

February 22, 2024, AERC Convention Board Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. MST.

Board members present were Connie Caudill, Gunnar Frank, Susan Garlinghouse DVM, Dawn Hilliard, Bridget Helms, Susan Kasemeyer, Eric Rueter, Nick Kohut DVM, Bob Marshall DVM, Naomi Preston, Maribel Paulson, John Parke, Olin Balch DVM, Melissa Ribley DVM, Laurie Underwood, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Monica Chapman, Jan Stevens and Tami Rougeau. Also present were Executive Director Kathleen Henkel and Regional Directors-elect Khristen Seymore-Norsworthy, Regina Rose, Bruce Burton and Marci Cunningham.

Nick Kohut DVM announced that West Region director Kelly Williams-Stehman stepped down from the Board due to personal obligations. Susan Garlinghouse, DVM made a motion to approve Tami Rougeau for the West Regional Director, seconded by Monica Chapman. Motion passed unanimously.

Naomi Preston made a motion to accept the agenda, seconded by Susan Garlinghouse, DVM. Motion passed.

A motion was made to approve the February 12, 2024 minutes by Susan Kasemeyer, seconded by Dawn Hilliard. Motion passed with three abstentions.

Jan Stevens made a motion, which was seconded by Susan Kasemeyer, to excuse Maureen Fehrs DVM (traveling), Mike Maul (health concerns), Mollie Krumlaw-Smith (employment conflict), Tim Worden (school), Vance Stine (travel issues) and Lisa Schnieder, Jessica Cobbley, Kelly Williams-Stehman (all retiring from the Board). Motion passed unanimously.

Kathleen Henkel reviewed the statistical report:

Membership as of 2/15/2023	2873
Membership as of 2/19/2024	2871
Sanction fees as of 2/19/2023	\$10,330
Sanction fees as of 2/19/2024	\$12,320
Rider fees as of 2/19/2023	\$5,312
Rider fees as of 2/19/2024	\$4,689
New members as of 2/15/2023	162
New members as of 2/19/2024	174

Motion from the Competition Committee to Implement a new Regional Award for 100-Mile Competitions, Recognizing the Top 3 in Each Region.

Naomi Preston presented the following motion on behalf of the Competition Committee:

Add a new Regional award for one day 100 mile rides, awarding the top 3 riders in each region, based on the number of 100 mile rides completed. Points will be used to break any ties. A minimum of two one day 100 mile rides is required to be eligible for this award.

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.

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. In the event a rider is only receiving this award, a sponsor will pay for the vest/jacket. Sponsor is already secured if needed.

To be implemented for the 2025 season.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion from Protest and Grievance Committee to Provide Digital Access to Past and Future P&G Decisions.

Nick Kohut, DVM presented the following motion on behalf of the Protest & Grievance Committee:

The Office of AERC is directed to assist in the compilation and organization of Protest Decisions (including results of any appeals) from the preceding 10 years and those rendered in the future in a searchable format on the AERC website in order to make the decisions available to the Board, Committees and Membership.

Benefit- At present the only way to review past P&G decisions is to comb through dozens of hard copy issues of Endurance News or to find someone with accurate personal knowledge of previous decisions. This can lead to inconsistent results, especially if there is a change of personnel on the P&G committee. While it is true that every case is unique, past decisions can provide guidance to the P&G and membership as to what actions may or may not violate the Rules and be subject to sanction and the types of sanction which may be appropriate. If there are concerns about privacy a possible option would be to redact the names of the parties, although the names will have already been published. In the event redaction is decided upon, it is strongly recommended that such names not be redacted during the penalty phase of the decision (e.g., suspension) and if the Respondent is warned that a repeat infraction will warrant a further more severe sanction, the Respondent's name should never be redacted. To the extent possible, the P&G Committee is prepared to assist in organizing and indexing the decisions for easier reference.

Ready access to prior P&G decisions will assist the P&G in maintaining a certain degree of consistency in deciding similar protests. Members will derive an educational benefit in learning how the Rules have been applied in the past and will provide guidance as to whether a potential protest is likely to meet with any success. In the case a party has previously been warned against further infraction, access to previous decisions where the Respondent has been sanctioned may indicate whether an additional protest may be warranted. It will also assist RMs in determining if a ride entrant is currently under sanction.

To be implemented immediately.

After a thorough discussion, many Board members agreed it would be best to have the past protests readily available to the P&G Committee. John Parke made a motion to send it back to the P&G Committee for revision for a policy, seconded by Tami Rougeau. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion from the Technical Committee

Eric Rueter presented the following motion to the Board:

The AERC Tech Committee would suggest that AERC offer REST Apis as a service to its' membership, as a means of retrieving data from the AERC db. Using APIs to retrieve data as an alternative to either hand copying the data, or requesting specific queries to be performed by a paid AERC programmer, would be a much more secure method than dropping data into a public location, and allowing basic public access to that location. In the long run it would also be much less labor intensive. First and foremost, it needs to be noted that nothing being requested to be made available in this methodology is not currently available through the website. Some of the data currently is made available in XLS (EXCEL 1995-2003) format. The difficulty with this is there are now problems with supplying this more than twenty-year-old format. The end user has to "manipulate" the data through manual processes to assure a properly formatted data structure. This method of extracting the data into an EXCEL spreadsheet, downloading that spreadsheet to a computer and then storing it in a format which allows the recipient to analyze the data, worked great in 2004 when downloading of members and horses started, but it is not the best method to use today. There are much better, quicker and more secure methods of allowing read only secure access for any entity that can show a legitimate need for the data from AERC. One of those methods is REST APIs.

REST (Representational State Transfer) API, is a current methodology (<https://www.redhat.com/en/topics/api/what-is-a-rest-api>) that allows for extraction of data without placing that data in a "flat file", and obtains the requested data as of the moment in time that it is requested. The REST API can accept input parameters, and can produce multiple output formats. The most common, and the one that AERC should use, is JSON (JAVA Script Object Notation). This process is all done with programming, with no human intervention other than "pressing a button" to initiate the process.

The first and main priority, is the "current" membership and horse data. For a short period prior to the conversion to the new database, this was available via REST APIs. When AERC converted to the new website / database that capability was lost, and Ride Managers and other interested parties, now have to rely on antiquated methods to assure the accuracy of membership and horse data. Chris Goering of Brand Media Solutions, the programmer / organization that the AERC Office uses, agrees with the Tech Committee.

Why is there a need for sharing this data? There are some applications that rely on accuracy of AERC Membership and Horse data. Currently to verify membership, a RM/RS, or organization such as Green Beans or the many regional organizations, must either go through a cumbersome process to download and manipulate this data, or continuously sign onto the AERC website and individually lookup members and horses.

Who can benefit from creating these REST Apis? At some point, just about every member of AERC. Any of the regional organizations, such as SERA, PNER, OCER, SEDRA, ECTRA, TERA would have the ability to download AERC Members and Horses so that their individual memberships can be easily verified. Green Beans can better track their members. Ride Managers and Ride Secretaries can be more confident

that they are being provided and are providing correct information. The Regional organizations can throughout the season or at the end of the season extract results for their year-end awards, without worrying about whether their records are up to date. This is not just one or two members (volunteers) whose “jobs” would be made easier, those members are providing services for a good portion, if not the entire AERC membership.

The AERC Tech Committee, through me, asked Chris Goering what the cost of implementing REST APIs for just the membership and horse data would be. His answer was around \$150

A couple of changes to the horse information would be requested, but not mandatory.

- 1) In the horses, drop just sending the “first” breed, and place in a second REST API all breeds and registration numbers.
- 2) Add the horse’s birthdate

Changes requested for the membership, but not mandatory

- 1) Add a membership expiration date. Reason: New members and members who pay their dues be who pay dues in Oct/Nov show as the 2023 season, but they are also valid in 2024. Cannot verify membership past Nov 30, 2023.
- 2) Implementation would start with membership and horses to quickly assist RM’s and Greenbeans. Then add remainder as programmer time allows.

The Tech committee would be willing to assist any AERC related organization with utilizing any REST Api that AERC would provide.

After a thorough discussion the Board felt they did not have a clear understanding of the motion. Eric Rueter made a motion to defer the motion until Sunday’s Board meeting, seconded by Olin Balch, DVM. Motion to defer passed unanimously.

The members of the Strategic Plan were updated (group chairs are shown in bold).

Membership - **Kathleen Henkel**, Tim Worden, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Marci Cunningham, John Parke.

Governance - **Nick Kohut DVM**, Tami Rougeau, Connie Caudill, Jan Stevens, Kathleen Henkel.

Finance - **Mollie Krumlaw-Smith**, Mike Maul, Vance Stine

Trails - **Dawn Hilliard**, Maribel Paulson, Bridgett Helms, Bruce Burton, Regina Rose.

Horse Welfare - **Melissa Ribley DVM**, Olin Balch DVM, Bob Marshall DVM, Laurie Underwood.

Education- **Naomi Preston**, Susan Garlinghouse DVM, Susan Kasemeyer, Eric Rueter.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to adjourn at 8:36 pm, Dawn Hilliard seconded. Motion passed

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill