

Draft Minutes

Virginia Horse Industry Board

July 15, 2024

Department of Forestry, Charlottesville

Board Members present:

Steve Escobar

Beth Sheely

Debbie Easter

Kelly Foltman

Oliver Brown

Robert Banner

Christie Morton (proxy for VQHA)

Ernie Oare

Board Members Absent:

David Lands

Amy Moore

Guests:

Janie Ober

I. Call to order- 10:04 am

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

II. Review of minutes

a. Minutes from the March 11 2024 meeting were reviewed. Tommy Barron motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Steve Escobar seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Easter	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Brown	Yes

III. **Financial Update**

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

Coggins- cc 625 (Figures through 6/30/2024)

Beginning Balance 6/30/2023	\$1,247,920.26
Revenues YTD	\$1,205,366.94
Expenditures YTD	\$156,829.85
Cash Balance YTD	\$2,296,457.35
Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 6/30/23 + rev – budgeted)	\$1,091,432.35

Feed Tonnage- cc 626 (Figures through 6/30/2024)

Beginning Balance 6/30/2023	\$1,180,088.59
Revenues YTD	\$255,815.85
Expenditures YTD	\$171,993.47
Cash Balance YTD	\$1,263,910.97
Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 6/30/23 + rev – budgeted)	\$748,558.29

IV. **New Business**

a. **Marketing RFP/Awarded Contractor Update**

- i. G. Petro provided an update on the advancement and final decision on the Marketing RFP, which has been an ongoing selection process among the Board’s marketing subcommittee, Heather Wheeler (previous program manager), and the VDACS procurement office. K Foltman explained more about the decision process and provided an overview of the awarded company- Top Right.

b. **Board Seats – Current Member Cycles**

- i. G. Petro recognized that Rob Banner and Kelly Foltman will have fulfilled their duty serving two terms as Board members, as of this meeting. Since the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office had yet to appoint replacements, it was decided that Rob and Kelly would remain in their respective Board seats until selections have been made- per handbook protocol. It was additionally noted that Floyd “Tommy” Barron and David Lands- as current Board members- have both completed one term and are eligible to reapply for a second term. Tommy Barron being present expressed interest in applying for a second term. Guest and member of the public, Janie Ober, expressed interest in reapplying for a seat on the Board. G Petro discussed the application process through the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office and made a note to provide the link to interested parties after the meeting.

c. **Subcommittee Continuation**

- i. It was recognized that K Foltman and R Banner have been intimately involved with the Marketing RFP process as the official subcommittee to handle the project, and it would be prudent to keep them as part of this subcommittee moving forward- despite their expiring Board seats. J. Ober expressed interest in being a public member of the subcommittee, while B. Sheely expressed interest in being a 3rd Board member participant. A motion was made by D. Easter to add J. Ober to the subcommittee. The motion was seconded by T. Barron. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Escobar	Yes

- ii. An additional motion was made by D. Easter to add B. Sheely to the subcommittee as well. The motion was seconded by T. Barron. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Escobar	Yes

- iii. A motion was made by D Easter to allow both K Foltman and R Banner to remain on the marketing subcommittee. The motion was seconded by T. Barron. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Escobar	Yes

d. Subcommittee Decision Making

- i. G Petro noted the importance of the Marketing subcommittee to be allowed a level of autonomy in decision-making ability outside of full Board meetings, to ensure efficient continuation of the project as it moves forward. A motion was made by D Easter that the marketing subcommittee will have decision making authority/autonomy in working with Top Right Partners, except in circumstances where the Chair or Vice Chair requests a full Board vote. The motion was seconded by S Escobar. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
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Brown	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Barron	Yes

e. Handbook Updates- Chair/Vice Chair

- i. Updates to the VHIB Handbook were shared, reflecting that the Vice Chair may assume all duties of the Chair in the event the Chair is unavailable or unable to fulfill his/her duties. A motion was made by K Foltman to approve the changes to the handbook. The motion was seconded by S Escobar. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Yes
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Barron	Yes

f. Budget

- i. G Petro drew attention to the need to expect changes in the operational budget with the incorporation of the Marketing contract. Special attention was given to administrative costs, namely printing, as need for commercial items inevitably increases. This prompted an overall discussion by the Board on general budget structure moving forward, and the following was structured for a motion:
 1. Small Grants (Marketing, \$5,000)- \$250,000/yr
 2. Youth Sponsorships- 4H/FFA/Pony Club/High School Rodeo- \$100,000/yr (\$25,000 ea) *Need for heads of organizations (regional) to come do “final presentation” on how funds were spent a la Soybean
 3. Large organization sponsorships- USHJA/HITS/Upperville/VHSA/Morven Park- \$125,000/yr (\$25,000 ea)
 4. Marketing RFP/Project- \$1M
 5. Contingency- \$525,000
- ii. K Foltman made motion to approve this general budget with these priorities moving forward for fiscal 2025. The motion was seconded by S Escobar. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Yes
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes

Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Barron	Yes

g. Sponsorship Proposals

- i. G Petro prompted the Board to review sponsorship proposals received from the following organizations:
 1. USHJA
 2. HITS Culpepper
 3. Upperville Colt & Horse Show
 4. VHSA
 5. Emory & Henry Intermont Equestrian
- ii. G Petro brought attention to the need to revisit priority given to these recurring sponsorships as the new marketing services project becomes a central focus of the Board. R Banner and T Barron recognized that special exception should be given to USHJA and VHSA when discussing continued sponsorships, as both organizations promised deliverables which will contribute to the goals of the new marketing services project. S Escobar made a motion to continue sponsorship of USHJA and VHSA for fiscal year 2025, saving the final decision on whether to renew the additional proposals for the December meeting. R Banner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Abstained
Easter	Yes
Foltman	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Barron	Yes

h. Grant Program

- i. **Cycle 4 Grant Applications- Review/Funding**
 1. *While using the newly formed and implemented grant scoring rubric (developed for approval at the March 11, 2024 meeting) the Board recognized a need for better definition under the criterium “benefit to Va horse industry.” It was noted that smaller regional organizations may be unable to affect wider swaths of populations when hosting events, but this should not work against them in applying for marketing grants. More thought was given to the idea of establishing a specific geographic or regional focus for each successive grant cycle, as a way to ensure smaller organizations in underserved areas have an equal opportunity to apply for and receive grant funds.
 2. During this cycle the Board received 7 applications for a total funding request of \$32,777.30. The Board reviewed and discussed each proposal. After discussion, S Escobar motioned to approve the

following projects. K Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Abstained
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Barron	Yes

Appalachian Gateway Horse & Trail Assoc.	2024 Show Awards	\$4,453.10	\$4,454
Hazelwild Farm	Aunt Sis Memorial Horse Shows Prizes & Awards	\$4,104.20	\$4,105
Horse Shows of Central Virginia	Celebrating Students: Increasing Access and Success for Riders	\$4,943.20	\$4,944
Virginia Polo, Inc.	Encouraging Support of VA Polo	\$3,720	\$3,720
	Total:	\$17,220.50	\$17,223.00

ii. **Cycle 1 FY25- Decision to Open**

1. The Board discussed opening of the next successive grant cycle, which would be the first cycle (cycle 1) of fiscal year 2025. Given the priority towards development of marketing project, and less grant applications received for cycle 4 than normal, S Escobar made a motion that the opening of cycle 1 be paused until the Board could revisit the topic later in the year. The motion was seconded by K Foltman. The motion passed unanimously.

Sheely	Yes
Brown	Abstained
Easter	Yes
Banner	Yes
Oare	Yes
Morton	Yes
Barron	Yes

iii. **Summit Concept**

1. The Board revisited the concept of holding a VHIB Summit for members of the equine industry in Va. S. Escobar noted an initial push to hold a Summit in Spring, as this would coincide with Governor and First Lady availability, but ultimately recognized the need for further information gathering to host such a large and complex event. It was decided that further research could be performed through the newly awarded marketing firm, and that fundamentals of the event should be better discussed and designed before any advancements are made.

V. **Public Comment- None**

VI. **Next meeting for October- October 9, Location TBD**

VII. **Adjournment- 2:02pm**