

February 12, 2024, AERC Board Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 8:06 p.m. EST.

Board members present were Connie Caudill, Gunnar Frank, Susan Garlinghouse DVM, Dawn Hilliard, Bridget Helms, Susan Kasemeyer, Eric Rueter, Nick Kohut DVM, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Bob Marshall DVM, Mike Maul, Naomi Preston, Maribel Paulson, John Parke, Olin Balch DVM, Melissa Ribley DVM, Lisa Schneider, Kelly Williams-Stehman, Vance Stine, Laurie Underwood, and Tim Worden. Also present was Executive Director Kathleen Henkel, Dee McDonald and Barbara Baris co-chairs of the Legal Committee, Diane Rowley, chair of the Protest Committee, Jay Mero DVM chair of the Veterinary Committee, Regional Directors elect Kristen Seymore-Norsworthy, Regina Rose, Bruce Burton and Marci Cunningham, and invited guest Susie Hayes.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to accept the agenda, Vance Stine seconded. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve the January 8, 2024 minutes by Susan Garlinghouse DVM, seconded by Susan Kasemeyer. Motion passed.

Susan Garlinghouse DVM made a motion to excuse Jessica Cobbley (employment conflict), Monica Chapman (attending the annual trail conference in Washington DC), Stephanie Palmer DuRoss (employment conflict), Maureen Fehrs DVM (traveling) and Jan Stevens (traveling), which was seconded by Vance Stine. Motion passed.

Kathleen Henkel presented the statistical report:

Membership as of 2/10/2023	2798
Membership as of 2/06/2024	2723
Sanction fees as of 2/06/2023	\$9,820.00
Sanction fees as of 2/06/2024	\$12,180.00
Rider fees as of 2/06/2023	\$3,241.00
Rider fees as of 2/06/2024	\$3,372.00
New members as of 2/10/2023	197
New members as of 2/06/2024	136

Motion to Change Rule 14.3 to Exclude Protests filed by the AERC Executive Director for Possible Violations of Rule 13 (AERC Drug Rule) from the Mediation Process Requirement

Melissa Ribley DVM and Jay Mero DVM presented a motion from the Veterinary Committee: Revise Rule 14.3 to exclude protests filed by the Executive Director for possible violations of Rule 13 from the mediation process requirement”.

Rule 13 (AERC Drug Rule) outlines the process by which the AERC Executive Director shall file a protest against the alleged violator in the case of a possible Rule 13 violation. The protest is based upon laboratory results and filed under advisement of both the AERC Legal and Veterinary Committees. Both the Legal and Veterinary Committees may request an Independent Investigation Period to independently verify material concerning the laboratory result. If after the Independent Investigation Period has ended

both the Veterinary Committee and the Legal Committee confirm that the laboratory report together with the findings of the Independent Investigation Period conclude that a possible violation of Rule 13 has occurred, then the Executive Director shall initiate a Protest on behalf of AERC.

Rule 14.3 requires referral of protests to non-binding mediation. The purpose of mediation is to allow the protestor (AERC in the case of possible drug rule violations based upon laboratory results) and the respondent an opportunity to voluntarily settle the matters in dispute. This is not an appropriate course of action for a possible violation of Rule 13 based upon analytical results that have been reviewed and investigated by both the Veterinary and Legal Committees prior to the filing of the protest. A mediator should not have sole discretion to withdraw the protest; rather the protest should be reviewed and decided upon by the Protest and Grievance Committee.

The deterrence factor of the Drug Testing Program is important, and members should expect that a violation of rule 13 will result in publication of the Protest results in Endurance News. The publication of such information is lost when referred to mediation. The AERC Board of Directors should be informed of drug rule violations and such information is lacking when referred to mediation.

The AERC Drug Rule is critical to the safety and welfare of our equine athletes as well as the public image of our sport. Because of this, AERC spends significant funding and resources on the drug testing program. A possible violation based upon laboratory results is a serious matter and should be subject to the Protest and Grievance Committee process without the option of mediation.

To be implemented for the 2025 ride season.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion from the Trails and Land Management Committee regarding the Clark State Forest Steep Hill Restoration Grant Request

Dawn Hilliard presented the motion, as follows:

Trails and Land Management Committee moves that AERC, using designated Trails Grants, assist in funding a portion of the Clark State Forest Steep Hill Restoration project in the Clark State Forest (Henryville, IN). Funds requested: Up to \$7,500.

This request is coming from the Friends of Deam/Clark State Forest, who work with the Daniel Boone Distance Riders and the Forest land managers annually to improve and maintain the trail system. Over the years, three steep hills have eroded to the point they are unusable unless totally dry. This project will improve the trails to allow for appropriate drainage by adding benches or switchbacks and a base layer of rock. The result will be a sustainable trail that will require little to no maintenance for years to come.

This project will include work by an AERC Trailmaster. The group has raised \$3750 in cash donations, Clark State Forest will provide \$6000 in materials, and 320 hours of volunteer time has been pledged.

Funds from dedicated Trails Grant fund, specifically monies donated from the estate of Julie Jackson-Biegert for use on Midwest region trails.

Motion from committee passed with one abstention.

Motion from the Competition Committee to Implement a New Regional Award for 100-Mile Competitions to Recognize the top 3 in each Region

Naomi Preston presented the motion from the Competition Committee to implement a new Regional Award for 100 mile competitions which recognizes the top 3 in each region, as follows:

Add a new Regional award for 100-mile rides based on miles and points, recognizing the top 3 in each region.

Participation in 100-mile rides is declining, as is the number of 100-mile rides on the calendar. This new award would provide a regional incentive for members to compete in 100-mile rides. The benefit is hopefully to encourage more riders to ride 100-mile rides; more riders for Ride Managers; more income for AERC; and more emphasis on the 100-mile distance.

Budget effect/impact (Attach spreadsheet if appropriate): Computer time would be needed to set up data for the award. This award would consist of an extra line of embroidered text on the existing AERC award vests/jackets. If needed, a sponsor can be found if there are significant costs.

Will gain more excitement about entering 100-mile rides, more recognition for riders, and more riders for Ride Managers and income for AERC.

After a thorough discussion, the motion was remanded back to the committee for clarification on qualifications.

Motion of the Veterinary Committee to Change AERC Rule 2.1.2 to Require that the Head Control Judge be a Member of AERC for a Minimum of Two Months Prior to the Ride

Melissa Ribley DVM presented a motion from the Veterinary Committee, as follows:

Add to rule 2.1.2: The Head Control Judge must be/have been an AERC member for a minimum of two months prior to the ride. Both regular Adult or Control Judge memberships are acceptable. Exceptions are allowed if the scheduled head control judge must cancel due to emergency circumstances that do not allow them to attend the ride. In such case, the Ride Manager must notify the AERC Office of the change who shall then notify the AERC Veterinary Committee.

Control judges are veterinarians employed by ride management to monitor the horses, counsel riders and ride management on equine welfare, and uphold the AERC rules. To provide this service, it is important that at least one control judge at the ride is a current member of AERC so that they are familiar with the organization and its rules and policies. The Head Control Judge typically oversees the judging at the ride, resolves conflicts between riders and other control judges, and is expected to have current knowledge of the AERC rules. Control Judges who are AERC members are provided with the AERC Veterinary Newsletter, Endurance News, and correspondence from the

AERC office that includes updates to rules and information on AERC-provided Continuing Education.

The current rule 2.1.2 reads in part: “A control judge must be an AERC member, prior to the publication of ride results, either as a regular member or as a control judge.” This was put in place because, for large rides where there are numerous control judges, it may not be practical for all control judges to be current members of AERC at the time of the ride. However, ride results are sometimes not submitted until weeks after the ride. This can and has resulted in rides taking place where there is no control judge present who is a member of AERC at the time of the ride. This can and has resulted in insufficient control of the ride and conflict between riders and the control judges.

The time period of two months prior to the ride is appropriate because typically, at this point, ride management has confirmed their Head Control Judge and allows time for the Head Control Judge to become familiar with AERC rules and policies. Notification of emergency exceptions and change of Head Control Judge will allow the Veterinary Committee to contact and counsel the replacement Head Control Judge who is new to AERC.

The choice of Head Control Judge is one of the most influential factors in providing a safe event for our horses. The Head Control Judge sets the control parameters, guides ride management on vet check layout, supervises other control judges at the ride, and resolves disputes involving veterinary matters. In the interest of horse welfare, a minimum standard of a current AERC membership should be in place for the Head Control Judge.

To be implemented for the 2025 ride season.

Motion from committee passed with one opposing vote.

John Parke made a motion to recognize the four outgoing Board members for their stellar efforts and contributions, which was seconded by Olin Balch DVM. Motion passed unanimously.

Lisa Schneider moved to adjourn at 9:09 p.m. Seconded by Susan Kasemeyer. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill.