

North Dakota Racing Commission Meeting
State Capitol Building, Peace Garden Room
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND
Thursday, November 20, 2025 – 10:30 a.m., Central Time
(701) 328-0950 Meeting ID: 841387498#

Minutes

Call to Order: Chairman Tracy Hanson called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Jack Schulz, Commissioner Shadd Piehl, Executive Director Bruce Johnson, Administrative Officer Gail Allensworth, and Legal Counsel William Woodworth

On the Phone: Chairman Tracy Hanson, Commissioner Mike Schmitz, and Commissioner Jessica Benson

Others Present: Robbie Wilson, Hugh Drexler, Zac Hoffner, Janelle Mitzel, James Pettie, Jay Alsop, John Bubel, Leon Glasser, and Scott Horst

Others On the Phone: Doug DeMontigny, Lorilee Goodall, John Ford, Audrey Edwards, Wendy Reuer, and Cary Thiel

AGENDA

1. **Approval of Minutes** – August 1 & October 17, 2025, meetings
2. **Reduced Licensing Fees for 2026**
3. **License Renewals for 2026**
 - a. **Service Providers/ADWs**
 1. 123 Gaming, Inc.
 2. AmWest Entertainment, LLC
 3. Colossusbets, Ltd.
 4. eBet Technologies, Inc.
 5. The Elite Turf Club, N.V.
 6. Game Play Network, Inc.
 7. Hartlane, LLC
 8. Lien Games Racing, LLC

9. MegaTote, LLC
10. PariBet, LLC
11. Skyland Pacific, LLC
12. StableDuel, LLC
13. US Off-Track, LLC
14. WatchandWager.com, LLC
15. Xpressbet, LLC

b. **Totalizator Providers**

1. AmTote International, Inc.
2. Global Tote US, LLC
3. I-Neda Ltd.
4. Sky Racing World, LLC
5. United Tote Company

c. **Site Operators**

1. Development Homes, Inc.
2. Horse Race North Dakota
3. North Dakota Quarter Horse Racing Association
4. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association
5. Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa (Sky Dancer Casino)

4. Licensed Operators Oversight & Protection

- a. Governor's Office Developments
- b. TRPB (Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau)

5. Live Race Date Requests for 2026

- a. Outdoor Recreation Development Association (ORDA) - Chippewa Downs
- b. Horse Race North Dakota (HRND) - North Dakota Horse Park

6. Breeders Fund 2026

- a. Breed Fund Audit for 2024
- b. In-State Awards
- c. Out-of-State Awards

7. Horsemen's Advisory Group & 2026 Recommendations

8. Executive Director Authorizations for 2026

9. Internship Program for 2026

10. Scheduling 2026 Commission Meetings

- a. February 19 in Bismarck
- b. May 21 in Belcourt
- c. September 17 in Bismarck
- d. November 19 in Bismarck

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

12. Adjournment

1. Approval of Minutes – August 1 & October 17, 2025, meetings

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 August 1 and October 17, 2025, as presented. All Commissioners voted aye and hearing no negative vote the motion passed.

Executive Director Johnson stated that there was a change to the agenda. Mainline, LLC, needed to be added under agenda item 3a.

A motion was made by Commissioner Piehl and seconded by Commissioner Schulz to change the agenda to add Mainline, LLC, under agenda item 3a. Piehl – Y, Schulz – Y, Hanson – Y, and Schmitz – Y. Motion passed.

2. Reduced Licensing Fees for 2026

Executive Director Johnson asked for authorization to offer a reduced licensing fee schedule for racetrack occupation fees, as it's been done in previous years, as an incentive to try to encourage horsemen to license early to help reduce congestion in the racing office on opening day.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Piehl to authorize the reduced licensing fee schedule for 2026. Schmitz – Y, Piehl – Y, Hanson – Y, and Schulz – Y. Motion passed.

Commissioner Benson joined the meeting at 10:43 a.m.

3. License Renewals for 2026

a. Service Providers/ADWs

1. 123 Gaming, Inc.
2. AmWest Entertainment, LLC
3. Colossusbets, Ltd.
4. eBet Technologies, Inc.
5. The Elite Turf Club, N.V.
6. Game Play Network, Inc.
7. Hartlane, LLC
8. Lien Games Racing, LLC
9. Mainline, LLC
10. MegaTote, LLC
11. PariBet, LLC
12. Skyland Pacific, LLC

13. StableDuel, LLC
14. US Off-Track, LLC
15. WatchandWager.com, LLC
16. Xpressbet, LLC

Executive Director Johnson listed all the applicants and recommended approving the relicensing for the sixteen Service Providers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Schulz to approve the relicensing of the sixteen Service Providers/ADWs. Schmitz – Y, Schulz – Y, Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

b. Totalizator Providers

1. AmTote International, Inc.
2. Global Tote US, LLC
3. I-Neda Ltd.
4. Sky Racing World, LLC
5. United Tote Company

Executive Director Johnson listed all the applicants and recommended approving the relicensing of all five Totalizator Providers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Piehl to approve the relicensing of all five Totalizator Providers. Schmitz – Y, Piehl – Y, Hanson – Y, Schulz – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

c. Site Operators

1. Development Homes, Inc.
2. Horse Race North Dakota
3. North Dakota Quarter Horse Racing Association
4. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association
5. Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa (Sky Dancer Casino)

Executive Director Johnson listed all the applicants and recommended approving the relicensing of all five Site Operators.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Piehl to approve the relicensing of all five Site Operators. Schulz – Y, Piehl – Y, Hanson – Y, Schmitz – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

4. Licensed Operators Oversight & Protection

- a. Governor's Office Developments

Executive Director Johnson provided a summary of the meeting regarding oversight on ADW's that he had with the Governor's office. The Commissioners asked questions which the Director answered. Executive Director Johnson indicated that there would be another meeting with the Governor's office.

No motions needed.

- b. TRPB (Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau)

Executive Director Johnson stated that he received a memorandum of understanding and engagement from the TRPB. There will be a cost to the Racing Commission. Executive Director Johnson stated that the Commissioners will receive the document before the next meeting to review.

No motions needed.

5. Live Race Date Requests for 2026

- a. Outdoor Recreation Development Association (ORDA) - Chippewa Downs
- b. Horse Race North Dakota (HRND) - North Dakota Horse Park

Executive Director Johnson stated that ORDA requested four weekends (10 days): June 6 & 7, 13 & 14, 20 & 21, 27 & 28, and July 4 & 5 for 2026 race dates. The recommendation was for 8 days from June 6 & 7, 13 & 14, 20 & 21, 27 & 28, and July 4 & 5, to allow for any makeup days they might need.

Executive Director Johnson stated that HRND requested July 10 & 11, July 17 & 18, July 25 & 26, and August 1 & 2 for 2026 race dates. The recommendation was for 8 days from July 10 & 11, July 17 & 18, July 25 & 26, and August 1 & 2.

There was discussion amongst the Commissioners whether to have a date range instead of specific dates approved to allow for makeup days.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to approve 8 race days from June 1 through July 5 for ORDA and 8 days of racing from July 7 through August 2 for HRND. Schulz – Y, Schmitz – Y, Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

6. Breeders Fund 2026

- a. Breed Fund Audit for 2024

Executive Director Johnson reported that Debbie Eisenhauer completed the audit of the 2024 Breed Fund for in-state and out-of-state awards. No errors were found, and the Director asked the Commissioners to accept the report.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to accept the 2024 Breed Fund audit report. Schulz – Y, Schmitz – Y, Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

- b. In-State Awards
- c. Out-of-State Awards

Executive Director Johnson stated that after meeting with the Horsemen's Advisory Group, he recommends the following:

- In-State Racing
 - \$225,000 available to provide breeders awards for 2026 for in-state racing;
- Standardbreds
 - Due to the lack of racing opportunities in North Dakota, Standardbreds have been awarded the following eligible in-state dates for 2026: June 6 through August 2, 2026, at Running Aces in Minnesota.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Piehl to accept the recommendation of \$225,000, for in-state breed fund awards for 2026, and the dates of June 6 through August 2, 2026, for Standardbreds. Schmitz – Y, Piehl – Y, Hanson – Y, Schulz – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

- Out-of-State Racing
 - \$25,000 available from the ND Breed Fund to provide breeders awards for ND-breds racing in out-of-state races. The following rules apply:
 - Points will be awarded January 1 through June 5, and August 3 through December 31, 2026;
 - No out-of-state points will be awarded for races held approximately June 6 through August 2, 2026;
 - Distributions shall be in accordance with current in-state rules;
 - It is the responsibility of the foal/mare/stallion owner to provide the Commission with the out-of-state race results;
 - Only official race results from Equibase, Daily Racing Form, or Trueform Racing Services will be accepted and must be mailed to the ND Racing Commission office;
 - All results must be postmarked no later than January 2, 2027.
- Double and Triple Points
 - Historically the Racing Commission has offered double breed fund points to those races worth \$10,000 or more and triple breed fund points to those races worth \$25,000 or more. This will be the same for 2026.
- Eligibility for "Back-to-Back" Racing
 - Any horse that is eligible for breed fund points in a race may not again be eligible to receive points for a period of four (4) days from that race. For example, horses racing on Saturday would not again be eligible until Thursday. This is an equine welfare rule implemented by the Commission to dis-incentivize "back-to-back" racing. This rule is applicable to in-state and out-of-state racing for all breeds.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Piehl to accept the recommendations for the out-of-state breed fund awards for 2026. Schulz – Y, Piehl – Y, Hanson – Y, Schmitz – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

7. Horsemen's Advisory Group & 2026 Recommendations

Executive Director shared some of the recommendations from the Horsemen's Advisory Group. They are as follows:

- Change the limit the field size from 6 to 5;
- Tighten security at the racetracks;
- There should be better communication between breed associations when applying for grants;
- The implementation of urine testing: what the extra costs would be and what extra work would be involved;
- Revise the trainer's test;
- Review the appeal process for medical violations;
- Confirmation (transparency) of test results;
- The horsemen like Friday night racing;
- EMT be possible instead of having an ambulance during training hours;
- ND-bred races should stay on the board longer;
- What other penalties can be considered, besides fines, for entering & scratching horses;
- Who owns/maintains the Fair Circuit equipment; where it should be and is there an inventory;

Executive Director stated that there will be more discussion at the February Horsemen's meeting.

No motions needed.

8. Executive Director Authorizations for 2026

Executive Director Johnson asked for authorizations to approve Promotion Fund expenditures, authorizations, and licensing approvals for the 2026 calendar year including but not limited to the following:

- All NDRC live race meet staff including the State Veterinarians, State Stewards, Industrial Laboratories, and the State Internships;
- All required track authorizations including condition books (60 days in advance) of the first race day, first race time, Tote, Photo Finish and all Race Official contracts;
- All required inspections and testing of equipment, grounds, track, barns, and buildings;
- All required submissions and documents for live racing events.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schulz and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to approve the recommendations from Executive Director Johnson for the authorizations needed for the 2026 calendar year. Schulz – Y, Schmitz – Y, Hanson – Y, Piehl – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

9. Internship Program for 2026

Executive Director Johnson stated that he would like to continue the Internship Program for 2026. The recommendation is up to three interns.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benson and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to authorize hiring up to three interns for the 2026 race season. Benson – Y, Schmitz – Y, Hanson – Y, Schulz – Y, and Piehl – Y. Motion passed.

10. Scheduling 2026 Commission Meetings

- a. January 29 in Bismarck
- b. May 21 in Belcourt
- c. September 17 in Bismarck
- d. November 19 in Bismarck

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

- HRND GM Hugh Drexler provided a synopsis of the 2025 race meet at the ND Horse Park:
 - 59 races; 19 Quarter Horse & 38 Thoroughbred; ND-bred 37.3%
 - \$460,000 in purses; HRND paid \$140,000; Associations paid significant dollars as well as the Racing Commission
 - Handle was up by 11%
 - They have reduced operating expenses & paid off \$350,000 in special assessments
 - Gaming Division is doing well
 - HRND wants to build a permanent facility at the racetrack
 - Field size averaged 6.06
 - Plan on getting the condition book out earlier
 - There were some issues: security; there should not be horsemen on the backside in RV's; entries
 - The track superintendent has made great strides
 - Being the GM & Racing Secretary is not too much trouble for Mr. Drexler
- Zac Hoffner with WDAY stated that the marketing campaign was successful; there were one million digital impressions;
Mr. Hoffner suggested a blend of digital and traditional tv campaign for 2026 and stated that he would be back for the January meeting for a presentation.

12. Adjournment

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

Meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.