

Draft Minutes

Virginia Horse Industry Board

December 18, 2024

Jefferson-Madison Regional Library- Charlottesville

Board Members Present:

Steve Escobar

Debbie Easter

Kelly Foltman

Robert Banner

Ernie Oare

Gail-Rezendes-Dell

Amy Moore

David Lands

Beth Sheeley

Christy Morton

Board Members Absent:

Oliver Brown

Guests:

Jill Byrne

I. Call to order- 10:09 am

a. The meeting was called to order and introductions were made for all those present.

II. Review of Minutes

a. Minutes from the October 9, 2024 meeting were reviewed. D. Easter made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Financial Update

a. G. Petro reported on the finances for each fund. Income and revenue listed as follows:

Coggins- cc 625 (Figures through 11/302024?)

Cost Code 625 (Coggins)			
FY2024-2025 (10.01.2024)			
Beginning Balance 7/1/2024	\$2,324,031.33		
Revenues YTD	\$495,976.37		
Expenditures YTD	\$196,766.15		
Cash Balance YTD	\$2,623,241.55		
Commitments			
	Budgeted	Paid YTD	Balance
VHSA Associate Program Sponsorship - approved 7/15/24	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$0.00
Virginia FFA Sponsorship	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Virginia Regional Pony Club Sponsorship	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Virginia High School Rodeo Association Sponsorship	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Virginia 4-H Horse Program Sponsorship	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
USHJA Sponsorship	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$0.00
Website/Marketing Contract	\$1,000,000.00	\$165,833.34	\$834,166.66
Administration			
Media - Website - Flair Communication	\$9,975.00	\$0.00	\$9,975.00
Board Meetings	\$1,200.00	\$442.95	\$757.05
eVA/Fiscal Service Fees	\$750.00	\$0.11	\$749.89
Postage (Including VIB)	\$1,000.00	\$12.07	\$987.93
Printing	\$1,250.00	\$0.00	\$1,250.00
Atty Services	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
Promotional Products	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
Board Travel	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Telecommunications	\$1,400.00	\$0.00	\$1,400.00
Board Member Handbook/Office Supplies	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00
2024 Commodity Board Fee	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
	Budgeted	Spent	Balance
Total	\$1,185,025.00	\$321,288.47	\$863,736.53
Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/23 - budgeted)	\$1,438,216.55		

Feed Tonnage- cc 626 (Figures through 11/30/2024?)

Cost Code 626			
FY 2043-2025 (11.01.2024)			
Beginning Balance 7/1/2024	\$1,280,152.94		
Revenues YTD	\$13,860.55		
Expenditures YTD 11/01	\$39,302.37		
Cash Balance YTD	\$1,254,711.12		
Commitments			
	Budgeted	Paid	Fund Balance
Grant Management Fees	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00

CYCLE 2			
BHSA	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
American Saddlebred Horse Association of Virginia	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Shenandoah Blue Ridge Appaloosa Association	\$2,475.00	\$0.00	\$2,475.00
Silver Eagle Stable	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Virginia Paint Horse Club	\$3,947.00	\$0.00	\$3,947.00
The Barns at Blue Mountain	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
HopeTree Family Services	\$4,550.00	\$0.00	\$4,550.00
FARRR Foundation	\$1,320.00	\$0.00	\$1,320.00
Good Hope Equestrian and Regenerative Farm	\$3,510.00	\$2,623.96	\$886.04

CYCLE 3			
Bland County Fair	\$2,703.56	\$0.00	\$2,703.56
Brookhill Farm	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Culpepper Battlefield Tours	\$4,050.00	\$2,758.94	\$1,291.06
Chesterfield County Fair Association	\$1,418.95	\$0.00	\$1,418.95
Draft Horse Pull at the State Fair of Virginia	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park	\$1,282.00	\$1,282.00	\$1,282.00
Friends of Virginia Beach Mounted Police	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Halifax Trailblazers 4-H	\$3,500.00	\$0.00	\$3,500.00
Virginia Horse Center Foundation (Mid Atlantic Dressage)	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Pine Spur Hunt Club	\$3,580.00	\$0.00	\$3,580.00
Ride With Pride	\$1,250.94	\$0.00	\$1,250.94
SPIRIT Open Equestrian Program	\$490.00	\$0.00	\$490.00

VHC Eventing Organizing Committee	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
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Virginia Thoroughbred Project	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Virginia Pony Breeders Association	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Virginia Walking Racking Horse Owners Association	\$4,699.28	\$0.00	\$4,699.28

CYCLE 4			
Appalachian Gateway Horse Owners Assoc.	\$4,454.00	\$0.00	\$4,454.00
CVHSA	\$4,944.00	\$0.00	\$4,944.00
VA Polo	\$3,720.00	\$0.00	\$3,720.00
Hazelwild Farm	\$4,105.00	\$0.00	\$4,105.00

FY25 Grants

	Budgeted	Spent	Balance
Total	\$140,276.73	\$6,664.90	\$152,116.83

- IV. **Meeting Dates-** Next meeting for March 25, 2025 in Warrenton, VA. Tentatively scheduled for June 17, 2025 following.
- V. **Flair Communication Contract Expiration- Decision on Renewal-** G. Petro highlighted that the current web-hosting agreement with Flair Communication for the VHIB website is set to expire on January 31, 2025. With the expected development of its new website by TopRight Partners to be completed after this cutoff, G. Petro explained that there

could be a gap in having a functional website for the public to access. G. Petro also noted the total expense of an additional year of hosting through the current contractor would not cost more than \$7,500.00. S. Escobar made a motion to approve up to \$7,500.00 in total spend to either partially extend, or wholly renew, the current contract with Flair Communication to host and maintain the VHIB website. D. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rezendes-Dell	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Moore	Yes
Morton	Yes
Lands	Yes
Sheely	Yes

VI. **TopRight Partners- Marketing Plan Presentation**

- a. TopRight Partners gave a thorough presentation on the overall Marketing Strategy, Narrative, and Identity. This overview of the strategy detailed things like goals and priorities of the marketing plan, primary and secondary key target audiences, messaging channels, tactics, and end-of-year deliverables. The atmosphere was made to be consultative, and the Board members were able to interact with the material shown to offer insights, critiques, and address any concerns. It was requested that the full Board provide additional feedback on the presentation in the form of input on the overall marketing strategy, commentary on the brand narrative, and their respective preferred visual identity/brand direction combination. Additionally, the Board was asked to compile a list of both Industry leaders and important stakeholders to aid the formation of overall messaging and mapping key personnel.

VII. **New Business**

a. **Awaiting new Board appointments**

- i. G. Petro detailed to the Board that although he had been in communication with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office, there was no update to relay on the appointment of two new Board members. G. Petro informed the board that he would keep them updated as new information presented itself.

- b. **Sponsorship Proposals- 2025-** The only "new" (previously ungranted) sponsorship proposal for this meeting came from Emory and Henry University for their InterMont Equestrian Program. G. Petro reviewed the original proposal from March of 2024, noting the Board's previous hesitancy through possible bias of a single collegiate entity. To avoid any implied bias, S. Escobar posed the idea of a rotating collegiate sponsorship annually, with Emory and Henry establishing proof of concept for a singular collegiate focus by the Board each year. It was generally recognized as well that this particular sponsorship would help remedy the lack of VHIB representation in Southwest Virginia. S. Escobar outlined language to be communicated with this

agreement to E & H, which would limit the agreement to a single year (January-December 2025), with no implication of renewal. This would ultimately set the tone for a “rotating” sponsorship versus a “continued” sponsorship. D. Easter made a motion to approve the Emory & Henry Intermont Equestrian Sponsorship proposal. K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- i. **AITC Sponsorship-** There was an additional proposal for sponsorship by Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom, which is an organization the Board typically sponsors year-over-year. This sponsorship is primarily maintained because of the comparatively lower requested amount (\$5,000), and the Board’s continued focus on advancing education and educational programming within the state. K. Foltman highlighted the comparability of the requested amount to a standard Marketing Grant, and the inconsequential nature (budgetarily speaking) of granting the request considering the size and consistency of its impact on the youth education sector. A. Moore made a motion to approve the AITC Sponsorship. K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rezendes-Dell	Yes
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Escobar	Yes
Morton	Yes
Lands	Yes
Sheely	Yes

- ii. **Sponsorships Closing-** G. Petro reviewed current sponsorships still “in-effect” through the end of the State’s fiscal year in June 2024, which included Virginia Horse Shows Association and United States Hunter Jumper Association as year-over-year applicants, and Virginia Future Farmers of America, Virginia Regional Pony Club, Virginia High School Rodeo, and Virginia 4-H Horse Program Sponsorship, all coming to the end of their previous 3-year sponsorship agreement with the VHIB. K. Foltman noted the importance of budgetary flexibility for the duration of 2025, with impending expenses related to the Marketing Services Project being of the highest priority. In this vein, K. Foltman also recognized the ability of the Board to support a full-time Social Media Marketing contractor in lieu of any single year-over-year sponsorship currently offered. This opened a discussion of larger opportunities the VHIB could take advantage of without the overhead expense of six separate annual sponsorships. D. Easter cited the importance of prioritizing funds towards the evolving needs of the Marketing Services Project through the remainder of 2025 before any continued discussion on entertaining new sponsorships. Additionally, from previous Board discussion on this same topic in October 2024, there was a collective

acknowledgement that sponsored organizations would be better served to receive funding on a “normal” fiscal year basis (January-December) versus the State’s June-July standard. This would allow the organization to implement better annual planning around the expenditure of funds. D. Easter made a motion to pause any additional sponsorships until the state of Board funds can be re-evaluated at the end of 2025 in the December Board meeting. B. Sheeley Seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rezendes-Dell	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Moore	Yes
Morton	Yes
Lands	Yes
Escobar	Yes

- VIII. **Virginia Polo Budget Change Request-** Virginia Polo submitted a Budget Change Request based on an existing budget for an active marketing grant. The request was to reallocate funds from an originally approved Print Ads category to a Mailer instead. Because the total amount requested in reallocation was more than the 20% variance approvable by the Program Manager, it was brought to the Board for decision. A. Moore made a motion to approve the budget change request by Virginia Polo. K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rezendes-Dell	Yes
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Escobar	Yes
Morton	Yes
Lands	Yes
Sheely	Yes

- IX. **Funding- FY25 Cycle 2 Grants-** During this cycle the Board received 13 applications for a total funding request of \$61,100.00. The Board reviewed and discussed each proposal. After discussion, K. Foltman moved to approve the following projects. D. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rezendes-Dell	Yes
Escobar	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Moore	Yes

Morton	Yes
Lands	Yes
Sheely	Yes

Organization	Project Title	Amount Requested	Amount Approved
BHSA	Battlefield Horse Show Association (BHSA) Year-End Awards Banquet	\$5,000	\$5,000
ASHAV	2025 ASHA Horse Show	\$5,000	\$5,000
CHSA	CHSA Year End Awards	\$5,000	\$5,000
ECSHA	2025 ECHSA Tenderfoot Award Program	\$5,000	\$5,000
Frying Pan Farm Park	Horse Expo & Pre-Turkey Quarter Horse Show	\$5,095	\$5000
HPEF	Marketing & Support for Twilight Jumpers	\$3,600	\$3,600
Louisa County FFA	Awards Banquet	\$4,250	\$4,250
SCRHA	Ride the Rail or Ride the Trail	\$5,000	\$5,000
VHC	2025 Virginia Horse Council Educational Seminar	\$3,450	\$3,450
VPBA	Production of VPBA Directory and Yearbook	\$4,500	\$4,500
VPHC	VPHC Marketing & Event Support	\$5,000	\$5,000

- X. **Decision to Open- FY25 Cycle 3 Grants-** G. Petro noted the Board's previous pause on Cycle 1 of the grant program for Fiscal Year 2025 because of their financial prioritization of the Marketing Services Project instead. The previous decision to open Cycle 2 was ultimately made to give grant applicants a window at securing funding for the full breadth of 2025 (January-December). With this in mind, G. Petro presented the idea that TopRight Partners expects to have the foundational elements of a grants management system functionally integrated into the new website by March 2025. Due to the pressing need for a grants management system to advance the marketing grant program, it was generally recognized that it could be advantageous to once again pause the opening of a successive grant cycle while more infrastructure is added to this end of programming. K. Foltman made a motion to suspend the opening of a successive grant cycle until the

successful integration of a grants management system can be reevaluated at the March 2025 meeting. S. Escobar seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rezendes-Dell	Yes
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Moore	Yes
Morton	Yes
Lands	Yes
Sheely	Yes

XI. Public Comment- None

XII. Adjournment- 2:08 PM