



**Agriculture and New York State Horse Breeding Development Fund
DRAFT Minutes – September 6, 2024**

ITEM 1: CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Brian O’Dwyer called the meeting to order at approximately 2:09 p.m. Establishment of a quorum was noted by Chairman O’Dwyer. In attendance were Fund Board Members Richard Ball, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Steve Jones.

ITEM 2: OPENING REMARKS BY CHAIRMAN O’DWYER – Chairman O’Dwyer thanked the Museum’s President, Max Hempt, and Executive Director Janet Terhune for providing the venue for the meeting.

ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF April 25, 2024 – The Fund considered previously circulated draft minutes of the meeting conducted on April 25, 2024. The minutes were accepted as circulated.

ITEM 4: 4-H PRESENTATION – In 2023, pursuant to Section 332(1)(b) of the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, the Fund contributed to the 4-H standardbred development program. These contributions are crucial in fulfilling the Fund’s legislative mission. Representatives of the NYS 4-H Horse Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension were invited to make a presentation regarding the status of their programs. Brianna Hughes, NYS Equine Youth Specialist, spoke to the Members about the expansion of programs this past year and plans for the upcoming year.

A grant of \$200,000 to the 4-H was approved for 2024.

ON A MOTION BY: Commissioner Ball - APPROVED: 3-0

ITEM 5: 2024 GRANT REQUESTS – Pursuant to Section 332(1)(i) of the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, qualified organizations were encouraged apply for grant funding. The Fund received five proposals totaling \$255,791. Staff reviewed and determined that the five grant proposals meet the statutory requirements for funding.

Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame: The first two grant proposals were from the Harness Racing Museum and Hall of Fame, totaling \$100,000 for 2024. The Museum notes that the significant financial support of this Fund continues to be critical to the Museum’s efforts to educate the public about harness racing history and the sport. These funds provide the means for adequate personnel support and marketing as well as upgrading equipment, purchasing educational craft supplies and other department expenses. The Museum’s education exhibit, which is updated annually to educate visitors on the programs and mission of the New York Sire Stakes and shall include new and valuable tools for teaching classes on the science and physiology of the equine. Under Section 332(1)(i) of the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, the Fund is authorized to distribute monies received by it “to support and promote

research, educational programming, and the preservation of the history and traditions of harness and trotting horse racing through acquiring and maintaining collections of artifacts, memorabilia and documents related to such history.” Both grant proposals meet that standard.

Goshen Historic Track: The Historic Track requested a grant in the amount of \$39,442 for 2024. The proposed funds would be used for the installation of a 140’ concrete wall and additional material for the track surface. This project will make the track safer for the horsemen and act as a barrier to the neighbors surrounding the track. Under Section 332(1)(i) of the Racing, Pari-Mutuel Wagering and Breeding Law, the Fund is authorized to provide such funding in “maintaining a historic racetrack that is designated as a national registered historic landmark.” This grant proposal meets that standard.

Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga: Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga requested a grant in the amount of \$12,000. This proposal seeks funding to support the implementation and expansion of its “Harnessing Hope” program. The program is aimed at enriching the lives of low-income children and youth by providing them with unique opportunities to engage with horses while learning about standardbred racing aftercare and career possibilities within the harness racing industry. Under Section 332(1)(i), the Fund is authorized to distribute monies received by it to support “educational programming.” This grant proposal meets that standard.

SUNY Morrisville Therapy and Technology Equipment Project: Morrisville College Foundation at the State University of New York at Morrisville requested a grant in the amount of \$109,349. The funding requested by the Morrisville College Foundation provides for the expansion of its Standardbred breeding program. This grant is necessary to continue providing education for future equine breeding professionals and to help strengthen the industry in New York State, which fulfills the Fund’s goal of investing in equine research and education. Under Section 332(1)(i), the Fund is authorized to distribute monies received by it to support “educational programming.” This grant proposal meets that standard.

The five proposals totaled \$255,791, which is below the statutory limit for this 2024. All five grants were approved.

ON A MOTION BY: Commissioner Ball - APPROVED: 2-0 (Trustee Jones – Abstained)

ITEM 6: REVIEW OF 2025 BUDGET, PROGRAM INCREASES, AND FINANCIAL UPDATE – At the Fund’s last meeting, the Fund’s Executive Director was asked to explore some potential increases to the Fund’s programs. The following suggestions were made for 2025:

1. Raise NYSS Finals from \$225,000 to \$300,000
2. Raise Excelsior Finals from \$55,000 to \$100,000
3. Raise County Fair Finals from \$15,000 to \$25,000
4. Raise Breeders Awards from \$1.32M to \$1.75M
5. Add a Stakes Race to the Program (\$1,000,000)

The total additions to the program are ~\$2.47M.

Giuseppe Carberg, Capitol Hill Management Services, presented the proposed 2025 Budget. Mr. Carberg noted estimated revenue of \$17.7 million and expenses of \$19.1 million, and that the

Fund has enough capital reserves to absorb the proposed increases to the program. Mr. Carberg also provided an update on the Fund's YTD financials.

The 2025 Budget was approved.

ON A MOTION BY: Member Jones - APPROVED: 3-0

ITEM 7: UPDATED BY-LAWS – Chairman O'Dwyer noted the By-Laws have not been updated in some time and contain numerous outdated provisions. Chairman O'Dwyer asked Ralph Scunziano to create a new version. The proposed By-Laws were presented to the Members at the Fund's April Board Meeting.

The By-Laws were approved.

ON A MOTION BY: Commissioner Ball - APPROVED: 3-0

ITEM 8: NEW/OLD BUSINESS – Chairman O'Dwyer asked Executive Director Scunziano to provide an update of the County Fairs. Scunziano noted this was the first County Fair Racing Season since the Fund Board approved three major changes to the program:

- 1) Nomination Fees were removed for the County Fair Racing Series;
- 2) The purse structure was changed so that purse amounts were guaranteed and not split when the fields are split; and
- 3) County Fair tracks each received \$15,000 for track improvements.

Scunziano noted the Fund received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback. The horsemen were especially excited about the purse structure and racing surface conditions. The Fund's Inspectors noted significant improvements to many of the racetracks across New York State. Scunziano applauded the County Fairs and Agricultural Societies for their efforts to protect the safety of the equine and human athletes.

The Members convened into Executive Session for the express purpose of consideration of matters pursuant to New York Public Officers Law Section 105(1)(d).

ON A MOTION BY: Member Ball - APPROVED: 3-0

Return from Executive Session. Chairman O'Dwyer concluded the Executive Session and had the record reflect that the Executive Session was limited to discussion regarding current litigation, as provided under Public Officers Law Section 105(1)(d).

ITEM 9: ADJOURNMENT: Chairman O'Dwyer declared the meeting adjourned at approximately 3:31 p.m.