

North Dakota Racing Commission Meeting
Quality Inn, Room E
1030 East Interstate Avenue, Bismarck, ND
Thursday, February 20, 2025 – 10:30 a.m., Central Time
(701) 328-7850 Meeting ID: 16125234#

Minutes

Call to Order: Chairman Tracy Hanson called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m.

Present: Chairman Tracy Hanson, Commissioner Mike Schmitz, Commissioner Jessica Benson, Executive Director Bruce Johnson, and Administrative Officer Gail Allensworth

On the Phone: Commissioner Richard LaFromboise and Legal Counsel Steve Hanson

Others Present: Zac Hoffner, Robbie Wilson, Leigh Backhaus, Scott Horst, Hugh Drexler, and Leon Glasser

Others On the Phone: Wendy Reuer, Jay Alsop, Lorilee Goodall, Deb Trickel, Leslie Csoksay, and Audrey Edwards

AGENDA

- 1. Approval of Minutes** – November 14, 2024, January 15 & January 27, 2025
- 2. Financial Updates**
 - a. Promotion Fund
 - b. Purse Fund
 - c. Breeders Fund
 - d. General Fund

3. 2024 Grant Reports

- a. ORDA
- b. HRND
- c. NDTA
- d. NDQHRA

4. 2025 Promotion & Purse Fund Requests

- a. Conditions for Promotion & Purse Fund Requests
- b. ORDA (Chippewa Downs)
- c. HRND (North Dakota Horse Park)
- d. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association
- e. North Dakota Quarter Horse Racing Association

5. Breeders Fund Report

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

6. Marketing & Advertising Update – WDAY Presentation

7. Legislative Update

- a. SB 2023 (Budget)
- b. SB 1342
- c. HB 1525
- d. SB 2312
- e. SB 2384
- f. SB 2347

8. Next Meeting Dates

- a. June 6, 2025, meeting in Belcourt at the Derrick Dixon Event Center
- b. August 1, 2025, meeting in Fargo at the Expressway Suites
- c. November 20, 2025, meeting in Bismarck at the State Capitol

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

10. Adjournment

1. Approval of Minutes – November 14, 2024, January 16 & January 27, 2025

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Benson to accept the minutes of November 14, 2024, January 16 & January 27, 2025, as presented. All Commissioners voted aye and hearing no negative vote, the motion passed.

Executive Director Johnson stated that agenda item #3 needs to be removed as it was covered at the November meeting.

2. Financial Updates

- a. Promotion Fund
- b. Purse Fund
- c. Breeders Fund
- d. General Fund

Executive Director Johnson provided an update to the Commissioners on all the Commission funds.

No motions needed.

3. 2024 Grant Reports

- a. ORDA
- b. HRND
- c. NDTA
- d. NDQHRA

This item was removed from the agenda as it was covered at the November 14, 2024, meeting.

4. 2025 Promotion & Purse Fund Requests

- a. Conditions for Promotion & Purse Fund Requests
 - b. ORDA (Chippewa Downs)
 - c. HRND (North Dakota Horse Park)
 - d. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association
 - e. North Dakota Quarter Horse Racing Association
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- a. Conditions for Promotion & Purse Fund Requests

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Benson to approve the conditions form for promotion and purse fund requests. Schmitz – Y, Benson – Y, and Hanson – Y. Motion passed.

- b. ORDA (Chippewa Downs)

Executive Director stated that ORDA requested \$200,000 from the Promotion Fund. The recommendation was \$180,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Benson to go with the Director’s recommendation of \$180,000 from the Promotion Fund for ORDA. Schmitz – Y, Benson – Y, and Hanson – Y. Motion passed.

Executive Director stated that ORDA requested \$25,000 from the Promotion Fund for a horsemen’s incentive, and he recommended approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benson and seconded by Chairman Hanson to go with the Director's recommendation of \$25,000 from the Promotion Fund to ORDA for a horsemen's incentive. Benson – Y, Hanson – Y, and Schmitz – N. Motion passed.

Executive Director stated that ORDA requested \$200,000 from the Purse Fund. The recommendation was \$140,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Benson to go with the Director's recommendation of \$140,000 from the Purse Fund to ORDA. Schmitz – Y, Benson – Y, and Hanson – Y. Motion passed.

c. HRND (North Dakota Horse Park)

Executive Director stated that HRND requested \$180,000 from the Promotion Fund. The recommendation was \$180,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Benson to go with the Director's recommendation of \$180,000 from the Promotion Fund to HRND. Schmitz – Y, Benson – Y, and Hanson – Y. Motion passed.

Executive Director stated that HRND requested \$7,500 from the Promotion Fund for additional RV hookups. The recommendation was \$7,500.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benson and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to go with the Director's recommendation of \$7,500 from the Promotion Fund to HRND for additional RV hookups. Benson – Y, Schnitz – Y, and Hanson – Y. Motion passed.

Commissioner LaFromboise joined the meeting on the phone.

Executive Director stated that HRND requested \$196,000 from the Purse Fund. The recommendation was \$140,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schmitz and seconded by Commissioner Benson to go with the Director's recommendation of \$140,000 from the Purse Fund for HRND. Schmitz – Y, Benson – Y, Hanson – Y, and LaFromboise - Y. Motion passed.

d. North Dakota Thoroughbred Association

Executive Director stated that the NDTA requested \$3,000 from the Promotion Fund and he recommended approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benson and seconded by Chairman Hanson to approve a Promotion Fund request to NDTA in the amount of \$3,000 for a horsemen's banquet to be held in Fargo on the last weekend of racing. Benson – Y, Hanson – Y, Schmitz – Y, and LaFromboise – Y. Motion passed.

Scott Horst, President of the NDTA, withdrew their Purse Fund Grant request.

e. North Dakota Quarter Horse Racing Association

Executive Director stated that the NDQHRA requested \$5,000 from the Promotion Fund and he recommended approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Benson and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to approve a Promotion Fund request to NDQHRA for their awards banquet with the NDQHA. Benson – Y, Schmitz – Y, Hanson – Y, and LaFromboise – Y. Motion passed.

Leon Glasser, President of the NDQHRA, withdrew their Purse Fund Grant request.

Executive Director Johnson stated that he recommended a jockey incentive of \$12,000 from the Promotion Fund for each racetrack.

A motion was made by Commissioner LaFromboise and seconded by Commissioner Schmitz to approve a jockey incentive of \$12,000 from the Promotion Fund for Chippewa Downs (ORDA) and the North Dakota Horse Park (HRND). LaFromboise – Y, Schmitz – Y, Hanson – Y, and Benson – Y. Motion passed.

5. Breeders Fund Report

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

Executive Director Johnson stated that he already covered this earlier in the meeting during item #2.

No motions needed.

6. Marketing & Advertising Update – WDAY Presentation

Executive Director Johnson introduced Zac Hoffner from WDAY-TV who provided a marketing/advertising update. The Commissioners asked questions which Mr. Hoffner answered.

No motions needed.

7. Legislative Update

- a. SB 2023 (Budget)
- b. SB 1342
- c. HB 1525
- d. SB 2312
- e. SB 2384
- f. SB 2347

Executive Director Johnson provided an update on all the bills in the current legislative session that could impact the Racing Commission. The Commissioners had questions which Director Johnson answered.

No motions needed.

8. Next Meeting Dates

- a. June 6, 2025, meeting in Belcourt at the Derrick Dixon Event Center
- b. August 1, 2025, meeting in Fargo at the Expressway Suites
- c. November 20, 2025, meeting in Bismarck at the State Capitol

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

- Hugh Drexler of HRND stated they hired a Gaming Manager and that they are having discussions with NDSU regarding the land.

10. Adjournment

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

Meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.