 421 which contains implementation language for LR 20 CA, the constitutional amendment to allow mobile sports betting in the state. LB 421 is being proposed so that LR 20 can be approved by the voters in the 2026 general election, this enabling language would already be passed and in statute so there would be no delay to the start of mobile sports wagering. This bill also proposes changes to the distribution of the 20% tax collected on sports wagering. The distribution would be as follows: 3% to compulsive gambling, 7% to the commission for operations, and 90% to the property tax credit cash fund. HBPA and WarHorse representative Lynne McNally also spoke on their position on this bill. LB 438 is a similar bill to LB 421, except it proposes a different distribution of the taxes collected from sports wagering. The distribution would be 2.5% to compulsive gambling, 5% to the commission for operations, 27.5% to the property tax credit fund, 20% to the general fund, and 45% to the Education Future Fund. Laurie also addressed LB433, a bill that proposes all deputy director and attorney positions at state agencies be changed to at-will discretionary positions for anyone newly hired after the effective date of the bill. Informational purposes only, no other motions carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Speaking on behalf of Choices Treatment Center, Education and Outreach Coordinator Mike Sciandra spoke on the problem gambling awareness month in March and notice of a proclamation signing on Tuesday, March 4th at 9am located at the capital. This date and location are subject to change. Kevin Hulse commented on the bills and over contributions to different industries.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm.

The next Commission Meeting will be March 7th, 2025, at 1:30pm located at the Bosselman Conference Center at Fonner Park in Grand Island. This will also be the public hearing for the changes to Title 294 of the Administrative Code.