



**Board of Trustees Meeting  
Ruidoso Select Sales Pavilion**

**July 22, 2023  
9:00 a.m.**

**PRESENT**

**President Tom Goncharoff, 1st Vice President Norma Alvarez and Trustees Brian Anderson (late arrival), Mark Brown, Denise Chambliss, C. Warren Franklin (late arrival), Debra Laney, Mike Logan, Helen Nave, and R. Patrick Sanders, Jr.**

**ABSENT**

**Susie Prather & Nancy Summers.**

**GUEST**

**Betty Hickman**

**QUORUM**

**President Goncharoff acknowledged a quorum present.**

**MINUTE APPROVAL**

**Mark Brown asked for the minutes of June 28, 2023, to be corrected. Under the discussion on distances, Mark intended to say that it is hard on two-year-olds to run 440 yards.**

**Debra Laney made a motion to approve the minutes of June 28, 2023, as amended, seconded by Helen Nave. Motion carried 7:0.**

**REVIEW NMHBA STAKES CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Debra Laney provided the Trustees with a document titled NMHBA Contributions to Stakes Races 2023, (copy incorporated into the record). She went over the first page that showed how much money was added to the Quarter Horse stakes and how much money was added to the Thoroughbred stakes showing the difference of how much more of our funds are going to Thoroughbreds than Quarter Horses. The totals showed that we added \$2,455,000 to the Thoroughbreds and \$1,890,000 to the Quarter Horses. This is \$565,000**

more going to the Thoroughbreds. Debra feels this is a little lopsided and would like President Goncharoff to assign a committee to work on this and they need to have a meeting in August so that we can decide on any changes for next year.

There was a lot of discussion amongst the Trustees on this subject.

President Goncharoff asked Debra Laney who she would like to serve on this committee. Debra would like to see Nancy Summers and Mike Logan since they are on the stakes committee already. President Goncharoff asked Denise Chambliss if she would serve, and Debra Laney volunteered to be on the committee as well. That would make two Thoroughbred and two Quarter Horse Trustees on this committee. Once they have come up with some ideas, we can have a special meeting with the entire Board of Trustees to discuss the committees' suggestions and make final decisions.

#### **UPDATE DATABASE TO TRACK ACTUAL TYPES OF RACES RUN AND NMHBA MONIES USED, ETC.**

Debra Laney provided the Trustees with a document titled 2022 Breeders Awards Breakdown, (copy incorporated into the record). This document showed the four classes of A, B, C, and D and how much went to breeders of horses that ran 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>. The total for 2022 was \$1,940,039.48. She had recently asked about the classes that we pay our awards in order to reassign those horses to a different class, but until we actually know how many horses are getting paid for what races they are running in, she doesn't think we can do that. She does not have enough data to make a decision on what is needed. She did go over the number of horses that ran 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in each category and what the total number was.

Debra Laney stated that we are paying 63% of the award funds to the bottom three categories and feels that we need to change that. She feels that Class A needs to be divided out more. Our mission statement is to improve the quality of the NM Breds in the state, and she thinks this would be a step in that direction.

#### **DISCUSSION ON PAYING NMHBA MONIES TO NM BRED TRIALS**

Mary Barber provided Debra Laney with the average number of trials that are run at each racetrack. Trials are the only type of NM Bred race that we do not add any of the breeders' money to the purses. It would come to about \$220,000 to start paying for trial horses. Mary Barber explained that we do pay award funds to any NM Bred that runs 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> but we do not add funds to the trial purses. Purse funds are distributed to at least the first six finishers and sometimes the purse is paid out to all participants in the race.

President Goncharoff asked if the determining factor would be if the funds were available? He thinks that this would be something for a committee to discuss. Warren Franklin asked how important it is to New Mexico racing that just want to see their horses run. He doesn't think that taking money away from the little guys is going to make our racing better. It would just make it better for the privileged that have the big money horses. We have to

have the claiming horses to fill the races. Debra explained that she is not suggesting to not have claiming horses, she just feels that the claiming horses don't deserve as much as the top horses. Warren Franklin asked exactly what Debra feels needs to be changed and Debra explained that she needs more information before we can make any decisions. She feels we owe our members the courtesy of doing this to see what we find out. Warren Franklin stated he just does not want to take away from the one-horse owner.

President Goncharoff stated that we need to get the numbers straight before we can make any decisions. Debra Laney is going to visit the office with Ralph Vincent to get the data needed and then she can present the information to the Trustees.

### **TROPHY PRESENTERS FOR AWARD CEREMONY**

Mary Barber asked what Trustees would be coming to the party that evening and what Trustees would not be attending. Helen Nave and Debra Laney will not be able to come.

Mary Barber asked the Trustees that are coming to the party to volunteer to present the trophies.

Mike Logan and Norma Alvarez volunteered to give out the six Quarter Horse racehorse awards and Denise Chambliss & Warren Franklin volunteered to give out the six Thoroughbred racehorse awards. Patrick Sanders volunteered to present the QH Broodmare of the year, the QH Stallion of the year and the QH Freshman Sire of the year. Denise Chambliss volunteered to give out the TB broodmare, TB Stallion, and the TB Freshman Sire of the year awards.

Norma Alvarez made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Debra Laney. Motion carried 8:0.

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Tom Goncharoff  
President

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Mary M. Barber  
Attest

### **TOWN HALL DISCUSSION**

#### **PLACEMENT IN SALE CATALOG**

Walt Wiggins went over the procedure for determining hip numbers for the horses in the sales. It is a really simple procedure that is totally random. It is the fairest draw that can take place. He starts off with an alphabetical listing of all the Thoroughbreds and then another alphabetical listing of the Quarter Horses for the New Mexico Bred sale. There are 75 Thoroughbreds in the NM Bred sale so there will be 75 numbered poker chips in the hopper and then they will spin it. The first chip pulled out goes with the first horse on the alphabetical list. The hopper is spinned after every horse down to when there are only two horses left. It is really simple, and it has worked very well for them. There is no plan to make any changes to this procedure. Nobody wants to be the first or the last horse in the sale. He wouldn't want to be first or last either but if you are in the business, you could have a lousy draw.

### **TASK FORCE REVIEW – RALPH VINCENT**

A printout was provided titled Criteria for Hybrid Race Schedule in New Mexico that was distributed to the people present.

Ralph Vincent started off by thanking the Trustees for helping to make the breed program what it is today.

This task force was started one year ago today. We started by looking at only the breeders and the breeder's activity. Starting in the Fall, the Commission was asking for ideas from everyone, not just the breeders. The Task Force presented this to the breeders late last year and they started implementing some of the suggestions that were on there. We got some legislation done this year. Thankfully we got a lot of help on that legislation from horsemen that contacted their legislators. Pierre Amestoy was up there a lot, and you can see the results of those interactions.

Then we expanded it to include horsemen. Owners and Trainers. We all have an opinion on where we are with the horsemen and so forth. He doesn't think anyone will disagree that the lack of communication and the lack of a voice by the major stakeholders in this industry is a real problem. It is still going on and why do we allow the Racing Commission to abandon their committees they used to have like the Rules Committee, the Medications Committee, and Race Dates and so forth. How people have allowed that to happen and that is where we are at. We need the racing opportunities, and we need them to be consistent. We have talked many times about this. The middle ground area for horses. One day you are an Allowance horse and the next you are a \$5,000 claimer. Another problem is the expense of trainers having to pick up and move over and over from track to track. The number of stalls available is always a problem. Another area that is in rule is the tracks need to be available for training thirty days before the meet. Why do we allow them to not follow those rules?

The next area was the racetracks. Ralph Vincent mentioned that Dustin Dix of Sunland Park was present, and he was happy to see him there. How do we treat trainers, owners, and patrons. When we shut down, these trainers and owners went out of state and when they came back, they talked about how much better they were treated somewhere else. We need to treat these people better. What happened to the betting contests, seminars, business to business relationships, ownership clubs, internships. There are ways to

improve and every year we should try to do better. How do we increase the horse population? He has heard that it may help to have straight meets. We have been talking about this for decades. He has tried his best to design a schedule for straight meets and the first page of the printout has some ideas of how we could do this. Both breeds must be taken care of. Thoroughbreds would have 9-10 months of racing opportunities and Quarter Horses would have racing opportunities for 7 to 8 months out of the year. We need to think about minimizing the number of times per year that a trainer has to pick up their lives and move.

The next topic was regulators. There is too much politics in this state, and we all know it is a problem. Secondly all the stakeholders need a voice in this industry. You have to make sure that all stakeholders have some influence. We cannot just leave it up to the racetracks. The Racing Commission has made significant progress in testing and in cleaning things up here. It is better than it has been, but it could be better still. Why are we not doing hair testing here like they are in Oklahoma and Texas. Paper Trainers have continued to be allowed. One idea was if a trainer gets caught and gets suspended, that suspension does not start until the fine is paid. These guys don't pay the fines until they want to get back up. The other deal is if you get caught, you shouldn't be able to transfer your entire barn into one trainer's file.

We are the third largest industry in the state and might even be considered second since we overlap with tourism. We need to continue to make sure legislators and others are aware of that. Somehow, we need to get the word out of the economic impact of this industry for the state of New Mexico. The breeders have tried to do this.

### JANET VANBEBBER OF THE AQHA

President Goncharoff introduced Janet VanBebber and thanked her for attending our Town Hall Discussion.

Norma Alvarez asked a question about an article she had seen about Lip Chip. She thought it may have been on the AQHA Facebook page. The question was, what is the difference between Lip Chip and Microchip? Janet answered that the AQHA is going to roll out using the microchip as part of the identification process starting on January 1, 2024. They are doing all the programming and are developing the application the identifiers will be using. But keep in mind that you are still doing the same processes for identifying a horse, but the microchip will just take the place of the lip tattoo. Our leadership has decided that you can use any chip you choose. If you want to use Lip Chip, you can go that route, or if you want to stick with the international standard, you can go that route. You or your veterinarian will have to implant the chip yourself. The AQHA will not do that for you. You will have to send the AQHA the information of where the chip was implanted when you register the horse. This will be a part of the horse's record, and this will help the identifier to find the chip so that person can then verify that the horse is eligible to run. This information is shared with Equibase and then it is on Incompass at the racetrack.

Norma Alvarez had read that some racetrack was already requiring chips on Quarter Horses, is that true? Janet replied that it could have been a house rule. Ruidoso Downs

was talking about doing this last year. As far as the AQHA using the chip, it will not officially start until January 1, 2024.

The Thoroughbreds went by crop year, but the AQHA will go by the calendar year.

President Goncharoff asked about ISO Compliant. He assumes the identifier chip reader has to be able to read whatever chip that has been implanted. Janet replied that yes, the ISO Compliant Component will allow the readers to read the various chips. The AQHA will be using the same ones the Jockey Club is using for the Thoroughbreds. There will be a video shown to the racing committee at Lone Star Park in October about the chip and the app that is being developed.

Mark Brown asked about a special chip that can monitor heart rates. Janet VanBebber feels that the sky is the limit. There is technology to monitor heart rates and temperature through certain microchips. There is a lot of potential as technology progresses. There is a variety of different chips out there and individuals need to decide what chip is best suited to their program. It may be possible to use the chip to help detect performance enhancing drugs through this technology.

Jill Giles asked who would be the identifier and was told that it would be the same identifiers that we are using today? It just changes from the lip tattoo to the chip, and you could pay that person to inject the chip. The cost would be about the same as you paid for the tattoo.

Mike Logan stated that he is a big fan of the Challenge. Here at Ruidoso Downs, there are only eight trials. He believes there was only one preferred race to work up to the trials. He also asked about the trial funds, and he noticed that the purses had been raised and asked if AQHA had anything to do with that. Janet feels that if you get one preferred before the trials race, you are doing pretty well. We are super fortunate for getting that one preferred race and you don't need to race them too often so that you can keep them sound. As for the funds, the schedule is done in December. They are rushed like heck to get it out by the end of the year. So, they aren't really sure what the purse will be, so they put the bare minimum on the schedule.

Janet VanBebber stated that she is here to answer any questions anyone may have. She is always available.

Ralph Vincent feels that there are not enough races to get a horse ready for the futurities and derbies. He told a story about his horse that could not get in a race until the trials that had not run for a long time. This is a real problem. He could not get his horse in since April and had to run in the trials in July.

### MEMBER COMMENTS

Pierre Amestoy mentioned the race dates and asked when the Commission will be discussing that. He is concerned if the race meets get too short, owners won't be able to run enough and will have to quit. Tom Goncharoff commented that if they run more races a day, that might provide more opportunities to alleviate some of these problems.

**Jane VanBebber had forgotten to mention that the AQHA Challenge is going to be back at the Downs At Albuquerque for the next three years and the purses will escalate each year.**

**Jill Giles asked what the breeders are doing to preserve the breed races at the racetracks. She hears the racetracks talking about not running breed races in order to attract more people to come here from out of state. Ralph Vincent commented that it is a rule to offer three NM Bred races per day and the tracks are running cheap races in order to have smaller 10% Breeder Awards. Tom Goncharoff commented that it is only 5% from the racetrack. Ralph Vincent thinks Jill has a good question. Some racetracks have the NM Bred races as the lesser races on the card and other racetracks have more breed races in because that is all they have to fill the races.**

**Tom Goncharoff mentioned that Mary Barber gives a report at every Commission meeting with the statistics on field sizes and also how NM Breds are fairing in open races. She commented that NM Bred combined average field sizes are 9+ horses per race, so we are filling the breed races and helping to fill the open races as well.**

**Norma Alvarez commented that we are also reaching out to our legislators. She thinks that is how we are going to have to fight. We have had a lot of success with the bills this year. Tom Goncharoff agreed that the relationships that we made at the state capital made a big difference. On the bill that took care of the HISA fees and insurance was a great effort and everyone came together to make that happen.**

**Larry Strain commented that we shocked our legislators on how big our voting block we have. We could swing 10 or 15 thousand votes. He thinks we are going to have to go back to the legislature to get some of our dates back. If we don't get more race dates, we won't need very many horses. Only having 30 days at Hobbs will really hurt a lot of people. They may have big purses but not a lot of people are going to get to run.**

**Nathaniel Roybal spoke about our messaging. He feels that it is completely missing the point. We need to build a better message. Just saying we need more race days will fall on deaf ears. How many horses are not getting to run? We need to have some hard data on how many horses and people have left New Mexico and everyone needs to know those statistics and be able to recite them off the tip of their tongues to legislators. Tom Goncharoff responded that we need to have information that is easy to understand by people that are not in our industry.**

**President Goncharoff thanked everyone for coming to this Town Hall Discussion and adjourned the meeting.**