FINAL Minutes

Virginia Horse Industry Board

July 23, 2021

Virginia Equine Alliance, Warrenton

*This meeting included an electronically available connection for the public via WebEx.*

*A recording of the meeting is available:*

*https://covaconf.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/covaconf/recording/playback/60d348decded10398ff70050568c4ceb*

*Password: VHIBd72021*

**Board Members Present:**

Debbie Easter

Janie Ober

Robert Banner

Kelly Foltman

Oliver Brown

John Wise

Sandra Greene (VQHA proxy)

**Guests/Staff:**

Bradley Copenhaver, VDACS, Commissioner

Melissa Ball, VDACS, Special Projects Manager

Heather Wheeler, VDACS, Program Manager, Virginia Horse Industry Board

**WebEx Guests:**

Dedi Spradlin

Megan Brown

**I. Call to Order – 10:15 AM**

The meeting was called to order and introductions were made for all those present and joining through the WebEx line.

**II. Review of Minutes – January 22, 2021, June 9, 2021, June 18, 2021, and July 20, 2021**

Minutes from the meetings were reviewed. The January 22, 2021 meeting was a meeting of the full board. The June and July meetings were meetings of the Strategic Marketing Subcommittee.

D. Easter motioned to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2021 meeting, J. Wise seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

O. Brown motioned to approve the minutes from three Strategic Marketing Subcommittee meetings, J. Wise seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

**II. Financial Report**

Heather Wheeler reported on the finances for each fund. Income and revenue are listed as follows:

**Coggins – cc 625 (Figures through May 31, 2021)**

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| --- | --- |
| Beginning Balance 7/1/2020 | $341,164.11 |
| Revenues YTD | $87,360.39 |
| Expenditures YTD | $75,966.39 |
| Cash Balance YTD | $352,558.11 |
| Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/20 + rev - budgeted) | $330,299.50 |

**Feed Tonnage – cc 626** **(Figures through May 31, 2021)**

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| Beginning Balance 7/1/2020 | $715,923.40 |
| Revenues YTD | $255,986.10 |
| Expenditures YTD | $17,216.59 |
| Cash Balance YTD | $954,692.91 |
| Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/20 + rev - budgeted) | $916,896.70 |

**FY22 Budget –** With a number of activities halted over the past year due to COVID, the Program Manager suggested that the Board continue with the same budget for FY22 as was in place in FY21. If activities or needs increase, the Program Manager will present an updated budget to the Board at a future meeting so that the Board can consider an increase to budgeted line items. K. Foltman motioned that the Board should approve the budget as outlined in the financial report for FY22, O. Brown seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

**III. Old Business**

1. **Program Manager Updates**

Heather Wheeler provided activity updates since the meeting in January. Those updates included: contacting individuals in the horse industry to discuss the needs of the industry as the state emerges from COVID restrictions, working with the Strategic Marketing Committee to develop plans for the future of VHIB, working on documents and plans for the proposed marketing grant cycle. H. Wheeler also advised the Board that she has accepted another position with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and will be moving into a new role. H. Wheeler will continue to support the Board in the interim and until a new employee is hired.

**IV. New Business**

1. **VHIB Marketing Grant Proposal**

J. Ober presented the Marketing Grant Program that the Strategic Marketing Committee developed. This grant will infuse $200,000 into the industry and signals support to the industry. The guidelines have been developed to be clear and make it easier for organizations to apply. The grant will consist of four cycles opening August 1st, October 1st, January 2nd, and April 1st. Horse industry organizations can apply for a marketing grant of up to $5,000 in funding to be used in their marketing efforts. This grant program has been designed to be easier for the Board to review and easier for the applicants. The design of the cycles will also guide quarterly meeting dates for the Board and it is imperative the board members attend meetings to ensure the grant cycles can be opened on time and run according to the guidelines presented. The Board will develop a scorecard for scoring the proposals and approve it at the next meeting.

K. Foltman made a motion for the Board to approve the Marketing Grant Proposal and Timeline as presented with $200,000 in funding, R. Banner seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

The Board reviewed the documents developed for the Marketing Grant Program to include a digital application hosted on Google Forms, the Grant Application and Guidelines in a word document that will allow anyone that is unable to access the virtual application to apply, and the Media Kit for grant awardees. D. Easter motioned to approve the grant documents with the suggested edits, K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

1. **American Horse Council Economic Impact Study**

The subcommittee presented a proposal for VHIB to once again participate in the American Horse Council’s Economic Impact Study in 2023 with a Virginia specific study. The Board can participate at a projected cost of $25,000. It was the subcommittee’s suggestion that the Board approve a $100,000 budget to cover the cost of the study plus additional funds to publish and market the results. And in the case that American Horse Council decides not to complete state specific studies, VHIB can use the funding to secure another organization to complete a study of the Virginia horse industry. J. Ober motioned that the Board approve $100,000 to participate in the upcoming 2023 economic impact study being conducted by the American Horse Council, K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

1. **Venue Sponsorship**

The subcommittee presented a proposal to the Board to budget $100,000 for FY22 to support four equine venues in the state. The proposal and sponsorships will help develop partnerships that will allow VHIB to propel the promotion of the Virginia horse industry to competitors and visitors outside of the state. VHIB will develop a marketing campaign to encourage out of state horse competitors, trail riders and horse owners to “Come Back to Virginia.” The sponsorship will be given with a request for the venues to provide their mailing lists and show schedules to the Board for promotional purposes. The subcommittee will continue to develop the other requirements for the sponsorships before the next meeting.

O. Brown motioned to approve the proposal of the sponsorships of four venues at $25,000 each for a total of $100,000, K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

1. **Website**

The subcommittee presented a proposal to budget $100,000 for a redesign of the VHIB website along with a contract for a marketing agency to handle the marketing of VHIB and the Virginia horse industry. With the addition of a client relations management portal, a directory, a calendar of events, and increased marketing, the Board will need an agency to manage content, develop newsletter, and ramp up marketing efforts. K. Foltman motioned to approve $100,000 for the website redesign and marketing agency contract costs, J. Wise seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

It was also discussed that the actual cost may exceed the $100,000 budget and in that case, the subcommittee will present the additional costs to the Board for additional funding considerations.

The subcommittee proposed that the Board assign another committee to work on these two items between Board meetings. That committee will consist of Janie Ober, Debbie Easter, Rob Banner, Kelly Foltman and a representative of the Virginia Horse Council.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

1. **VHSA Sponsorship Proposal**

The Board received a request from the Virginia Horse Show Association to support their Associate Program as a Award Sponsor again in 2021. VHSA provided examples of how VHIB was recognized for their sponsorship last year and board members commended VHSA on their recognition and see their efforts as an example of how VHIB should be recommended by those receiving funds from the Board. D. Easter motioned that the Board approve $30,000 for the sponsorship of VHSA’s Associate Program as the Award Sponsor, K. Foltman seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed with Oliver Brown abstaining.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Abstained |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

1. **Nomination of Chair and Vice-Chair**

K. Foltman motioned that the Board approve Janie Ober as the Chair and Debbie Easter as the Vice-Chair for FY22. The motion unanimously passed.

The Board discussed that attendance at meetings has been problematic along with the Board’s four permanent seats. VHIB is the only Board with permanent seats and a change to that would require a change in the code. The Board would like to see a communication sent from VDACS and/or the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office to all Board members about the importance of serving on the Board and attending meetings. H. Wheeler will work with the Commissioner’s Office to have a communication developed.

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| Ober | Yes |
| Easter | Yes |
| Foltman | Yes |
| Banner | Yes |
| Brown | Yes |
| Wise | Yes |
| Greene | Yes |

**V. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**VI. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Board will September 20th. The location will be determined based upon room availability but efforts will be made to host the meeting in Charlottesville.

**V. Adjourn**

The committee adjourned the meeting at 1:16 PM.