

## July 19, 2025, AERC Midyear Board Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. EST.

Board members present were Bruce Burton, Connie Caudill, Marci Cunningham, Maureen Fehrs DVM, Bridget Helms, Nick Kohut DVM, Naomi Preston, Regina Rose, John Parke, Susan Kasemeyer, Vance Stine, Maribel Paulson, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy, Tami Rougeau, Olin Balch DVM, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Bob Marshall DVM, Diane Connolly, Mike Maul, Erin McChesney, Melissa Ribley DVM, Laurie Underwood and Lara Worden. Also on the call were Interim Executive Director Giulia Orth and chair of the Technical Committee, Jim Jarosik.

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

Tami Rougeau moved to approve the minutes from the June 9, 2025, Board meeting which was seconded by Olin Balch DVM. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Vance Stine and seconded by Tami Rougeau to excuse Dawn Hilliard (ride conflict), Jan Stevens (personal loss) from this meeting and to also excuse Susan Kasemeyer from the June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting (connectivity issues). Motion passed.

The Statistical report was presented by Giulia Orth:

| Category  | 2024           | 2025                   | Change    |
|---|----------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Total Members as of 7/1/2025                    | 3,883          | 3,643                  | (240)     |
| New Members as of 7/1/2025                      | 430            | 385                    | (45)      |
| New JRs and YRs as of 7/1/2025                  | 68             | 53                     | (15)      |
| Rider Fees up to 7/1/2025                       | \$28,556       | \$23,922 (in progress) | (\$4,634) |
| Sanction Fees up to 7/1/2025                    | \$14,790       | \$17,305               | \$2,515   |
| Starting Riders recorded in June as of 7/1/2025 | 1,426 (closed) | 863 (in progress)*     |           |
| Starting Riders recorded in May as of 7/1/2025  | 1,606 (closed) | 1,620 (closed)         | 14        |
| *10 rides pending for June 2025 on 7/1/2025     |                |                        |           |

### Technical Committee

Jim Jarosik, chair of the Technical Committee, updated the Board of ongoing projects in the office involving digital transformation efforts, including a shared file system project with enhanced security features. This will allow committees to have a common repository for their documents. He discussed several other items and concerns that the committee will be working on.

### Convention Committee

Laurie Underwood reported on plans for both a 2026 virtual convention (proposed for February 28) and a 2027 in-person event, with Evelyn Baig handling venue research. More information will be forthcoming as bids come in.

Laurie Underwood shared the Convention Committee Charter. The motion to approve the charter, which was made by Tami Rougeau and seconded by Vance Stine, passed unanimously. The charter can be viewed on the website.

The Board reviewed and discussed reports from the committees.

### Motion Regarding Mediators

John Parke made a motion to ratify the Executive Committee's approval of mediators Jack Price (SE region) and Ann Kitzmiller (Central region), and Board approval of additional mediator Frank Crum (West region), which was seconded by Bruce Burton. Motion passed unanimously.

### Ride Results

There was a discussion on regional ride results and attendance through July, noting a decline in rides and riders in most regions. Various ideas to boost participation were considered.

### Strategic Plan

Tami Rougeau facilitated an in-depth discussion regarding the revised Strategic Plan. The plan places greater emphasis on committee initiatives and their contributions to achieving strategic objectives. Committees will provide quarterly reports to promote ongoing engagement and accountability.

John Parke moved to approve the revised Strategic Plan, which was seconded by Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy. Motion passed unanimously.

### Executive Session

A motion was made by John Parke at 12:19 p.m. to go into executive session and was seconded by Tami Rougeau. Motion passed.

A motion was made by John Parke at 1:05 p.m. to exit executive session, which was seconded by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith. Motion passed.

### Motion Regarding Employee Handbook

A motion was made by John Parke to approve the Employee Handbook pending review by California employment attorneys. If any changes are necessary, the matter will be brought back to the Board for consideration. The motion was seconded by Tami Rougeau. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Motion Regarding PCI Compliance

Tami Rougeau moved to approve the Executive Committee's decision to implement PCI-compliant credit card processing software via authorize.net by mid-to-late August. The motion was seconded by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith. Motion passed unanimously.

#### Motion Regarding Enhanced Analytics and Tracking

Tami Rougeau proposed a motion, seconded by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, to implement a new system for enhanced analytics and tracking at a cost of \$19.00 per month. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### Financial Review

AERC Treasurer Mollie Krumlaw-Smith reviewed the financials with the Board and stated that while AERC remains financially stable, it is concerning that membership income is lower than expected. She reported that donations and sponsorship put AERC running slightly ahead of budget by \$26,000.

Motion from the Veterinary and Welfare of the Horse Committees Regarding Revision of the AERC Fatality Reporting Procedure. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion on behalf of the Veterinary and Welfare of the Horse Committees:

Revise the AERC Fatality Reporting Procedure to reflect the change to the policy the board voted on during the April 2025 board of directors meeting.

#### AERC Equine Fatality Reporting Procedure

- 1) If there is an equine fatality at or related to an AERC ride, the Control Judge shall complete the Fatality Report form and submit it to the Ride Manager for transmittal to the AERC office. The Ride Manager shall be responsible for ensuring the Fatality Report form is completed and transmitted to the AERC office in a timely manner.
- 2) The AERC office shall open a file for each fatality incident and forward copies of the Fatality Report form for the incident to the Veterinary Committee and the Horse Welfare Committee.
- 3) The Veterinary Committee shall prepare a report to the Board of Directors concerning the cause of the death. This report shall be confidential and shall not be made public.
- 4) The Veterinary Committee report and veterinary records or other materials collected by the Veterinary Committee shall be made available to the Horse Welfare Committee. The Veterinary Committee will identify causal or contributing issues to the incident and write up a general educational article in Endurance News. The Welfare Committee shall publish an annual statistical summary of equine fatalities on the AERC Website and in Endurance News.

The AERC Welfare of the Horse Committee will publish an annual summary of equine fatalities in Endurance News and on the website providing transparency to the membership and the public.

After a thorough discussion, the motion from committee passed with 14 in favor and 9 against.

Motion from the Veterinary Committee Regarding the Addition of Products using Far infrared Radiation to AERC Rule 13 Appendix F - Prohibited Treatments. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion on behalf of the Veterinary Committee:

Update Rule 13 Appendix F- Prohibited Treatments to include the use of far infrared radiation. One example of this type of product is the Back on Track product line. Far infrared radiation (FIR) is a technology used in the Back on Track and similar products. It is purported that FIR is therapeutically used in horses to improve circulation, reduce pain and inflammation, and promote healing. The use of these products during competition is not consistent with the intent of AERC rule 13 which states that endurance equines should compete under their natural abilities without the influence of any drug, medication or veterinary treatment.

FIR products such as Back on Track are widely used within the endurance community and there has been previously no clear guidance or clarity within the AERC rules on the allowance of these products during competition. Specifically listing this therapy in the drug rule appendix will provide riders with the information they need to comply with the AERC drug rule. The addition of FIR to the Prohibited Treatment Appendix will provide guidance and clarity to AERC members.

Will be implemented for the 2026 ride season, thereby giving time to notify the membership.

A thorough discussion was held. A key concern raised was the criteria for placing non-proven therapeutic items on the prohibited list. Melissa Ribley, DVM, explained that it depends on the product's intended use and clarified that FIR products are allowed outside competition, but not during events. Motion from the Vet Committee passed with 12 in favor, 6 opposed and 5 abstentions.

Motion from the Sanctioning Committee to Add New LD Pioneer Ride rule to clarify the LD pioneer Ride Award that was Passed in 2024. Connie Caudill presented the motion on behalf of the Sanctioning Committee:

Proposed rule-

L1.5 LD Pioneer rides are series of rides on consecutive days, totaling three days or more, and a minimum of 75 miles. Maximum mileage per day to be awarded is 35 miles. Sanctioning of such rides must be sent to the AERC Executive Director for distribution to the Sanctioning Committee at least 90 days before the ride date. Pioneer rides shall require approval of the Sanctioning Committee for the first two years or at any time a request to change ride dates.

A Pioneer ride hosting more than one LD ride in a day must indicate on the sanctioning form, which LD ride is to be included in the pioneer division. Equines must be a minimum of 60 months of age to be eligible for the AERC LD Pioneer award.

Background- AERC offers a pioneer division for Limited Distance (LD) rides, although our current rules do not mention this. This rule will clarify that only one LD

ride per day will be counted towards the pioneer ride award. While some events offer two LD rides within a single day, with the maximum limit of 35 miles per day, this rule ensures riders understand that they cannot accumulate additional miles towards their pioneer ride by participating in multiple rides on the same day. Will be added to the 2026 rule book.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion from the Sanctioning Committee to Revise the Wording from “special event rides” to “pioneer rides” in Rule 16.2. Connie Caudill presented the motion on behalf of the Sanctioning Committee:

For clarification, revise the wording from “special event rides” to “pioneer rides” in rule 16.2.

Current rule:

16.2 Special event rides are series of rides on consecutive days, totaling three days or more, and a minimum of 150 miles. Sanctioning of such rides must be sent to the AERC Executive Director for distribution to the Sanctioning Committee at least 90 days before the ride date. Special event rides shall require approval of the Sanctioning Committee for the first two years or at any time a request to change ride dates.

Revise to the following:

16.2 Pioneer rides are series of rides on consecutive days, totaling three days or more, and a minimum of 150 miles. Sanctioning of such rides must be sent to the AERC Executive Director for distribution to the Sanctioning Committee at least 90 days before the ride date. Pioneer rides shall require approval of the Sanctioning Committee for the first two years or at any time a request to change ride dates. Background- Rule 16.2 defines special event rides, which aligns with the Pioneer ride definition. The current rules do not mention "Pioneer rides". Revising the term "special event" to "Pioneer" is logical.

Revise rule in the 2026 rule book.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion regarding the 2026 AERC National Championship Ride Venue. Connie Caudill presented the motion on behalf of the National Championship Committee:

2026 AERC National Championship Ride venue.

The 2026 AERC National Championship Ride to be hosted at Orkney Springs, Virginia, by the Old Dominion organization with Diane Connolly managing. Ride dates June 11,12 and 13, 2026.

This ride has been hosting 100 mile rides for 50 years. \$5,000 will be reimbursed to ride management and another \$3,000 for completion belt buckles.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to adjourn at 3:29 p.m., seconded by John Parke.  
Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill, Secretary.

