

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2018

On Wednesday, December 19, 2018, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Arnold “Arnie” Dansicker at 2:23 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Dansicker; Commissioner Chuck Gast; Commissioner Lenny Moore; Commissioner David Norman; Commissioner David Shull; Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; and Olga Escobar, Administrative Specialist.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commission minutes for November 28, 2018, which were previously distributed to all Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Norman, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the November 28, 2018 minutes of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL BOXING EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the boxing events currently scheduled to be held in the State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella noted that Jeter Promotions, LLC notified the Commission that it is cancelling its sanctioned professional boxing scheduled to be held at the Maryland Live! Casino and Hotel Events Center on March 9, 2019, and is rescheduling the boxing event for the preceding day at the same venue.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following boxing event being promoted by Jeter Promotions, LLC pending the securement of a contract between the promoter and the venue where the boxing event is being held:

Friday, March 8, 2019 - TBA Starting Time

Maryland Live! Casino and Hotel Events Center
7002 Arundel Mills Circle
Hanover, Maryland
Promoter: Jeter Promotions, LLC,
advertising as “Jeter Promotions”.

ELECTION OF COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

The Commission held a discussion in regard to the election of Commission Chairman. The Commission agreed to elect a Commission Chairman in January of each year.

Chairman Dansicker nominated Commissioner Norman to serve as the new Commission Chairman.

Chairman Dansicker expressed his strong desire to see the Commission “keep up its high regulatory standards and build upon its history of success”.

Chairman Dansicker opined that Commissioner Norman would be very effective in the leadership role of Commission Chairman, citing Commissioner’s Norman vast knowledge and experience in regulating combative sports over the years, which included Commissioner Norman’s distinguished tenure as Commission Chairman in the past.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the election of Commissioner Norman as Commission Chairman effective January 1, 2019.

The Commission congratulated Chairman Dansicker on his outstanding contributions as Commission Chairman.

Executive Director Pannella stated that Chairman Dansicker was always available to field telephone calls from Mr. Pannella regarding pertinent and timely Commission business during the day, in the evening and on weekends. Mr. Pannella noted that oftentimes such calls involved the discussion of critical regulatory issues about which immediate decisions had to be made. Mr. Pannella

thanked Chairman Dansicker for his considerable time and learned advice.

The Commission also congratulated Commissioner Norman on his new position.

Mr. Pannella stated that he had the great pleasure of working with Commissioner Norman when Commissioner Norman last served as Commission Chairman. Mr. Pannella noted that this was an important period in the history of the Commission as the Maryland Legislature authorized the Commission to regulate mixed martial arts contests. Mr. Pannella noted, further, that he was looking forward to working again with Commissioner Norman in Commissioner Norman's new capacity as Commission Chairman.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Dansicker noted that, at the last Commission meeting and starting with its January, 2019 meeting, the Commission elected to move the starting times of its monthly meetings from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m..

COUNSEL'S REPORT

Counsel London reported that, in the past year, all five Commission members have been in full compliance with all meeting attendance requirements stipulated by the Maryland Legislature.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Pannella reported that the grandfather of licensed promoter Dennis Wipprecht, Jr., Francis Rappold, recently passed away. The Commission extended its deepest condolences to the family of Mr. Wipprecht.

Mr. Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. The Commission sent e-mail correspondence on December 12, 2018 under Mr. Pannella's signature to Clyde Doughty, Athletic Director of Bowie State University, commending Mr. Doughty and his staff on their combined outstanding administrative support of professional boxing in the State of Maryland. Specifically, the Commission's e-mail correspondence stated that Mr. Doughty's "keen leadership and vision, in

particular, was pivotal in contributing to the success of both the September 22, 2018 and December 8, 2018 professional boxing events” held at Bowie State University’s A.C. Jordan Arena in Bowie, Maryland. Each boxing event was promoted by Shabazz Brotherz, LLC. The Commission expressed its hope that future boxing events would be held at Bowie State University in 2019. In e-mail correspondence sent to the Commission later in the day on December 12, 2018, Mr. Doughty responded that he enjoyed working with the promoter and boxers who were involved with these two referenced boxing events as well as with the Commission. Mr. Doughty noted that he was open to the idea of more boxing events being held at Bowie State University provided that it made sense for the institution from a financial standpoint.

Mr. Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. The Commission received e-mail correspondence on December 13, 2019 from Thomas Arnold, a Board Member of the Perry Hall High School Sports Boosters Association, who was a key figure in arranging for a professional wrestling event to be held at Perry Hall High School in Nottingham, Maryland on December 29, 2018. The promoter of this Commission-sanctioned wrestling event was Dennis W. Wipprecht, Jr., advertising as Maryland Championship Wrestling (“MCW”). Mr. Arnold inquired as to whether the Commission had received “any negative instances or feedback from the many shows that MCW has held for school fundraisers” and whether the Commission thought the wrestling event would be “school friendly”. The Commission sent e-mail correspondence later in the day on December 13, 2019 under Mr. Pannella’s signature to Mr. Arnold, explaining that Mr. Wipprecht is licensed in good standing and that the Commission has received no formal complaints against Mr. Wipprecht’s promoter license since Mr. Wipprecht was first licensed by the Commission in 1991. It was noted that Mr. Wipprecht has promoted several professional wrestling events over the years at schools in Maryland jurisdictions including Baltimore County and Carroll County. Mr. Pannella stated further that, in his professional experiences attending and regulating MCW events at area high schools, Mr. Wipprecht and his business partner, Dan McDevitt, have ensured that a “family friendly” product was presented and that no foul language was used by any of the participating wrestlers, referees or valets. With the expressed written support of the Commission and certain elected officials representing the Perry Hall and Nottingham communities in Baltimore County, the referenced wrestling event was allowed to be held at Perry Hall High

School and was deemed to be very successful by Mr. Arnold.

REVIEW OF DECEMBER 8, 2018
PROFESSIONAL BOXING EVENT

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report in regard to the professional boxing event promoted by Shazazz Brotherz, LLC advertising as “Shabazz Brotherz” and held on December 8, 2018 at Bowie State University’s A.C. Jordan Arena in Bowie, Maryland.

The professional boxing event included nine boxing contests and 56 scheduled rounds of boxing competition. This marked the second time a professional boxing event was held at Bowie State University.

Commissioner Norman attended the boxing event. He opined that the large and vocally supportive crowd exhibited “great enthusiasm and respect” for the high caliber of boxing contests.

Commissioner Norman opined that the Commission referees who officiated the boxing contests made correct bout stoppages.

Mr. Pannella stated that he discussed the referenced bout stoppages with Commission Chief Physician Dr. John W. Stiller, M.D., with Dr. Stiller opining that the Commission referees consistently made the correct calls in this regard from a medical standpoint.

Within the week prior to the boxing event, Mr. Pannella attended a meeting with promoter representatives and representatives of the Bowie State University Athletic Department. As a result, and having already held one boxing event at Bowie State University, the promoter’s representatives and university’s representatives were in a good position to properly plan for the various logistics relative to holding a successful boxing event.

Mr. Pannella opined that Bowie State University is an excellent location for holding professional boxing events, noting that: (1) it can be a productive learning experience for Bowie State University students, as many students were actively

involved in the production of the two boxing events held at the institution; (2) the A.C. Jordan Arena is an impressive facility which includes the necessary amount of crowd space and production rooms needed; (3) Bowie State University's Athletic Department has demonstrated its strong and ongoing support of the concept of professional boxing events being held there; (4) Bowie State is very convenient to reach as a destination point, as it is located in Prince George's County, Maryland and very close to an exit on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway; (5) the location is convenient to navigate for both boxing fans living in the Greater Washington, D.C. area and the Greater Baltimore area; and (6) there is adequate parking to accommodate a large crowd, which is within a short walking distance to the venue.

PROMOTER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE AN INTERPRETER FOR COMPETING BOXERS OR MMA CONTESTANTS WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH

The Commission held a discussion in regard to scenarios at Commission-sanctioned combative sports events wherein a competing boxer or MMA contestant does not speak English.

Executive Director Pannella stated that, during boxing events and MMA events regulated by the Commission as well as during Commission weigh-in activities related to these combative sports events, the Commission utilizes the interpreting services of Commission Administrative Specialist Olga Escobar. Mr. Pannella explained that Ms. Escobar provides such services when competing boxers and MMA contestants who are fluent in Spanish and who do not speak English are interacting with Commission representatives.

Mr. Pannella noted that, as a Commission practice conducted at both combative sports events and combative sports weigh-in activities, he identifies a licensed second or manager who is fluent in English and who is affiliated with each respective competing boxer and MMA contestant who does not speak English.

Mr. Pannella noted that, as a Commission practice conducted at both combative sports events and combative sports weigh-in activities, he: (1) informs all Commission inspectors and physicians as to which licensed second or manager will be interpreting for each competing boxer and MMA contestant who does not speak

English; or (2) identifies another individual who will be designated to interpret for each competing boxer and MMA contestant who does not speak English.

Mr. Pannella noted that, as a Commission practice and prior to a combative sports contest, he instructs the Commission referee assigned to officiate a combative sports contest when one or more of the competing boxers or MMA contestants do not speak English to: (1) identify the licensed second or manager who will be interpreting for each competing boxer and MMA contestant who does not speak English; and (2) have a conversation with the boxer or MMA contestant who does not speak English as well as with the second or manager, who will be interpreting for the referenced boxer or MMA contestant, concerning the specific commands which the referee will be vocalizing to both combatants during the contest.

Commissioner Gast noted that all promoters of combative sports events held in the State of Maryland should: (1) notify the Commission in the days prior to a boxing or MMA event as to when a competing boxer or MMA contestant cannot speak English; (2) provide the Commission with information relative to the language in which the boxer or MMA contestant is fluent when he or she does not speak English; and (3) make the necessary arrangements well in advance of a combative sports event to hire, and to provide, an interpreter relative to the respective language in which each competing boxer or MMA contestant who does not speak English is fluent.

The Commission agreed to formulate Commissioner Gast's recommendation as a Commission policy.

NEXT SIX MONTHLY COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission held a discussion regarding the next six monthly Commission meeting dates approved at the last Commission to be held on the following dates and times in the Third Floor Conference Room, 500 North Calvert Street in Baltimore, Maryland:

Wednesday, January 23, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.;

Wednesday, February 20, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.;

Wednesday, March 27, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.;

Wednesday, April 24, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.;
Wednesday, May 15, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.; and
Wednesday, June 19, 2018 at 3:00 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Moore, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 2:49 p.m..

Patrick Pannella
Executive Director