

# LOUISIANA STATE RACING COMMISSION

## MINUTES – October 17, 2024 Meeting

*As transcribed by Julia D. Harper, Certified Court Reporter*

### COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE


Edward J. Koehl, Jr., *Chairman*  
Mike R. McHalfey, *1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair*  
Earl A. "Boo" Landry, Jr., *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair*  
Vincent V. Tumminello, Jr., M.D., *3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair*  
Dr. Patrick Bernard  
Larry L. Findley, Sr., DVM  
K. R. "Ron" Finkelstein, O.D.  
Nathan C. Granger

### ABSENT

Rock M. Bordelon  
Leslie P. Bouie  
Travis K. Miller, DVM  
Deano Thornton  
Katherine L. Winters

# APPROVED

At the Commission Meeting of  
February 13, 2025  
(Date)

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director  
Louisiana State Racing Commission

The meeting of the Louisiana State Racing Commission (LSRC) is called to order by the Chairman on Thursday, October 17, 2024 at 9:10 AM in the Event Center of the Delta Downs Racetrack, Casino, & Hotel, 2717 Delta Downs Drive, Vinton, Louisiana. Roll call is taken; a quorum is present.

## I. ASSOCIATION REQUESTS/REPORTS

### A. BOYD RACING, LLC d/b/a DELTA DOWNS RACETRACK, CASINO & HOTEL

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, by Mr. John Simon, Director of Racing Operations. Mr. Simon states that the 76-day Thoroughbred Meet began on October 10, 2024 and had a successful opening weekend. He says that Dr. Mick Peterson, Executive Director of the Racing Surfaces Testing Laboratory, was happy about the consistency of the track surface and there were no complaints from the horsemen. He says that he is waiting for track soil test results. Mr. Simon says the backside barns are full. Mr. Steve Kuypers, Vice President and General Manager of Delta Downs, states that the winner's circle and pavers projects are complete. He says that they are working on paving the back roads to the test barns and new projects have been approved including: sewer lines, electricity and plumbing upgrades for the entire backside and a 40-unit dorm. See Meeting Transcript for discussion amongst the commissioners and Mr. Kuypers about a timeline and safety. The agreed priority is the bathrooms and the dorms, then the barns later. Mr. Kuypers states that the dorms should be built by March of 2025. Commissioner Tumminello motions to approve Amber Lindsay, Claire Hudson, and Christie Hatley as placing judges; Commissioner McHalfey seconds; motion carries.

### B. THE OLD EVANGELINE DOWNS, LLC

#### d/b/a EVANGELINE DOWNS RACETRACK & CASINO

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, by Ms. Tracey Coonce, Director of Racing Operations. Ms. Coonce informs that the Evangeline Downs' 46-day 2024 Quarter Horse meet began on October 2, 2024. She says that handle was down over the first 8 days and field size was down due to late move-ins. She said

that the second condition book will be out tomorrow. Also, she mentions Dr. Peterson inspected the track surface, met with the maintenance crew, and provided positive feedback. Ms. Carol Core, Vice President and General Manager of Evangeline Downs, provides a brief update on three backside projects (restrooms, paddock/winner's circle area, and dorms) and the replacement of the track lights. Chairman Koehl asks about the Rain Plane, bathroom facilities, and 2 additional barn timelines. She says the Rain Plane will be ready for use for the 2025 meet and doesn't have the timelines for other capital projects.

**2024 QUARTER HORSE MEET****2. RACES**

- a. **Approval** of first condition book for 2024 quarter horse meet.
- b. **Ratification** of designated races for 2024 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

**3. STEWARDS, OFFICIALS & MANAGEMENT**

- a. **Ratification** of officials for 2024 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Findley motions to approve Items #2 & #3; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**C. CHURCHILL DOWNS LOUISIANA HORSERACING COMPANY, LLC****d/b/a FAIR GROUNDS RACE COURSE & SLOTS**

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, *Mr. Jason Boulet, Director of Racing*, Mr. Boulet informs that the Fair Grounds' 15-day Quarter Horse meet, which was supposed to conclude on September 14, 2024, concluded on September 15, 2024 because of hurricane issues. He states that over the 15-day meet, 146 races were ran, \$3.7 million in purse money was distributed to the horsemen, and the total handle was \$5.5 million. He discusses preparations for the upcoming Thoroughbred meet, and states that Fair Grounds is prepared for the first day of racing, November 22, 2024. See Meeting Transcript for discussion on Fair Grounds' stakes schedule. Mr. Boulet introduces Fair Grounds' new General Manager, Ms. Cathy Beeding; see Meeting Transcript for her background. Mr. Boulet says that the new video board for the paddock is currently under construction and they plan to have it replace the old one by opening day. Mr. Boulet also announces that the paddock will be completely renovated.

**2024-2025 THOROUGHBRED MEET****2. RACES**

- a. **Approval** of first condition book for 2024-2025 thoroughbred meet.

Commissioner Landry motions to approve; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

- b. **Approval** of designated races for the 2024-2025 thoroughbred meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Granger motions to approve; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**3. STEWARDS, OFFICIALS & MANAGEMENT**

- a. **Approval** of Officials for 2024-2025 thoroughbred meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Landry motions to approve; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**D. LOUISIANA DOWNS INVESTMENT COMPANY, LLC  
d/b/a LOUISIANA DOWNS CASINO & RACETRACK**

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, *Ms. Roxanne Tanner, Director of Racing*. Ms. Tanner informs that the 2024 Thoroughbred meet concluded on September 26, 2024. She mentions that 38 percent of carded races were dedicated to Louisiana breeds, and that they carded 139 turf races out of over 484 total. Matt Crawford, former Director of Racing at Louisiana Downs, briefly discusses the upcoming drainage pipe culvert project, which will begin on November 21, 2024 and is expected to last about two weeks. Ms. Tanner states that she and Billy McKeever, the Back Side Director, are going to start discussing items that need to be looked at, in addition to video boards and the paddock. Mr. Benard Chatters, President of the Louisiana Horsemen's Benevolent Protective Association, expresses concern over the state of Louisiana Downs' back side; see Meeting Transcript. Executive Director Stephen Landry proposes that Louisiana Downs and the HBPA discuss a timeline and list of improvements. Commissioner Findley agrees with Mr. Chatters that the back side needs a lot of work.

**2025 QUARTER HORSE MEET**

2. **RACES**
  - a. **Approval** of designated races for 2025 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Findley motions to approve; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

3. **STEWARDS, OFFICIALS & MANAGEMENT**

- a. **Approval** of officials for 2025 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Findley motions to approve; Commissioner McHalfey seconds; motion carries.

**2025 THOROUGHBRED MEET**

4. **RACING DATES (R.S. 4:158A), RACES AND POST TIMES**

- a. **Approval** for 2025 thoroughbred meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Findley motions to approve; Commissioner Landry seconds; motion carries.

## **II. HPBA UPDATE**

**A. LOUISIANA HORSEMENS BENEVOLENT & PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION  
(LAHBPA)**

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, *Mr. Ed Fenasci, Executive Director of LaHBPA*, says his organization worked with Louisiana Downs and their proposed schedule. Also, he says he is working with racing commission auditors with the flow and process of purse funds.

## **III. BREEDER UPDATES**

**A. LOUISIANA QUARTER HORSE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (LQHBA)**

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, *Bruce Salard, Executive Director of LQHBA*, Mr. Salard introduces Ms. Misty Coats who was hired as Assistant Executive Director of his organization. He says that foal crops are consistent with over 800 this year. Mr. Salard begins a discussion regarding Swamp Fever and annual Coggins. (see transcript pgs. 93-103). Commissioner Landry motions to have Coggins and Piro testing for quarter horses arriving in Louisiana post October 21, 2024 through March 31, 2025 and to have these tests within 30-days prior to arriving in the state along with a health certificate; Dr. Findley seconds; motion carries.

**2. HAIR TEST**

- a. Request for LSRC to provide \$11,000 reimbursement budget for LQHBA's Hair Testing Program at the 2025 Louisiana Downs Quarter Horse Meet.

Commissioner Granger motions to approve; Commissioner Landry seconds; motion carries.

**B. LOUISIANA THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (LTBA)**

1. **PROGRESS REPORT**, *Mr. Roger Heitzmann, Executive Director of LTBA*, recaps the September 27, 2024 yearling sale held in Opelousas and mentions the upcoming stakes schedules at Delta Downs and Fair Grounds.

\*\*\*\*35-minute recess\*\*\*\*

**IV. RULES**

**A. DISCUSSION/NOTICE OF INTENT:**

**1. Jockey Fee Schedule**

LAC 46: XLI Chapter 7 – Jockeys and Apprentice Jockeys  
§725. Jockey Fee Schedule [amend]

Commissioner Tumminello motions to approve as a Notice of Intent; Commissioner McHalfey seconds; motion carries.

**B. FORMAL ADOPTION:**

1. LAC 35:III. Chapter 57 – Associations' Duties and Obligations  
§5728. House Rules [NEW]

Commissioner McHalfey motions to approve as a Notice of Intent; Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.

2. LAC 35:III. Chapter 57 – Associations' Duties and Obligations  
§5734. Purses and Sports Wagering [NEW]

Commissioner McHalfey motions to approve as a Notice of Intent; Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.

**V. LICENSE APPROVALS**

**A. REQUESTS FOR REDUCTION OF SENTENCE/REINSTATEMENT**

**1. Hector R. Alcalá, Trainer.**

Seeking reinstatement of license with probation for the remainder of sentence.

Commissioner McHalfey motions to reinstate Trainer's license with probation for the remainder of sentence approved; placed on probation through July 18, 2027; if Mr. Alcalá receives a Category I, II, or III equine medication violation while on probation, his original suspension, through July 18, 2027, will be reinstated; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**2. Kenneth "Trey" Ellis, Trainer.**

Seeking reinstatement of license.

Commissioner Tumminello motions to reinstate Trainer's license with probation for the remainder of sentence approved; placed on probation through January 25, 2025; if Mr. Ellis receives a Category I, II, or III equine medication violation while on probation, his original suspension, through January 25, 2025, will be reinstated; Commissioner Landry seconds; motion carries.

**3. Robert J. Touchet, Trainer.**

Seeking reinstatement of license with probation for the remainder of sentence.

Commissioner Granger motions to reinstate Trainer's license with probation for the remainder of sentence approved; placed on probation through October 25, 2025; if Mr. Touchet receives a Category I, II, or III equine medication violation while on probation, his original suspension, through October 25, 2025, will be reinstated; Commissioner McHalfey seconds; motion carries.

**4. Joseph M. Davis, Owner/Trainer. Convicted felon.**

Seeking reinstatement of license.

Commissioner McHalfey motions to reinstate Trainer's license; placed on probation for one year, through October 16, 2025; if Mr. Davis receives any equine medication violation while on probation, or is involved in any incident for which a ruling is issued against him, his license will be revoked; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**5. Commissioner Granger motions amend agenda to allow convicted felon and casino employee, Ryan C. Keith, to request a temporary conditional license until the next commission meeting.**

Commissioner Granger motions to approve temporary license as a casino employee, until the next Louisiana State Racing Commission meeting, at which the LSRC will consider Mr. Keith's license application after conducting a full criminal background check; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

\*\*\*\*5-minute recess\*\*\*\*

## VI. ADJUDICATIONS

### A. VIOLATIONS OF LAC § 35:I.1797 (Equine Positives)

**1. Kenneth L. Roberts, Sr., Trainer - Rulings as Provided in Agenda**

*\*Continued to next meeting*

**2. Jason H. Magnon, Trainer - Rulings as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner McHalfey motions to approve Plea agreement; stewards' ruling upheld, and amended; suspended for five years; 2 years active suspension, December 12, 2023 to December 12, 2025, followed by 3 years of suspended suspension to be served on probation, December 13, 2025 to December 12, 2028; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; any Category I, II or III equine medication violation while on probation will result in a 3-year suspension in addition to the penalties for the violation; Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.

**3. Fernando Valdez, Trainer - Rulings as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner McHalfey motions to approve Plea agreement; stewards' ruling upheld, and amended; suspended for 6 years; first 2 years of active suspension, February 15, 2024 to February 14, 2026, followed by 4 years of probation, February 15, 2026 to February 14, 2030; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; any Category I, II or III equine medication violation while on probation will result in a 4-year suspension in addition to the penalties for the violation; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**4. Rosa E. Ramirez, Trainer - Ruling as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner Findley motions to approve Plea agreement; stewards' ruling upheld, and amended; fined \$1,000; suspended for one year; placed on probation for the entire year of suspension, October 17, 2024 to October 17, 2025; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; any Category I, II or III equine medication violation while on probation will result in a 6-month suspension in addition to the penalties for the violation; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**5. Roy A. Roberts, Trainer - Ruling as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner Findley motions to approve Plea agreement; stewards' ruling upheld, and amended; fined \$1,000; suspended for one year; placed on probation for the entire year of suspension, October 17, 2024 to October 17, 2025; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; any Category I, II or III equine medication violation while on probation will result in a 6-month suspension in addition to the penalties for the violation; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

**6. Willie J. Simien, Jr. - Ruling as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner Landry motions to approve Plea agreement; stewards' ruling upheld, and amended; no fine; suspended for one year; 6 months active suspension, September 3, 2023 to March 4, 2024, followed by 6 months of suspended suspension to be served on probation, March 5, 2024 to September 4, 2024; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; any Category I, II or III equine medication violation while on probation will result in a 6-month suspension in addition to the penalties for the violation; Commissioner Granger seconds; motion carries.

**B. VIOLATION OF LA. R. S. § 4:175 & LAC § 35:I.1705, *et seq.* (Electrical Device)**

**1. Marlon Del Cid, Jockey - Ruling as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner Tumminello motions to continue case to next Commission meeting; Mr. Del Cid will remain suspended pending the Commission's adjudication; Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.

**C. VIOLATION OF LA. R. S. § 35:I.9901 (Claiming a Horse)**

**1. Jesus H. Lira, Trainer - Ruling as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner Tumminello motions to uphold Stewards' ruling, and amended, adding an additional six months to Mr. Lira's suspension; Mr. Lira is suspended from July 13, 2024 to July 13, 2025; placed on probation for 6 months, July 14, 2025 to January 14, 2026; Commissioner McHalfey seconds; motion carries.

**D. VIOLATION OF LA. R.S. §4:153 (Summons)**

**1. Casey Fusilier, Jockey. – Ruling as Provided in Agenda**

Commissioner Tumminello motions to uphold Stewards' ruling; fined \$500;  
Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.

**E. VIOLATIONS OF LAC 35:I.1801 (Animal Neglect/Cruelty)**

**1. Thomas W. Sam, Jr., Trainer** *(Motion for Rehearing)*

Motion for rehearing DENIED {Poll Vote to rehear 0-Yes; 6-NO}

**2. Keith T. Sam, Owner/Groom** *(Motion for Rehearing)*

Motion for rehearing DENIED {Poll Vote to rehear 0-Yes; 6-NO}

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**A. PERSONNEL MATTERS**

Commissioner Tumminello motions to approve compensation issues that were previously discussed; Commissioner Landry seconds; motion carries.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Findley motions to adjourn; Commissioner Tuminello seconds; motion carries.



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Stephen Landry,  
Executive Director