

September 8, 2025, AERC Board Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m. EST.

Board members present were Bruce Burton, Connie Caudill, Marci Cunningham, Maureen Fehrs DVM, Bridget Helms, Jan Stevens, Nick Kohut DVM, Dawn Hilliard, Naomi Preston, Regina Rose, John Parke, Susan Kasemeyer, Vance Stine, Maribel Paulson, Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy, Tami Rougeau, Bob Marshall DVM, Diane Connolly, Mike Maul, Melissa Ribley DVM, Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss, Laurie Underwood and Lara Worden. Also on the call were Acting Executive Director Giulia Orth, Jay Mero, co-chair of the Veterinary Committee and Tom Rajala, chair of the International Committee.

Naomi Preston made a motion to accept the agenda, which was seconded by Tami Rougeau. Motion passed.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to approve the minutes of the Board meeting held on August 11, 2025, which was seconded by Jan Stevens. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Vance Stine and seconded by Tami Rougeau to excuse Erin McChesney (family health issue), Olin Balch DVM (possible reception issues), Mollie Krumlaw-Smith (work and RM conflicts) and Stephanie Palmer-DuRoss (work conflicts). Motion passed.

Stephanie Palmer DuRoss was able to join the meeting later.

The Statistical report was presented by Giulia Orth

Category	2024	2025	Change
Total Members through September 4	4,056	3,821	(235)
New Members through September 4	509	447	(62)
Rider Fees through September 4	\$39,529	\$36,707 (in progress)	(\$2,822)
Sanction Fees through September 4	\$15,360	\$17,600	\$2,240
Starting Riders recorded from start of the ride season through September 4	8,850	7,208 (in progress)*	(1,642)

Committee Reports

National Championship Committee Report presented by Connie Caudill: The Junior at last year's ride received the saddle award, shipping cost was paid by the family. Nothing else new to report.

Trails/Land Management Committee Report presented by Dawn Hilliard and Monica Chapman: The Trails Committee is happy to welcome Lara Worden from the SE Region. We will have our quarterly zoom meeting in October. Otherwise, nothing new to report.

Veterinary Committee Report presented by Melissa Ribley DVM: The rationale of the Veterinary Committee in the banning of treatments or substances was explained in detail. It's not black and white, but in general under Rule 13.1, horses must compete on their natural abilities. Excepting substances and treatments that are grandfathered in, everything else is considered illegal. There are commonly used substances that allow a horse to compete more safely which are allowed such as ice, electrolytes and Pergolide. The basic framework for adding substances or treatments to the Rule 13 appendices is:

- To provide clarification, if necessary, of treatments and/or substances already on the prohibited list
- A determination that a treatment or substance is unsafe if used in competition
- A determination that the treatment or substance is performance enabling
- Use of the treatment or substance is prejudicial to the sport of endurance riding (i.e., perception)
- Availability of the substance or treatment at a reasonable cost
- Is the intended use consistent with our rules which are in place to protect equines from harm

Jay Mero DVM added that preventative treatments such as Omeprazole was added as legal but not if treatment is needed for active ulcers. The Vet Committee carefully hashes out each of the substances and treatments which are added to the Rule 13 appendices.

International Committee Report presented by Tom Rajala: An update on the Championship ride in Brazil, where 3 US riders started the senior division and 2 completed, and one started the Young Rider division and completed in 3rd place. Tom Rajala also updated the Board on the 5 Young Riders who are in the process of traveling to Romania with their horses to compete in the Young Rider Championship.

AERC Office Update presented by Giulia Orth: Giulia Orth hired Tiffany Keim, who will start work in the office later this month. She presented the Board with a detailed office report. Giulia Orth's report included a proposal to offer AERC members the option to join/renew with digital membership materials (aka eco-friendly/paperless memberships) as an elective option. The members who opt for eco-friendly memberships would continue to receive the paper copy of the Endurance News.

Giulia Orth asked the Board to ratify the Executive Committee's approval to hire two office staff members before November, with staggered start dates for efficiency. She also requested ratification of a \$2,000–\$2,500 legal review fee for the Employee Handbook.

John Parke moved to have the Board ratify the actions of the Executive Committee that were presented in the Office Report. Vance Stine seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion from the Competition Committee Regarding 100-Mile Points. Naomi Preston presented the motion on behalf of the Competition Committee:

To award full points for 100 mile rides, even if there are fewer than 11 senior riders.

Members would be granted full points for any 100 they complete, making this distance more attractive when fewer than 10 riders enter. Riders otherwise may choose to enter a 50 mile two days in a row to receive more points.

Budget- No more than \$100 for programming.

The new change will be implemented at the start of the 2026 ride season.

Laurie Underwood made a motion to amend the motion to give full points if at least 5 seniors start the ride, which was seconded by John Parke. The amendment passed with 3 no votes.

Connie Caudill made a motion to amend the motion to remove “senior” from the motion. The amendment passed unanimously.

Amended motion: Full points will be awarded for 100-mile rides when at least five riders (including Juniors) start. The motion passed with three no votes.

A discussion was held concerning the banning of riders by ride managers. The Board confirmed that the ride manager has the authority to ban riders from their own rides if they have cause.

John Parke made a motion to adjourn at 9:01 p.m., which was seconded by Susan Kasemeyer. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill, Secretary