

North Dakota Racing Commission Meeting
Thursday, September 17, 2026 – 10:30 a.m., Central Time
Sakakawea Room, State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND

1-701-328-0950, Meeting ID: 1797812#

Minutes

Call to Order: Chairman Tracy Hanson called the meeting to order at 10:51 a.m.

Present: Chairman Tracy Hanson, Commissioner Jack Schulz, Commissioner Shadd Piehl, Commissioner Mike Schmitz, Executive Director Bruce Johnson, Legal Counsel William Woodworth and Matthew Swanson, Administrative Officer Kaitlynn Schatz

Others Present: Hugh Drexler, Scott Horst, Robert (Robbie) Wilson, John Bubel, Janelle Mitzel

Others On the Phone: John Ford, Mike Weiss, Jason King, James Lee, James Pettie, Justin Stempeck, Nicolas Soto, Zach Birnbaum, Christian Hellmers, William Alempijevic, Lorilee Goodall, Jay Alsop

AGENDA

- 1. Approval of Minutes** – May 21st, 2026, Meeting
- 2. NDRC Office Staff Change**
 - a. Kaitlynn Schatz
 - b. Administrative Officer
- 3. Ongoing Regulatory Buildup**
 - a. Vixio, (UK)
 - Presentation
 - b. Pari-Mutuel Wagering Outlook
 - Fast moving, chaotic environment
 - c. Vixio / TRPB

4. TRPB Update

- a. Limited Scope Exam
 - Lien Games, (Sponsor) = White Label/Affiliates
- b. Expanded Background Checks
 - Lucky Horseshoe Gaming

5. New ADW Applications

- a. Longshot Fantasy
 - Approved at May 21st NDRC Meeting
- b. Draft Kings
- c. Off-Track Avenue

6. 2026 Live Race Meet Reports

- a. ORDA (Chippewa Downs)
 - Financials
 - Promotion Fund Grant Follow-Up
 - Medication Violations
 - Other Issues
- b. HRND (ND Horse Park)
 - Financial
 - Promotion Fund Grant Follow-Up
 - Medication Violations
 - Other Issues
- c. North Dakota Quarter Horse Race Association
 - Purse Fund Grant
 - Promotion Fund Grant
- d. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association
 - Promotion Fund Grant

7. 2026 Advertising & Marketing Campaign

- a. Follow Up Report
 - AgWeek Mr. Alec Winmill

8. 2026 NDRC Fund Updates

- a. Purse Fund
 - Compared To 2025
- b. Breeders fund
 - Instate Checks Delivered
 - Complications
- c. Promotion Fund
 - Compared To 2025
 - 25% Balance for Operating Expenditures Report

9. Budget Issues

- a. Meeting With OMB
 - Issues raised by SAO Report
- b. Report on 2023 – 2025 Budget

10. 2027 Legislative Session

- a. Present Agency Bill
 - Seek Clarification on Century Code, N.D.C.C. 53-06.2-11(6)

11. NDRC Plans For 2026 - 2027

- a. Providing a New Environment for ADW Changes
 - Be the “Smart” Innovators
- b. Updated Economic Impact Study
- c. Summer 2027 Live Race Meet Dates
 - Horsemen’s Meeting
 - Arizona Symposium

12. Next, Final 2026 Meeting Date and Location

- a. November 19, 2026, meeting in Bismarck at the State Capitol

13. Any other business which may properly come before the Commission

14. Adjournment

1. Approval of Minutes – May 21, 2026, Meeting

Previously, all Commissioners had received a copy of the minutes to review.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Piehl to accept the minutes of May 21, 2026, as presented. Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, Schmitz – Y, and Schulz – Y. Motion passed.

2. NDRC Office Staff Change

- a. Kaitlynn Schatz
- b. Administrative Officer

Executive Director Johnson explained the recent staff change for the North Dakota Racing Commission. Gail Allensworth, former administrative officer for the commission, had retired and Kaitlynn Schatz would be taking her place as administrative officer. Introduced her and welcomed her.

No motions needed.

3. Ongoing Regulatory Buildup

- a. Vixio, (UK)
 - Presentation
- b. Pari-Mutuel Wagering Outlook
 - Fast moving, chaotic environment
- c. Vixio / TRPB

Executive Director Johnson introduced Vixio and James Lee, who had previously given a presentation during the last commission meeting, to discuss how their services could support the Racing Commission. This presentation was to review what they offer to their subscribers and to go over the pricing packages available. There are a lot of regulatory changes taking place in Pari-Mutuel Wagering.

Areas where Vixio could offer assistance to the Racing Commission if the Commission purchases a subscription to use their website platform are: 1) HHR, 2) Other State Legislative laws and regulations; and 3) New gaming models being introduced.

Four packages were presented at the end of the presentation with various options for subscriptions.

The commissioners asked questions which Mr. Lee answered. Another representative of Vixio, Zachary Birnbaum, also gave some further explanations and answered questions. There was discussion between Executive Director Johnson, William Woodworth, and the Commissioners over proper procurement procedures being followed, as well as the pricing options.

A motion was made by Commissioner Piehl and seconded by Commissioner Schulz to authorize permission to purchase a subscription for Vixio within the next year. This will be determined by the budget in coming months. Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, Schmitz – N, and Schulz – Y. Motion passed.

More information on how much this is related to horse racing was discussed and requested by Chairman Hanson from Mr. Lee so that can be discussed in the future. Mr. Lee will provide this information with the Executive Director Johnson. Differences between Vixio and TRPB were briefly discussed.

No motions needed.

4. TRPB Update

- a. Limited Scope Exam
 - i. Lien Games, (Sponsor) = White Label/Affiliates
- b. Expanded Background Checks
 - i. Lucky Horseshoe Gaming

Executive Director Johnson shared information acquired for Lien Games from the Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau, in response to cease and desist letters that have come in. Lien Games

allowed the investigation, and Executive Director Johnson shared the findings from TRPB with the Commissioners and Legal Counsel.

No motions needed.

5. New ADW Applications

- a. Longshot Fantasy
 - i. Approved at May 21st NDRC Meeting
- b. Draft Kings
- c. Off-Track Avenue

Executive Director Johnson updated the Commissioners on Longshot Fantasy. Longshot Fantasy was approved by the Commissioners at the last meeting but has yet to be approved by the Attorney General's office.

Christian Hellmers, owner of Longshot Fantasy, was on the call and requested a meeting with the Attorney General's office in the next two weeks for the final approval needed and to discuss any concerns or disqualifications. Executive Director Johnson asked Legal Counsel if it would be possible to meet and discuss this with their office. The consensus was that the Executive Director, Legal Counsel, and Mr. Hellmers plan to set up a time to meet in the next two weeks. The Executive Director promised to be in touch with Mr. Hellmers on this.

- b. Draft Kings

Executive Director Johnson stated the Draft Kings application is complete and just needs to be approved by the Commissioners and then can be approved by the Attorney General's Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Piehl and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to accept Draft Kings as an ADW for the Racing Commission. Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, Schmitz – Y, and Schulz – abstained. Motion passed.

- c. Avenue Off-Track

Executive Director Johnson requested that the Commissioners be open to having a special meeting, if needed, to approve Avenue Off-Track to accommodate getting them approved once their completed application can be submitted.

No motions needed.

6. 2026 Live Race Meet Reports

- a. ORDA (Chippewa Downs)
 - Financials
 - Promotion Fund Grant Follow-Up
 - Medication Violations

- Other Issues
- b. HRND (ND Horse Park)
 - Financial
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- c. North Dakota Quarter Horse Race Association
 - Purse Fund Grant
 - Promotion Fund Grant
- d. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association
 - Promotion Fund Grant

Executive Director Johnson explained that part of the audit that happened this past Spring noted a more detailed description of the grants and funds awarded by the Racing Commission. He presented the numbers to the Commission and presented them on the screen.

a. ORDA (Chippewa Downs)

Robert Wilson of ORDA outlined the expenses, most of the funds going to salaries for employees at the track, an ambulance contract, and track insurance. Mr. Wilson explained other expenses and what the proposed grant money for 2027 will be used for.

There was discussion about the racing dates for ORDA in the future and Executive Director Bruce Johnson stated he plans to have deeper discussion about racing dates for both tracks in meetings with the horsemen in the state to make an informed decision on when racing should take place next year. He said these meetings would take place between now and the next Commission Meeting in November.

A medication violation that took place was discussed by Executive Director Johnson. The overprescribed medication was very high, and it was stated that there was no fine. The state steward, James Pettie, spoke about the incident and corrected that there was a \$200 fine given. This was the only medication violation for the 2026 North Dakota racing season. Discussion about fines being given for medication violations was discussed amongst the commissioners and Executive Director Johnson.

b. HRND (ND Horse Park)

Hugh Drexler of HRND shared the expenses for the 2026 racing season. Mr. Drexler shared what the 2027 grant money is intended to be utilized for, and he recommended consideration for moving the race dates in the future due to the heat and other factors. There was further discussion about the necessity to move up post times due to the heat this past racing season. Executive Director Johnson again emphasized the need for meetings to discuss future race dates for the next race season for both tracks in North Dakota.

c. North Dakota Quarter Horse Racing Association

Leon Glasser of NDQHRA was unable to attend the meeting, but he did pass on information on the funds used during the 2026 racing season to John Buble who shared them with the Commission. There was a short discussion on the purse money that was given and how that is dispersed.

d. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association

Scott Horst of the North Dakota Thoroughbred Association shared the details of the promotion fund grants given at this year's races. Mr. Horst also shared a desire to have the horsemen have a meeting and be active in this upcoming legislative session.

No motions needed.

7. 2026 Advertising & Marketing Campaign

a. Follow Up Report

- AgWeek Mr. Alec Winmill

Mr. Alec Winmill was unable to be a part of the meeting. Commissioner Schmitz had questions and concerns regarding the contracted marketing spots that were run and if they helped raise awareness of the Racing Commission. Executive Director Johnson said that Mr. Winmill would be a part of the November meeting, so any concerns and questions can be addressed at that time. Chairman Hanson recommended forming a subcommittee to possibly discuss future marketing plans. Legal counsel advised that a subcommittee could be a good idea and any findings could be brought to the Commission meetings for further consideration.

No motions needed.

8. 2026 NDRC Fund Updates

a. Purse Fund

- Compared To 2025

b. Breeders fund

- Instate Checks Delivered
- Complications

c. Promotion Fund

- Compared To 2025
- 25% Balance for Operating Expenditures Report

Executive Director Johnson went over the totals compared to previous years for the Racing Commission's special funds. An explanation of the changes in the audit for the promotion fund was

provided. Going forward, all meetings will have updates on the Purse, Breeder's, and Promotion Funds (Special Funds).

No motions needed.

9. Budget Issues

- a. Meeting With OMB
 - Issues raised by SAO Report
- b. Report on 2023 – 2025 Budget

Executive Director Johnson explained that there have been conversations on the budget with OMB, and he said the audit findings will change some of the Racing Commission's spending and which funds will be used because of the changes.

No motions needed.

10. 2027 Legislative Session

- a. Present Agency Bill
 - Seek Clarification on Century Code, N.D.C.C. 53-06.2-11(6)

Executive Director Johnson expressed desire to clarify the audit ruling for the promotion fund at the upcoming legislative session.

No motions needed.

11. NDRC Plans For 2026 - 2027

- a. Providing a New Environment for ADW Changes
 - Be the "Smart" Innovators
- b. Updated Economic Impact Study
- c. Summer 2027 Live Race Meet Dates
 - Horsemen's Meeting
 - Arizona Symposium

Executive Director Johnson discussed advances with ADW changes and the hopeful addition of more Pari-Mutuel companies for the Racing Commission.

Executive Director Johnson requested authorization to attend the Global Racing Symposium.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Schulz for the Executive Director to attend the Global Racing Symposium held in Arizona in December, should the budget allow. Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, Schmitz – Y, and Schulz – Y. Motion passed.

12. Next, Final 2026 Meeting Date and Location

- d. November 19, 2026, meeting in Bismarck at the State Capitol

Commissioner Schulz asked if it would be possible to move the next meeting to an alternate location. The Commissioners agreed they could discuss this as an option.

13. Any other business which may properly come before the Commission

Mr. Scott Horst asked for clarification on white labels with ADW companies. Discussion about the white labels and whether the money is separate or is tax that is reported to the Racing Commission. John Ford of Potent Systems asked if Lucky Horseshoe Gaming was approved now and confirmed that the profits of white labels are all reportable to the Racing Commission.

No motions needed.

14. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Schulz to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye and hearing no negative vote the motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:52 PM.