

TTA Board of Directors Meeting
March 23, 2019 10:30a.m. Sam Houston Race Park

The meeting was called to order and board members welcomed new director Chris Hicks. The roll was called with the following directors present or participating via conference call: Adams, Adger, Asmussen, Bryant, Carson, Deal, Eoff, Hicks, Johnsen, Leckinger, Mallet, Peek, Savage, Schafer, Sheffield, Smith, Stephens, Tracy, and Witt. Directors Moulton and Vardeman were absent. TTA Executive Director Mary Ruyle, Accreditation/Racing Manager Jennifer Gibbs and Accountant Cheri Grant participated along with guests Tim Boyce, Bart Lang of Lone Star Park, Dwight Berube and Frank Hopf of Sam Houston Race Park, and James Leatherman of Retama Park.

Leatherman reported that plans for 2019 include 14 days of live racing for Thoroughbreds during the dates July 30 – September 11, with anticipated purses of \$125,000 per day, not including stakes. The El Joven and La Senorita Stakes are set for August 14, the Horse Racing Hall of Fame and Fiesta Mile Stakes are to be run September 6, with the Texas Stallion Stakes to be either September 10 or 11.

The 2018 meet had smaller fields than previous meets, with a decline in export handle.

Dwight Berube and Frank Hopf reviewed the Sam Houston Thoroughbred meet in which schedules were adjusted to promote attendance and handle. Live on-track handle was up while export was down, but ATB restricted races averaged the equivalent of 1.5 per day. With no overpayment for the current Thoroughbred meet, a purse increase is indicated for the 2020 meet. Reduction of the purse for the 2019 Houston Ladies Classic did not negatively impact the field size, and a promotion involving a \$25,000 cash giveaway was very popular.

Bart Lang stated that 2018 saw a 7% increase in per-race handle and a 17% increase in off-track handle, with fuller fields. The inaugural Lone Star Racing Club had over 100 members and was very successful, and participants for the 2019 Club are coming in now. This year's meet begins April 18 with the Bluebonnet Stakes. The \$300,000 Steve Sexton Mile will be on April 28, the Lone Star Park Turf Stakes on May 27 and the Texas Stallion Stakes for 3-year-olds is on June 1. The Lone Star Showcase on June 23rd features the Texas Stallion Stakes for 2-year-olds, the Wayne Hanks Memorial and the Lane's End Danny Shifflett Scholarship Stakes. Star of Texas weekend on July 14 includes the HTC Assault Stakes, the Valor Farm Stakes and both divisions of the Texas Thoroughbred (Sales) Futurity.

Tim Boyce provided an update on the April 10 Texas 2-Year-Olds in Training Sale, and discussed plans for a complimentary brunch on the morning of the Sale, to be hosted by Lone Star Park and TTA.

Director Witt made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 4, 2018 Board of Directors conference call meeting and the January 28, 2019 Executive Committee conference call meeting. Director Tracy seconded and the motion carried unanimously among those participating and voting.

Director Adger made a motion to ratify the actions taken by the Executive Committee during calendar year 2018 through January 2019. Director Witt seconded and the motion carried unanimously among those participating and voting.

Accountant Cheri Grant briefly reviewed the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended 8/31/18, as well as the unaudited financial report for the period ending 2/28/2019.

Following a short lunch break, the meeting resumed.

Ruyle reported that due to declines in source funding, as well as in the number of participating stallions and nominated foals, exacerbated by changes to the series format whereby an additional race will be conducted in calendar year 2019, there are imminent problems with achieving the desired \$65,000 purse for each division of the Texas Stallion Stakes beginning with the foals of 2017. After discussion, Director Johnsen volunteered to discuss the issue with Lone Star Park to determine if they are willing to increase the amount of purse money provided. The board will reconsider the issue at the June board meeting.

Leckinger and Ruyle provided an update on proposed legislation beneficial to the industry.

Ruyle reported that Highlander Training Center issued an invitation to host the next board meeting, which was approved. She will work with HTC staff to determine the date.

Director Sheffield presented a report on The Paddock Foundation and the Roses to Ribbons events.

Director Tracy gave a brief update on the Texas Thoroughbred Educational Fund.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.