



**Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund  
Minutes – May 24, 2023**

**ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Brian O’Dwyer called the meeting to order at approximately 11:34 a.m. Establishment of a quorum was noted by Chairman O’Dwyer. In attendance were Fund Board Members Richard Ball and Steve Jones.

**ITEM 2: OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN O’DWYER:** Chairman O’Dwyer thanked Commissioner Ball and the Department of Agriculture and Markets for hosting the meeting. He noted the Fund Board was joined by Elizabeth Wolters, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Ralph Scunziano, Executive Director of the Fund.

**ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2023:** The Fund considered previously circulated draft minutes of the meeting conducted on February 9, 2023. The minutes were accepted as circulated.

**ITEM 4: FINANCIAL UPDATE – ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT REVIEW:** Jill LaBoissiere from Capitol Hill Management Services provided an update on the Fund’s 2023 year-to-date financials and discussed the 2022 Financial Audit. She noted there were deficiencies in payments from both Catskill OTB and Resorts World Catskills. Chairman O’Dwyer noted the Fund has retained counsel to pursue the money owed by Catskill OTB. Jill discussed the 2022 Financial Audit and noted it included an unqualified opinion, which is the highest standard for financial reports. There was a discussion regarding the number of years the Fund has utilized the same audit firm. It was suggested that the Fund explore options for other firms for next year’s audit.

The 2022 Financial Audit was accepted.

**ON A MOTION BY: Commissioner Ball - APPROVED: 3-0**

**ITEM 5: COUNTY FAIR SERIES SCHEDULE:** The Fund gave the counties until April 27th to provide their intentions. A discussion took place regarding the ability of the Fund to hold the County Fair Finals at a non-parimutuel track. The Fund Board expressed the desire to have the ability to hold future County Fair Finals at a non-parimutuel track and requested the conditions for next year to be amended to allow for such.

A schedule of harness racing to be conducted at 19 fairs was presented with the Finals recommended to be held at Saratoga Raceway.

**ON A MOTION BY: Commissioner Ball - APPROVED: 3-0**

**ITEM 6: 2023 GRANT REQUESTS:** Executive Director Scunziano stated the budget includes \$253,000 in grant funding. The Fund solicited grants at its February 9, 2023 meeting and these grant proposals had a deadline of April 27, 2023. Organizations that were interested were encouraged to examine Article III of the Racing Law to determine if they qualify and then apply. Executive Director Scunziano presented a brief synopsis of each proposal. The five proposals totaled \$278,855. Because the statutory limit for this year is \$253,000, the Board recommended that each proposal receive a prorated amount.

- a. Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame - \$90,728
- b. Historic Track – Retaining Walls/Fencing – \$54,437
- c. SUNY Morrisville Therapy and Technology Equipment Project - \$95,587
- d. Saddle Up NY! - \$12,248

**ON A MOTION BY: Commissioner Ball - APPROVED: 2-0 (Trustee Jones – Abstained)**

**ITEM 7: PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS - REPORT:** Executive Director Scunziano presented a summary of the testimony and information provided at the listening sessions. He noted the overwhelming amount of support for the semen transport Bill. Deputy Commissioner Wolters noted the lack of discussion regarding the support of mares within NYS. She noted the suggestions of increased Breeders Awards and a tiered system. Commissioner Ball noted the importance of incentivizing mares to stay within NYS. He noted a legislative review of any changes, on a regular basis, should be implemented to monitor effects on the program. Trustee Jones noted the difficulty of attracting stallions to NY with the current statutory requirements. He noted the numerous economic benefits of allowing shipped semen. He noted a bonus purse structure for NY sired and bred horses may be a good way to incentivize mares to stay within NYS. Also, he noted Breeders Awards should be at levels more competitive with other states. Chairman O’Dwyer requested a report to be prepared Executive Director Scunziano containing recommendations of the Fund. Chairman O’Dwyer also requested a plan for next meeting regarding incentives for mares to stay within NYS.

**ITEM 8: NEW/OLD BUSINESS:** Trustee Jones discussed the expense of the printed version of the Stallion Directory. He suggested keeping a digital version each year and saving the cost of printing the directory.

**ITEM 9: ADJOURNMENT: On a motion to Adjourn by Trustee Jones, APPROVED: 3-0**  
Chairman O’Dwyer declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:44 p.m.