

**Michigan Harness Horsemen's Association**  
**Board of Director's Minutes of Meeting November 16, 2023**  
**Ngage Management Office, 2501 Jolly Road, Suite 110, Okemos, Michigan 48864**

**Present:** Scott Altizer, Greg West, Tom Barrett, Brett Boyd (zoom), Jerry Earls (zoom), Teresa Marotta (zoom), Kim Pluta, Charles Taylor, Crystal Terrell (zoom), Legislative Rep David Ladd (zoom) and Ngage Management Rep Katy Stanke.

**Absent:** Claudia Cary Davidson

**Guests:** Steve Wins, Jason Seymour, Carrie Marotta, Rob Marotta, Marilyn Berterra

**Call to Order:** President Tom Barrett called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM

**Moment of silence** for Ron Merritt, James McCann, Cathy Hayden, Wayne Johnson, Rondal Krugielka, Walker Bellows, John Driver and Dr. James K. Irving.

**Excuse Absent Members: Motion:** Chuck Taylor moved to excuse the absence of Claudia Cary Davidson, supported by Greg West. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Approval of Consent Agenda: Motion:** Scott Altizer moved to accept the agenda, supported by Greg West. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Approval of October Minutes:** Correction to Old Business, under Banquet Report the motion for awards budget was made by Tom Barrett, not Crystal Terrell. Correction to Standing Reports, under Colt Stakes, Crystal Terrell has suggested to MDARD they use an online form for fair applications and provided a sample form for their review. To date, MDARD has not approved the form for use. Amend Board members comments to include Don Marotta and Ron Simons under nominations for board. **Motion:** Greg West moved to approve the October meeting with the requested changes, supported by Kim Pluta. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Standing Reports:**

**President –** Tom Barrett gave an update on the new Northville Downs track location in Plymouth Township, Northville Downs expects to have Board Trustee approval at the December meeting and reach a principal agreement with Plymouth Township. Additionally, Northville Downs has asked MHHA if it would consider offering assistance in building the new track. Discussion took place regarding what an arrangement to assist Northville Downs could look like. Tom Barrett will continue to have discussions and report back any significant update to the board.

**Legislative –** David Ladd reported while time has run out to get bills passed for 2023, he has been told by several senators they are a priority for 2024. Moving forward he suggests a redraft of SB411 to remove all mention of Out-Of-State Breeders Awards, and leave all other language for now, including the language regarding a temporary simulcasting facility. When we get to the house this language will be an issue. David is going to draft a letter from the MHHA in partnership with MAFE to oppose the move of our regulators from MDARD to MGCB.

**Treasurer –** Crystal Terrell reported the financial reports were emailed to the board prior to the meeting, no questions were raised. Simulcast wagers are down 12% through November 5. Live

Handle is up 10%, it fell off Sept 1 and is approximately \$35,000/night. ADW continues to be flat and stay steady below \$1.5 million. Average purses through the meet are \$68,000.

**Pari-Mutuel Track** – no report

**Colt Stakes** – Crystal Terrell reported applications were sent to all the fairs we have races at and need to be returned by December 6. There is an MDARD committee meeting on December 19 it will include MHHA, MAFE, Breeders and MGCB to discuss the 2024 program and budget. MHHA will be presenting the 2-tiered 2-year-old with reduced Michigan Bred program at this meeting which was previously approved by the MHHA Board.

**Horse Racing Advisory Commission** – Tom Barrett reported the next meeting is December 7. The Fowlerville grant is being processed.

**Open MHHA Member Concerns** – no report

**Phone log** – Katy Stanke reported call volume has dropped recently with the end of the colt stakes season. Asked the board if they had any questions after reading the phone log. No questions were raised.

#### **Old Business:**

**2023 Colt Stakes Expenses Summary** – Crystal Terrell reported total revenue from Colt Stakes is \$111,300 while expenses were \$103,230.82. Please note this includes two grants to cover live streaming and track maintenance.

**Banquet Update** – Katy Stanke reported the Crowne Plaza has agreed to keep the hotel bar open until midnight after the banquet ends. There are currently 16 people registered. Registration prices increase on Dec 15. Scholarship auction donations are starting to come in, please keep trying to solicit more. The awards committee will meet December 6 at 5:00 PM at the Fowlerville Fair Office. Board approved extending early bird ticket pricing until Jan.1.

**Fair Feedback Survey Results** – Katy Stanke reported 52 responses were collected. There was a lot of good feedback and board members have the complete list of comments in their packets. Favorite fairs are Fowlerville and Big Rapids, with Hastings a close third place. Allegan and Cadillac are the least favorite fair tracks with Harrison a close third place. Survey results will be shared with the fairs at the MAFE convention in January.

#### **New Business:**

**Live Streaming Proposal** – Crystal Terrell shared a proposal from 412 Communications for the 2024 season at \$700/day which is \$50/day less than Trot & Pace Marketing for 2023. Tabled until February meeting to allow time for additional proposals.

**Upfront Hannahsboy foals of 2022** – Crystal Terrell reported Upfront Hannahsboy was registered in Ontario and served mares there in 2021 prior to being sold and brought to Michigan where he also bred mares The definition of Michigan Sired as defined in the Horse Racing Act of 1995, Section 20 (5)(i) Michigan sired standardbred horses means standardbred horses conceived after January 1, 1992 and sired by a standardbred stallion registered with the department of agriculture and rural development that was leased or owned by a resident or

residents of this state **and that did not serve a mare at a location outside of this state from February 1 through July 31 of the calendar year in which the conception occurred.** A foal that is born on or after January 1, 2002 of a mare owned by a nonresident of this state and that is conceived outside of this state from transported semen of a stallion registered with the department of agriculture and rural development is eligible for Michigan tax-supported races only if, in the year that the foal is conceived, the department of agriculture and rural developments agent for receiving funds as the holding agent for stakes and futurities is paid a transport fee as determined by the department of agriculture and rural development and administered by the Michigan Harness Horsemen's Association. Based on this definition the board agreed that foals of 2022 of Upfront Hannahsboy are not eligible for the Michigan Sire Stakes and letters would be sent to the stallion owner and owners of those foals.

**Membership list to Board Candidates for campaign purposes** – Tom Barrett reported Marilynn Berterra asked if requested, the MHHA would provide a list of current members to candidates for the purpose of campaigning for the MHHA Board of Directors. Marilyn commented the USTA provides a list to their candidates if requested. **Motion:** Kim Pluta moved that when requested MHHA board candidates be given a copy of the current membership list for campaigning purposes. Supported by Greg West. Motion passed with one opposed vote from Brett Boyd.

#### **MHHA Member Comments:**

Carrie Marotta asked if the board would consider reinstating a stallion registry in Michigan to avoid situations like the Upfront Hannahs boy issue in the future. Crystal Terrell said she had already talked MDARD about this, the issue is if we institute a registry, it has no teeth and puts the responsibility on us, but we can't really do anything about it. Brett Boyd commented the Department of Ag tracks through the USTA reports, 7 – 8 years ago it was decided to work off of the USTA data because they clearly identify the situation and as a sale company, they will be more diligent in vetting horses. Basically, reinstating the stallion registry would create more paperwork of no value.

#### **Board of Director Comments**

Jerry Earls asked when we will know if Northville Downs will race the January dates. Tom Barrett explained Northville Downs only found out yesterday that the developer wants them out January 1<sup>st</sup>, and they are still working on an extension to be able to race the January dates.

#### **Executive Session:**

**Ngage Contract Renewal** – The MHHA Board broke into executive session to review the Ngage Management contract proposal.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM

**Next Meeting** – January 20, 2024 at 5:00 PM, Annual Membership Meeting at Crowne Plaza West Lansing

*Minutes prepared by Ngage Account Lead, Katy Stanke, November 28, 2023, Pending board approval.*