

LOUISIANA STATE RACING COMMISSION

MINUTES – February 23, 2026

As transcribed by Julia D. Harper, Certified Court Reporter

COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE

Edward J. Koehl, Jr., Chairman
Earl A. "Boo" Landry, 1st Vice Chair
Vincent V. Tumminello, Jr., M.D., 2nd Vice Chair
Dr. Patrick Bernard
Leslie M. Bouie
Dr. Larry L. Findley, Sr.
Nathan C. Granger
Travis K. Miller, DVM
Deano Thornton
Katherine L. Winters

ABSENT

Rock M. Bordelon
K. R. "Ron" Finkelstein, O.D.

APPROVED

At the Commission Meeting of

April 24, 2026

(Date)



Executive Director

Louisiana State Racing Commission

The Meeting of the Louisiana State Racing Commission (LSRC) is called to order by the Chairman on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 10:00 AM in the Black Gold Room of Fair Grounds Race Course & Slots, 1751 Gentilly Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana. Roll Call is taken; a quorum is present.

Commissioner Bouie motions to approve the November 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

I. ASSOCIATION REQUESTS/REPORTS

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

1. PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. John Simon, Racing Secretary and Director of Racing at Delta Downs, states that Delta's 2025-2026 thoroughbred meet ended on Saturday, February 21st. He announces that their closing night's handle was 2.3 million, which is \$300,000 more than last year. He notes that handle for this meet was up 4% but starters per race was flat. He mentions how they did not receive any complaints about their track this meet. He discusses their upcoming quarter horse meet, which begins on April 24, 2026.¹

Executive Director, Steve Landry, requests that the Commission discuss and vote on a resolution regarding the facility and maintenance infrastructure requirement improvements agreed to by Boyd Gaming.²

Chairman Koehl asks for a vote to see if they have unanimous approval to consider the resolution.

¹ See Meeting Transcript for Mr. Simon's full Progress Report.

² See Meeting Transcript for Resolution 2026-01 in full.

Commissioner Bouie motions; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

Commissioner Bernard asks if Boyd Gaming or Evangeline Downs has taken control of Copper Crowne and mentions issues with the management that have been brought to his attention. Mr. Vincent Schwartz, Regional Senior Vice President for Boyd Gaming, assures Commissioner Bernard that he will get with the HBPA to address the issues.³

Commissioner Bouie motions to accept Resolution 2026-01; Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

B. THE OLD EVANGELINE DOWNS, LLC

d/b/a EVANGELINE DOWNS RACETRACK & CASINO

1. PROGRESS REPORT

Ms. Tracey Coonce, Director of Racing at Evangeline Downs, announces that Evangeline's 2025 quarter horse meet ended on December 20th and that they did over a million in handle on their closing night. She states that handle overall was down 7% but their handle on track was up 6%. She discusses their track preparations for the upcoming thoroughbred meet and announces that they are looking at an average purse payout per day of around \$180,000-\$185,000.⁴

2026 THOROUGHBRED MEET

2. REQUEST BY EVANGELINE DOWNS, LLC TO AMEND RACING DATES APPROVED ON AUGUST 29, 2025 (R.S. 4:158A) TO REMOVE 3 RACE DAYS TOTAL

- a. **Approval** for amended 2026 thoroughbred meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

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

3. REQUEST BY EVANGELINE DOWNS, LLC TO AMEND WAGERING APPROVED ON AUGUST 29, 2025 (R.S. 4:158A)

- a. **Approval** of new Jackpot Pick 6 wagering form for 2026 thoroughbred meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.⁵

Commissioner Findley motions to approve; Commissioner Landry 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 at Fair Grounds, states that Fair Grounds has completed 54 of their 72-day meet and that they are showing a 7% increase year-to-year overall in handle. He mentions how they were off the turf course for 19 days last year, but this year they were only off for 6 days. He announces that Daily Racing Form has returned to Churchill Downs after 5 or 6 years, and that the Environmental Protection Agency will consider ending the dissent decree this Summer.⁶

³ See Meeting Transcript for concerns raised by Commissioner Bernard.

⁴ See Meeting Transcript for Ms. Coonce's full Progress Report.

⁵ See Meeting Transcript for Ms. Coonce's comment on proposed wagering format.

⁶ See Meeting Transcript for Mr. Boulet's full Progress Report.

Commissioner Bouie asks Mr. Boulet to elaborate on Fair Grounds' community development efforts.⁷

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

1. PROGRESS REPORT

Ms. Roxanne Tanner, Director of Racing at Louisiana Downs, notes that there has been a very enthusiastic response to the start of Louisiana Downs quarter horse meet. She states that entries are up to 8.5 this year, compared to 6.5 last year. She announces that they had a record number of nominations and record purse (\$160,000) for the Maiden Classic.⁸

2026 QUARTER HORSE MEET

**2. REQUEST BY LOUISIANA DOWNS, LLC TO AMEND RACING DATES
APPROVED ON NOVEMBER 17, 2025 (R.S. 4:158A) TO MAKE UP FOR
WEATHER-RELATED CLOSURES**

- a. **Approval** for amended 2026 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

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

3. RACES

- a. **Ratification** of first condition book for 2026 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

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

4. STEWARDS, OFFICIALS & MANAGEMENT

- a. **Approval** of officials for 2026 quarter horse meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

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

2026 THOROUGHBRED MEET

**5. REQUEST BY LOUISIANA DOWNS, LLC TO AMEND RACING DATES
APPROVED ON AUGUST 29, 2025 (R.S. 4:158A) TO REMOVE 21 DAYS TOTAL**

- a. **Approval** for amended 2026 thoroughbred meet as provided in Meeting Agenda.

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

II. HBPA UPDATE

**A. LOUISIANA HORSEMEN'S BENEVOLENT & PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION
(LAHBPA)**

1. PROGRESS REPORT

⁷ See Meeting Transcript for full discussion on Fair Grounds' community initiatives.

⁸ See Meeting Transcript for Ms. Tanner's full Progress Report.

Mr. Benard Chatters, President of the LAHBPA, states that he is happy with the results of the Commission working with the horsemen. He thanks Boyd Gaming for their help with the Copper Crowne Training Center.⁹

Executive Director Landry asks Mr. Chatters to discuss the agreement between the HBPA and Delta Downs regarding the purse money for the two races that were cancelled due to lightning. He asks the Commission for a motion to affirm the agreement.¹⁰

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

III. BREEDER UPDATES

A. LOUISIANA THOROUGHBRED BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (LTBA)

1. PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Roger Heitzmann, Executive Director of the LTBA, discusses Louisiana Champions Day at Fair Grounds and Louisiana Premier Night at Delta Downs. He announces that their annual sale will take place on September 1, 2026. He discusses how Louisiana Breds have been racing all around the country, the way breeding has picked up in Louisiana, and the LTBA's Out-of-State Breeders Awards.¹¹

B. LOUISIANA QUARTER HORSE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (LQHBA)

Commissioner Findley gives a speech congratulating Mr. Bruce Salard, now former Executive Director of the LQHBA, on achieving the John Andreini Lifetime Special Recognition Award.¹²

1. PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Bruce Salard announces that he is stepping down as Executive Director of the LQHBA on March 31, 2026 and Ms. Misty Coats will assume the position on April 1, 2026. He mentions how Evangeline Downs has a sold-out crowd for the Louisiana Million, and that the LQHBA gave out \$25,000 in scholarships that night. He notes that they had an over 30% decrease in positive hair tests at Evangeline Downs compared to last year, which he believes was primarily due to implementing the new hair testing rule in October. He also discusses this year's foal crop.¹³

IV. RULE

A. FORMAL ADOPTION:

1. LAC 35:XV.Chapter 126 – Offtrack Wagering in Sports Book Lounge [NEW]
Commissioner Bouie motions to approve; Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.¹⁴

⁹ See Meeting Transcript for Mr. Chatters' full Progress Report.

¹⁰ See Meeting Transcript for discussion on LAHBPA-Delta Downs purse agreement.

¹¹ See Meeting Transcript for Mr. Heitzmann's full Progress Report.

¹² See Meeting Transcript for Commissioner Findley's full speech.

¹³ See Meeting Transcript for Mr. Salard's full Progress Report.

¹⁴ The Commission will need to hold a Substantive Changes Hearing regarding the changes made to the Rule, per the Office of the Governor and Office of the State Register.

V. ADJUDICATIONS

A. VIOLATION OF LAC § 35:V.7901 (Careless Riding)

1. **Isaac Castillo, Jockey** – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Appeal withdrawn. Commissioner Findley motions to approve State Steward, Charles Ashy, Jr.'s, recommendation. Suspended 4 racing days, March 5, 2026 through March 8, 2026. Suspension to be served during the current Fair Grounds Thoroughbred Meet. Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

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

1. **Ricardo Hernandez, Jr., Jockey** – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Bouie motions to approve plea agreement. Stewards' ruling upheld and amended; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; license revoked for 5 years, February 23, 2026 through February 22, 2031. Pursuant to LAC 35:1706 and at the request of the Louisiana State Racing Investigation Unit at Delta Downs with the consent of the Assistant Attorney General representing the Louisiana State Racing Commission, Mr. Hernandez will be allowed to re-apply for licensure with the Louisiana State Racing Commission as a Jockey after serving three years of his license revocation. Mr. Hernandez waives any and all rights he may have to seek any further relief or redress of this matter by the Louisiana State Racing Commission and in any court. Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.

2. **Martin Osuna, Jockey** – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Case continued to the next Commission meeting. Mr. Osuna shall not ride until he appears before the Louisiana State Racing Commission.

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

1. **Patrick L. Clemons, Trainer** – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

The Commission rejects the plea offer. Commissioner Findley motions to approve an amended plea offer. Stewards' ruling upheld and amended; \$1,000 fine; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; 6-month suspension (dates to be determined); 6-month active probation (dates to be determined). Any Category I, II, III or more than 3 Category IV prohibited medication violation(s) while on probation will result in the imposition of a 6-month suspension in addition to any penalties that may result from the violation. Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

2. **Renato Contreras, Trainer** – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Bouie motions to approve plea agreement. Stewards' ruling upheld and amended; \$1,000 fine; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; suspended 60-day suspension; 1-year active probation, February 23, 2026 through February 23, 2027. Any Category I, II, III, IV-Gross, or more than 3 Category IV and/or V prohibited medication violations while on probation will result in the activation of the 60-day suspended suspension, in addition to any penalties for the violation. The 60-day suspension shall remain suspended unless and until the terms of probation are violated. Mr. Contreras has waived any and all rights he may have to seek any further relief or redress of this matter by the Louisiana State Racing Commission and in any court. Commissioner Tumminello seconds; motion carries.

3. **Lazaro P. Cribeiro, Trainer** – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Case continued to the next Commission meeting. Mr. Cribeiro shall remain under suspension until he appears before the Louisiana State Racing Commission.

4. Lanny D. Keith, Trainer – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Case continued to the next Commission meeting at the request of Mr. Keith's attorney, Mr. Eddie Guidry. Mr. Keith shall not enter any horses into races until he appears before the Louisiana State Racing Commission.

5. John E. Norwood, Jr., Trainer – Rulings as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Thornton motions to uphold and amend the Stewards' rulings upheld; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; 5-year suspension, May 1, 2026 through April 30, 2031. Mr. Norwood will be allowed to reapply for licensure with the Louisiana State Racing Commission after serving two years of his suspension. This is not the guarantee of a license.

6. Eric Palacio, Trainer – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

The Commission rejects the plea offer. Commissioner Findley motions to approve an amended plea offer. Stewards' ruling upheld and amended; no fine; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; 2-year active suspension (dates to be determined); 3-year active probation (dates to be determined). Any Category I, II, or III prohibited medication violation while on probation will result in the imposition of a 3-year suspension in addition to any penalties that may result from the violation.

7. Julio Ramirez, Trainer – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

The Commission rejects the plea offer. Commissioner Bernard motions to approve an amended plea offer. Stewards' ruling upheld and amended; fined \$1,000; horse disqualified, purse redistributed; 6-month suspension (dates to be determined). Commissioner Miller seconds; motion carries.

D. VIOLATIONS OF LAC § 35:I.303 (Impermissible Conduct)

1. Martin Osuna, Jockey – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Case continued to the next Commission meeting. Mr. Osuna shall not ride until he appears before the Louisiana State Racing Commission.

2. Brison J. Thibodeaux, Exercise Person – Rulings as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Granger motions to approve plea agreement. Stewards' rulings upheld and amended; no fine; 3-years active suspension, March 9, 2025 through March 8, 2028. Mr. Thibodeaux is prohibited from being present on any premises overseen, regulated, or licensed by the Louisiana State Racing Commission. Once the suspension is completed, Mr. Thibodeaux will be required to re-apply with the Louisiana State Racing Commission. This is not the guarantee of a license. Mr. Thibodeaux waives any and all rights he may have to seek further relief or redress of this matter by the Louisiana State Racing Commission and in any court. Commissioner Bouie seconds; motion carries.

E. VIOLATION OF LAC § 35:I.1743 (Possession of Drugs, Syringes or Needles)

1. Thomas W. Nixon, Trainer – Ruling as provided in Meeting Agenda.

Commissioner Thornton motions to reject the plea offer; Commissioner Bernard seconds; motion carries. Mr. Nixon must appear at the next Commission meeting. The Commission asks that he not run before his appearance.¹⁵

F. STEWARDS DECISION NOT TO DISQUALIFY HORSE

LAC § 35:V.7901, *et seq.* (Right to the Track; Swerve)

1. Maria De Jesus Rios Carlos

Fair Grounds, Race 4, 01/18/26

The Stewards' decision not to disqualify #5, TIME TO PARTY, the first-place finisher on January 18, 2026, Race 4, at Fair Grounds was upheld by a Commission vote of 8-to-1.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bouie motions to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Findley seconds; motion carries.



Stephen Landry
Executive Director

¹⁵ The Commission did not approve a counterplea offer for Mr. Nixon.