

August 22, 2026, AERC Midyear Board Meeting Minutes

President Nick Kohut DVM called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. EST.

Board members present were Chelsea Arnold, Olin Balch DVM, Bruce Burton, Connie Caudill, Diane Connolly, Marci Cunningham, Maureen Fehrs DVM, Bridget Helms, Dawn Hilliard, Susan Kasemeyer, Nick Kohut DVM, Mollie Krumlaw-Smith, Mike Maul, John Parke, Maribel Paulson, Naomi Preston, Melissa Ribley DVM, Tami Rougeau, Khristin Seymore-Norsworthy, Vance Stine, Laurie Underwood, Ashley Wingert, Lara Worden and Executive Director Giulia Orth. Stagg Newman was also present.

Connie Caudill moved to accept the agenda which was seconded by Vance Stine. The motion passed.

John Parke moved to approve the June 13, 2026, meeting minutes, which was seconded by Olin Balch DVM. The motion passed.

Vance Stine made a motion which seconded by Olin Balch DVM to excuse the following Board members from the meeting: Jan Stevens (for family commitment); Regina Rose (at a ride in Alaska); and Bob Marshall (at a ride in Alaska ride), and to excuse Susan Kasemeyer from the from the July 13, 2026, meeting due to reception issues. The motion passed.

Giulia Orth presented the statistical report.

	2025	2026	Change	% Change
Total Members through July 31	3,725	3,604	-121	-3.2%
New Members through July 31	417	443	+26	+6.2%
Rider Fees through July 31	\$30,182	\$31,014	+\$832	+2.8%
Sanction Fees through July 31	\$17,620	\$17,368	-252	-1.4%
Starting Riders through July 31*	6,487	5,963	-524	-8.1%

* Pending results from 4 rides on 7/31/26

Committee Reports that were received and reviewed were from the following committees; Education, Executive, Hall of Fame, International, Jr/Young Riders, Marketing, Membership, National Championship, Protest and Grievance, Research, Rules and Bylaws, Technical, Trails and Land Management, Veterinary, and Welfare of the Horse. The committee reports are available to be viewed and located alongside the Board meeting minutes on our website at www.aerc.org.

Motion of the Land and Trails Committee Regarding Larose Forest Three-Mile Rehabilitation Project (Larose, ON) Trail Grant request. Dawn Hilliard presented the motion.

The Trails and Land Management Committee moves that AERC, using designated Trails Grant funds, help fund the rehabilitation of a three-mile section of trail in the Larose Forest. Funds requested: \$4,000 (US).

Larose Forest is a county-owned park that has been used by equestrians for decades. AERC has sanctioned 12 events using this trail system in the past.

A critical three-mile section of trail connecting the eastern and western sections of the forest was damaged due to abnormal rainfall and is currently unsafe for use. The Three Mile Rehabilitation Project is being organized by the United Counties of Prescott-Russell with an estimated cost of \$20,000 (CAN). OATREC has already earmarked \$3,000 (CAN) towards this project and will also put all proceeds from this year's rides towards the project. Fundraising is on-going by multiple organizations that use the trail system.

Funding from dedicated Trails Grant fund. Work to begin fall of 2026.

Motion out of committee passed unanimously.

Financial report presented by Mollie Krumlaw-Smith

AERC's Net Ordinary Income is tracking very close to the prior year and is currently \$6,000 favorable to budget.

Rider fees and day-member fees have both increased, suggesting that overall riding activity may be rising despite the decline in formal membership. Membership continues to decline, resulting in an unfavorable year-over-year revenue reduction of \$11,000. The virtual convention was financially successful, generating \$12,500 in income. Production costs for *Endurance News* have dropped considerably, by nearly \$12,000. The office staff has done an exceptional job reviewing costs and making improvements across spending areas where possible.

Credit card convenience fees will go into effect shortly. These fees are expected to help offset the costs associated with 2027 renewals and year-end rider fees.

Interest income is down, primarily because funds are being held in lower-interest accounts, but as they mature changes will be considered. Mollie Krumlaw-Smith recommended authorizing two or three individuals to approve transactions and moving funds into higher-earning accounts where appropriate.

John Parke made a motion, with respect to signatory authority for authorizing our investments and bank funds, that we appoint the President and Secretary. Tami Rougeau seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Motion of the Veterinary Committee to Add Synephrine to AERC Rule 13 Appendix A Prohibited Substance. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion.

Background: Synephrine is a stimulant which can cause vasoconstriction, increased heart rate and is used as a weight loss aid in humans. Since synephrine is classified as a stimulant, it is prohibited under Appendix B, Categories of Prohibited Substances.

Benefit and/or Impact to Membership- Listing synephrine specifically in Appendix A will clarify to riders that it is a prohibited substance. Synephrine may be found as an ingredient in herbal and nutritional supplements, it may be found in Teff hay, and it may be found in the leaves of some citrus trees. Because of the possibility of unintentional administration or ingestion of synephrine by the competing horse, riders should be advised to use reputable suppliers of hay, feed and supplements, to check the horse's environment for plants containing synephrine, and ensuring that any personnel taking supplements or other products containing synephrine wash their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with the substance.

A thorough discussion was held during which concerns were expressed that there are no established thresholds for synephrine and that it occurs naturally in Teff hay. Melissa Ribley DVM stated that synephrine is a stimulant and is currently a prohibited substance, but the Vet Committee brought this motion to the board for clarification. Synephrine is already a prohibited substance, and any amount may cause a positive drug test. Nick Kohut DVM noted that all other equine sporting events that drug test list synephrine as a banned substance. Some Board members felt an educational article would be enough to clarify the matter. John Parke would like to take a month to find out what maximum levels occur in a horse being fed Teff hay to a horse and if that level is therapeutic so we can revisit the matter.

John Parke made a motion to defer the synephrine motion until the next Board meeting. Naomi Preston seconded the motion. Motion passed with one opposing.

Motion of the Veterinary Committee to Add SGLT2 inhibitors (sodium-glucose cotransporter 2 inhibitors) to Appendix B, Category of Prohibited Substances. Melissa Ribley DVM presented the motion.

Background- SGLT2 inhibitors are used to treat type 2 diabetes in humans. They are used off label in horses to treat equine metabolic syndrome, insulin dysregulation and resulting laminitis. Because of the exercise, training and feeding programs typically involved with active endurance horses, the need for the use of SGLT2 inhibitors would be unlikely. However, because analytic laboratories are detecting the substance in increasing numbers due to their increased use in the overall equine population and because their use in the competing endurance horse is contraindicated due to their diuretic and therefore dehydrating effect, the SGLT2 inhibitors should be prohibited during AERC competition.

The addition of SGLT2 inhibitors to the AERC Category of Prohibited Substances would provide clarification to riders considering competing with a horse that is currently administered an SGLT2 inhibitor.

To be implemented immediately.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion from the National Championship Committee Regarding the 2027 AERC National Championship Ride Venue. Connie Caudill presented the motion.

Approve the 2027 AERC National Championship Ride to be held at Antelope Island, managed by Jeffery Stuart. The NC ride venue will become official when the contract is agreed to and signed by both Jeff Stuart and AERC.

Location-Syracuse, Utah, approximately 50 miles from Salt Lake City.

Ride dates-October 1–3, 2027.

Motion from committee passed unanimously.

Motion from the Marketing Committee for AERC to recognize Intro Ride distances in overall mileage for AERC members. The motion was presented by Connie Caudill

Proposed Motion- Add another column to the online results for rider and horse ride results listing the Intro rides and add those miles to the overall mileage. Highlighted in yellow. In the overall miles, it will add all the miles. The horse records would be updated the same way.

Rule change: Under the Introductory Ride rules, rule 7 would be changed from: “7. No points or mileage are recorded for the equine or owner” to: “7. Lifetime completion miles will be recorded for AERC Members and AERC equines. No points will be recorded.”

Background and Benefit: AERC has been losing members at an alarming rate. Recognizing Intro ride distances in overall mileage may help retain current members, particularly longtime riders who continue to support AERC rides by participating in Intro rides when they are no longer able to ride longer distances.

This change may encourage newer Intro riders to become AERC members by making their mileage visible and allowing it to count toward overall totals.

Eligibility and Mileage Recording: Riders must be AERC members at the time of the ride for Intro mileage to be recorded. Previously completed Intro miles will not be counted retroactively.

Fees and Entry Costs: AERC will continue to charge only a minimal rider fee, currently \$1.00, and will not assess drug-testing fees for Intro Rides or Day Member fees. This approach may help keep Intro Ride entry fees lower.

This proposal supports AERC’s long-term vitality by encouraging broader member engagement and helping more riders remain connected to the organization.

Discussion was held with some positive comments and a few concerns.

Tami Rougeau made a motion to defer until an article is published in Endurance News and we receive some feedback from our members. The motion was seconded by Connie Caudill and passed unanimously.

Survey Results. Giulia Orth reviewed the preliminary results from the Membership Survey and membership data for Board discussion. A total of 684 members responded. After reviewing the results, Nick Kohut DVM, asked that each committee chair review the comments and suggestions and, where relevant to their committees, consider ideas to address them.

Website Development. John Parke moved to ratify the Executive Committee’s decision to approve an additional one-time website development expense of \$3600 to enable surcharge payments. Mike Maul seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Connie Caudill and seconded by Tami Rougeau to enter into executive session at 4:06 p.m., to discuss disciplinary topics and updates.

At 4:29 p.m. John Parke made a motion to exit executive session. Seconded by Mike Maul. Motion passed.

Susan Kasemeyer made a motion to adjourn at 4:31 p.m., which was seconded by John Parke. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Caudill, Secretary