

April 10, 2023 AERC Board meeting minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 8:03 pm

Board members present were Olin Balch DVM, Connie Caudill, Monica Chapman, Jessica Cobbley, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Gunnar Frank, Maureen Fehrs DVM, Susan Garlinghouse DVM, Bridget Helms, Dawn Hilliard, Susan Kasemeyer, Eric Rueter, Nick Kohut DVM, Bob Marshall DVM, Maribel Paulson, Naomi Preston, Melissa Ribley DVM, Lisa Schneider, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Kelly Williams-Stehman, Jan Stevens, Vance Stine, Laurie Underwood, Tim Worden. Also present were Executive Director Kathleen Henkel and Tom Rajala, chair of the AERC-I Committee.

Susan Garlinghouse DVM moved to accept the revised agenda, seconded by Lisa Schneider. Motion passed unanimously.

Lisa Schneider made a motion to approve the March 13, 2023 Board meeting minutes, seconded by Susan Kasemeyer. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to excuse John Parke for personal reasons was made by Vance Stine and seconded by Connie Caudill. Motion passed unanimously. John Parke was able to join the call a little later.

Absent was Mike Maul who tried several times unsuccessfully to get on the call.

Kathleen Henkel reviewed the Statistical report:

Membership as of 4/8/2022	3717
Membership as of 4/7/2023	3447
Sanction fees as of 4/7/2022	\$11,060.00
Sanction fees as of 4/7/2023	\$11,360.00
Rider fees as of 4/7/2022	\$9,619.00
Rider fees as of 4/7/2023	\$9,398.00
New members as of 4/8/2022	292
New members as of 4/7/2023	297

Motion from Trails Committee

Dawn Hilliard presented the Orkney Springs trail grant motion.

The Trails and Land Management Committee moves that AERC, using designated Trails Grants, assist in funding a portion of the Orkney Springs Trail and Extension rehab project in the George Washington National Forest, Lee Ranger District (Basye, VA). Funds requested: Up to \$3,500 from the dedicated Trails Grant fund. ODEEO is contributing \$1100 and has sourced donations of equipment and labor. The ODEEO provided the Forest Service over 400 hours of volunteer work last year and routinely has 3 or more work weekends yearly. The AERC ride manager has a 5 year permit for her ride, showcasing ongoing involvement with the local land managers.

This request is coming from the Old Dominion Equestrian Endurance Organization (ODEEO) and the George Washington National Forest, Lee Ranger District land managers. Over the years, a

large section of trail has become eroded and is frequently very muddy. This project will include reopening existing drainage and runoff ditches or building new ones and regrading all of the lower sections of trail. The project will remove/excavate the mud and a base of gravel will be laid with a top layer of blue stone dust, raising the trail bed. The result will be a sustainable trail that will require little to no maintenance for years to come.

Motion from committee passed with one abstention.

AERC International Discussion

The Board received an email from a member who had concerns about some of the articles in Endurance News which seem to promote FEI. As chair of the AERC-I Committee, Tom Rajala was invited to join the discussion.

Regarding the article which appears in the April issue Endurance News, Tom Rajala stated that he tried to focus on the achievements of AERC members participating in a World Championship, making the health of their horses the first priority, holding to the AERC motto, and representing their respective countries. The purpose of previous articles was to raise awareness of the international governing body of equestrian sports and awareness of what USEF has been developing for endurance sport committee. He felt these points were important to the general membership to help to understand the difference between national and international organizations, and options for riders (members) who desire to compete internationally. He wanted to show how AERC fits into the larger endurance sport picture and how the AERC was the foundation from which FEI Endurance was born. He hopes this will convey the purpose of the articles.

During the discussion Nick Kohut DVM reiterated that AERC has no affiliation with USEF or FEI but ride managers are free to sanction with other organizations of their choice.

A member of the Board felt that even though ride managers can sanction their rides with other organizations, Endurance News should not publish articles promoting those rides as this seems like free advertising which other organizations do not receive.

Kathleen Henkel reminded Board members that AERC-I is a committee of AERC and writes articles in our publication.

Nick Kohut DVM will forward Tom Rajala's explanation to the concerned member.

Financial Discussion

Mollie Krumlaw-Smith will contact the accountant regarding charging convenience fees on credit card transactions and how to put them on the books. She will go over the details with the accountant and get clarification to determine if there needs to be a way to distinguish use of credit card versus debit cards.

John Parke stated that he had actually requested a deferral of this discussion at last month's meeting until Mollie Krumlaw-Smith brings a comprehensive money saving motion to the Board versus discussing credit card fees only. Mollie Krumlaw-Smith conveyed there has been some progress made, such as eliminating publication of the February Endurance News issue, negotiation by the office of a reduction on printing costs, reducing office hours, and much more. Mollie Krumlaw-Smith will get the details and have a motion for the Board once she has more discussion with the office staff.

Discussion regarding the Technical Committee

Nick Kohut DVM stated that the IT committee plays a very important role in AERC and there is no motion to disband that committee. He went on to say that the AERC Bylaws state the Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operations of AERC.

Nick Kohut DVM nominated Eric Rueter for chair of the Technical Committee, Olin Balch DVM seconded.

Discussion was held concerning who should have full access to the database and website. Kathleen Henkel stated access should only be given to the office and the programmer. Eric Rueter said that he feels that the program should be audited to see what work has been done and improvements that could be made, but that he would need access in order to know what is currently being done. Eric Rueter also stated that the Technical Committee could run queries versus paying the programmer to run them.

John Parke made a motion to defer the discussion on who has access to the database until Eric Rueter and the Technical Committee write a one-page committee policy on protocols for database access (charter) for the Board to review. Discussion on access to the database can wait until the Board sees a policy. Jan Stevens seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Vote on Eric Rueter to chair the Technical Committee passed with 14 yes votes and 10 abstentions.

Motion from Veterinary Committee to Update AERC Rule 9 to Prohibit Hazing During Best Condition Judging

Melissa Ribley DVM presented a motion from the Veterinary Committee to prohibit hazing during best condition judging.

Update of AERC Rule 9 to prohibit hazing during Best Condition Judging

Proposed Motion Add rule 9.5: Overt hazing is prohibited during Best Condition judging. "Overt Hazing" is defined as, but not limited to, the use of any object used directly or indirectly to strike, threaten or otherwise stimulate an equine to move or behave with more animation than might otherwise be produced. The use of a crop or lunge whip is prohibited. Reasonable signals to cue a trot-out gaiting to the equine are acceptable.

Background- The AERC Veterinary Handbook includes the statement "*Overt "hazing" of the horse is not allowed during Best Condition judging* "

There is no reference to hazing in the current AERC rule book. With this addition to rule 9, the AERC Veterinary Handbook and Rule Book will be consistent with each other in reference to hazing.

Reasoning for disallowing hazing during Best Condition judging:

- 1) Judging of the "Quality of Movement" portion of the Best Condition is unfairly influenced by hazing.
- 2) Evaluation of the horse's movement during Best Condition judging, unlike the pre, post and ride exams, is not required for the horse's welfare or to determine the horse's ability to continue. If the horse cannot be presented during BC judging such that the gait and quality of movement can be evaluated at the trot, the horse may simply not be considered eligible for Best Condition and be excused from the judging.

Unless Riders read the Veterinary Handbook, they do not know that hazing is prohibited according to this publication. Veterinarians are inconsistent in allowing hazing during Best Condition judging because the Veterinary Handbook and Rulebook do not provide the same information regarding hazing.

To be implemented for the 2024 ride season.

After a brief discussion, motion from committee passed unanimously.

Strategic Plan Updates

Governance Group - Nick Kohut DVM confirmed that the final copyrighted items to be investigated by our attorney are: the AERC logo, AERC's motto "To Finish is to Win" and Endurance News. Kathleen Henkel will send these to the attorney.

Welfare of the Horse Group - Melissa Ribley DVM conveyed that the horse welfare group parallels the Vet Committee's goals. The group is currently discussing the shortage of control judges, compensation received by control judges at rides and ensuring that equine fatality reports are sent to the Board. The group has requested the ride managers' most recent survey on this subject. The group is also working on a Power Point presentation for the recruitment of new vets.

Susan Kasemeyer moved to adjourn at 9:39 p.m. EDT, John Parke seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill