

July 31, 2021, Midyear AERC Board meeting minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 10:06 am EDT.

Board members present were Olin Balch DVM, Michael Campbell, Connie Caudill, Monica Chapman, Susan Kasemeyer, Chalice Coward, Dawn Hilliard, Susan Garlinghouse DVM, Nick Kohut DVM, Bob Marshall DVM, Mike Maul, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, John Parke, Maribel Paulson, Naomi Preston, Lisa Schneider, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Kelly Williams-Stehman, Jan Stevens, Vance Stine, Laurie Underwood, Tim Worden.
Also present were Executive Director Kathleen Henkel and Kyra DeMartini.

Nick Kohut DVM requested approval of the agenda with a couple of revisions concerning the order of the items. Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to accept the revised agenda, Olin Balch DVM seconded. Motion passed.

Lisa Schneider made a motion to approve the board conference call minutes from the July 12, 2021 meeting, Michael Campbell seconded. Motion passed.

A brief discussion was held concerning what is a reasonable excuse to miss a meeting. Most felt that managing a ride, vetting a ride, medical and family issues are reasonable excuses. Directors were elected to govern the sport and represent the members. The midyear and convention meetings must be attended, if at all possible. This discussion was not to reflect on members missing the current meeting but just food for thought on future meetings and Directors' responsibilities.

Connie Caudill made a motion to excuse Jessica Cobbley – managing a ride; Angie Mikkelson, Tami Rougeau attending a ride, Christoph Schork – family matter.
Olin Balch DVM seconded. Motion passed.

Nick Kohut DVM reviewed how the meeting would be conducted, with breaks from time to time. He was happy that this Board worked well together in getting business accomplished over the past year and that the revision and passing of the bylaws have been completed.

Kathleen Henkel updated the Board on the AERC Office. The office staff checked out the hotel for the March 4-5, 2022, convention to be held in Reno (Sparks), Nevada. The rooms have all been recently remodeled and the block of hotel rooms that have been reserved for the convention is in the no smoking tower. She is still in the process of signing with a trade show company. Mollie Krumlaw-Smith felt she may be able to get them a discount. Kathleen Henkel said they are already getting speakers lined up for the convention. The CE class should be taking place for the veterinarians. Future conventions are planned for Jacksonville, Florida in 2023 and then in San Antonio, Texas in 2024.

Membership Report – presented by Kathleen Henkel-

Membership on 8/13/19	4656
Membership on 7/21/20	3963
Membership on 7/23/21	4443
Sanction fees as of 7/23/2020	\$11,495
Sanction fees as of 7/23/2021	\$10,750

Rider fees as of 7/23/20 \$ 12,874
Rider fees as of 7/23/21 \$ 29,958

New members as of 6/19/19 482
New members as of 7/21/20 312
New members of 7/23/21 541

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith updated the Board on the finances. She stated that we are surpassing our budget by about \$25,000. The really great news is that the online convention made a little over \$20,000, which is more profit than we have earned in many years.

She questioned if we want to think about offering some kind of online sessions in the future for those unable to attend in person? We wouldn't want to take away from the in-person convention. It is just something to consider.

Our budget at the end of June was favorable by \$90,000, though our 2021 budget was very conservative and some of that favorability will be absorbed as we go through the rest of 2021

Very good news to this year's financial end is that we will come out better than when we entered in. This is incredible during the pandemic. This was managed by controlling spending, moving the office, acquiring the PPP grant that we do not have to pay back and having the 2021 virtual convention be well attended.

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith conveyed that the drug testing fees had brought in \$27,000. We have a policy to not spend more on testing than what we have taken in. She said that the Finance Committee will be making a motion to restrict a portion of the current drug testing reserve for drug testing related issues that may come up in the future.

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith reported that all in all AERC is solid financially.

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith gave an update on the AERC Legacy Foundation. (ALF). Money is coming into ALF. One anonymous donor gave \$10,000 and several Board members have also donated. ALF should be able to pay AERC back the seed money loan of \$10,000 by the end of this year. A formal meeting will need to take place to establish how the funds will be used. She foresees 4-5 different accounts so donors can designate how their donation should be spent, such as trails, education, etc. She stated that we need to get people fully engaged to donate to make the foundation worthwhile. One way that she tried to bring in some funds was through the Facebook birthday donations that can go to support the non-profit, ALF, which ended up bringing in over \$500 from hers alone!

Amazon smile is another way to donate AERC. Kathleen Henkel will put something out to our members reminding them of this option.

The Board members thanked Mollie Krumlaw-Smith for keeping AERC's finances on track. They appreciate her commendable leadership that she works at tirelessly with a great attitude.

Michael Campbell presented a motion from the Rules Committee.

Motion Name: Use of Helmets by Junior Riders

Proposed Motion: Rule 10.1.1 Whenever mounted all Juniors (whether sponsored or unsponsored) must wear properly fastened safety helmets which are for equestrian use.

Background: This motion is to correct and refine the current Rule 10.1.1 which states “All Juniors, sponsored or unsponsored, must wear approved safety helmets (approval by AHSA, PCA, ANSIZ90.4 or Snell).

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC Organization: Maintain and improve safety for Junior riders in AERC.

Implementation plan: Immediate

Kathleen Henkel requested that implementation should not be immediately but at the start of the new season so that it can be put in the rule book. It was discussed that some bike helmets may be better than some equestrian helmets. One concern was who, if anyone, would be responsible for checking on what kind of helmet the juniors wear? Another concern was removing the list of certifying bodies (i.e., AHSA), which changes from time to time.

After a discussion of legal liability for ride management and AERC, Michael Campbell withdrew this motion along with the motion to require helmets for Young Riders. He will take them both to the Legal Committee for advice and discuss further it further with the Rules Committee. He will then bring it to the Board with revised wording at a future board meeting.

A motion from the Veterinary Committee was presented by Nick Kohut DVM, regarding a raise in funding for necropsies.

Motion Name: Funding for necropsies (postmortem examinations)

Proposed Motion: Increase the amount AERC will reimburse for a necropsy for a ride-related fatality from the current amount of \$300 to \$500.

Background, analysis and benefit: The AERC Veterinary and Welfare Committees are tasked with reviewing ride-related fatalities. Much valuable information can be obtained from a necropsy as a definitive cause of death can be determined. The purpose of reviewing fatalities is to learn where riders, ride veterinarians, ride managers and AERC can improve to help prevent a future similar fatality. AERC approved the funding of necropsies on horses that have died as a result of participating in an AERC sanctioned event. The amount AERC will reimburse for a necropsy has remained at \$300 for over 15 years. Medical costs have increased, and horse owners will face increased costs for a necropsy. The cost of a necropsy will range from \$0 - \$500 or more depending on the laboratory. Many teaching hospitals will perform a necropsy for free if the animal dies or is euthanized at the facility.

The death of a horse is a difficult time for the owner and equally difficult is the decision to have a necropsy performed. Encouraging necropsies through funding will benefit the organization and sport of endurance riding.

Budget effect/impact: Dependent on number of necropsies performed annually. Historically less than five on average annually = less than \$1000 annually.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership and/or the AERC: Ride related fatalities are fortunately not a common occurrence. We should learn from every ride related fatality to prevent future similar fatalities and a necropsy will provide a great amount of information as to how/why the horse died and thereby possible preventative measures.

Impact on AERC Office: Reimbursing owners for necropsies.

Implementation plan: To be implemented immediately.

Kathleen Henkel stated that the funds currently come from the general funds.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Nick Kohut DVM led a discussion on the Committee Charters. Each Committee was asked to revise their charters as needed and send them to the Board for approval. He stated that some charters had omitted that the chair had to be approved by the Board. This will be corrected. The Board had other suggestions for improving some of the charters. These suggestions will be sent to the committee chairs by the secretary. The Board will review the charters for approval in the September Board meeting.

The next item discussed was the committee reports. Only five committees sent in written reports. Nick Kohut DVM asked if any of the committee chairs that were on the Board would like to report on their committee. The Board received updates from several committee chairs during this time. One item of particular excitement was from the Office. Kyra DeMartini relayed an update from 4EightyEasts about the new AERC website. It should be ready to launch by the end of September. It will be tested by a few select Board members before having it totally go online. This has been a slow process and unfortunately there isn't anything that we can do to speed it up, but things are moving forward.

Nick Kohut DVM asked each group to review their Strategic Plan and update the Board on their groups progress.

Membership- Kyra DeMartini said the webinars are being accepted very well. They promote education and welfare. The group is planning on continuing them.

Finance- Mollie Krumlaw-Smith reported that long term on the strategic plan ALF needed to be established and now they need to put effort into getting funds into that account. Looking forward long term (5-10 years down the road) AERC is going to have to make some hard decisions. There are fewer people owning horses. She would appreciate any ideas or suggestions.

Trails- Monica Chapman stated their goals for midyear had been accomplished. The next item will be an article in EN, which is ongoing monthly. The Committee has \$10,000 in grants that they would like to give out by the end of the year and would like people to apply for these as needed. The committee is sending out a poll to see which type of lands the rides are taking place on. Their target goal for getting this information together is the 2022 convention.

They would like to see more participation from the West region. They know work is being done in that region, but people are not actively recording their hours on the AERC site. Trail advocates are desperately needed in that region. If anyone is willing to help, she asks that they contact her.

Welfare- Laurie Underwood reported that the committee has been working on ways to improve how fatalities are reported. One change is that will currently take place- only one person will make contact with the rider instead of two different committee members (Vet and Welfare) trying to get information concerning a fatality.

Governance- Lisa Schneider reviewed the goals that are being worked on and some that have been met:
- Effective use of the committees- with the update of the charters this will be met in September. Each committee chair should submit their approved charter along with the committee members for publication in EN.

-Regular status reports from the committees.

-Kathleen Henkel and Nick Kohut DVM worked on the agenda.

-Kathleen Henkel is giving regular updates on the convention.

-Increase Director responsibilities; will be expecting reports from each region at the convention.

-Publish responsibilities of directors.

-Kathleen Henkel sent out Code of Conduct and Social Media policies.

-Posting what the Board is doing to be transparent. Each region should post the draft meeting minutes on social media so the Board is speaking with one voice.

John Parke requested an informal discussion on how the Board members should interact with Facebook. Who should respond to what?

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to go into executive session to discuss legal issues at 2:02 pm, seconded by Connie Caudill. Motion passed.

Connie Caudill made a motion to come out of executive session at 3:22 pm. Seconded by Monica Chapman. Motion passed.

John Parke made a motion to adjourn at 3:23 pm. Seconded by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill