

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

On Wednesday, February 17, 2021, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman David Norman at 3:00 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Norman; Commissioner Brian Boles; Commissioner Chuck Gast; Commissioner Lenny Moore; Commissioner David Shull; Greg Morgan, Commissioner, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (“O&P Division”), Maryland Department of Labor (“Department of Labor”); Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; and Olga Escobar, Board Specialist. This was a virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic public restrictions, with all Commission members and Commission staff calling in telephonically.

LEGISLATIVE POLICY FOR THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Tiffany Robinson, Secretary of the Department of Labor, announced the 2021 Maryland Legislative Session departmental policy via written correspondence for all Department of Labor employees and board, commission and advisory council members regarding providing testimony before the Maryland General Assembly.

Chairman Norman noted that the Department of Labor policy also pertains to those instances when a board or commission member intends to testify before the Maryland General Assembly in a personal capacity, regardless of the topic of legislation.

Mr. Pannella noted that a board or commission member is required to complete a departmental form notifying the Department of Labor of his or her intention to testify before, or to submit written testimony to, a committee of the Maryland General Assembly.

MARYLAND STATE ETHICS COMMISSION YEAR 2020 FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT

Executive Director Pannella reported that the Year 2020 Annual Financial Disclosure Statement for all Maryland State employees and board, commission and advisory council members who are required to do so must be received by the Maryland State Ethics Commission no later than April 30, 2021.

Mr. Pannella noted that Commission members are required to complete the “Form 2” financial disclosure statement.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commission minutes for the Commission meeting held on November 18, 2020, which were previously distributed to Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the November 18, 2020 minutes of the Commission.

Commission minutes for the Commission meeting held on December 16, 2020, which were previously distributed to Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the December 16, 2020 minutes of the Commission.

Commission minutes for the Commission meeting held on January 20, 2021, which were previously distributed to Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the January 20, 2021 minutes of the Commission.

DONNELL DORSEY - ISSUANCE OF PROMOTER LICENSE

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report.

Donnell Dorsey recently applied to the Commission to obtain a promoter's license as a promoter of professional wrestling events in the State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella noted that Mr. Dorsey was "very enthusiastic" about securing the promoter license to hold wrestling events in Waldorf, Maryland.

Commissioner Moore and Mr. Pannella interviewed Mr. Dorsey as a condition of licensure. They reviewed the license application and corresponding documentation submitted by Mr. Dorsey, and were satisfied that the promoter's application complies with the Commission's licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the licensure of Donnell Dorsey as a promoter.

UPDATING COMMISSION MEDICAL PROTOCOLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOLS FOR COVID-19 TESTING WITH REGARD TO "DOUBLE-MASKING" AS AN OPTION

Chairman Norman provided the Commission with the following report concerning the Commission's intention to update its "COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events Without Spectators in Attendance".

The changes to the Commission document under consideration are aimed at providing wrestlers and other individuals working at Commission-sanctioned wrestling events held during the pandemic with an option relating to mask wearing which may provide more protection against the coronavirus.

Executive Director Pannella is currently researching the potential health benefits of a specific scenario where a cloth mask is worn over a surgical mask.

Commission Chief Physician Dr. John W. Stiller, M.D. has voiced his support of "double-masking" as an option in accordance with specified criteria determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Chairman Norman stated that the Commission will make a determination in the near

future concerning the language for the proposed changes to the referenced Commission protocols.

Chairman Norman stated that its protocol changes, anticipated to be completed in time, will be applicable to the Commission's regulation of the upcoming three-day series of taped wrestling matches without spectators in attendance which is being promoted by licensed promoter Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC ("ROH"), being sanctioned by the Commission, and being held on March 17 - 19, 2021 at The University of Maryland Baltimore County ("UMBC") Events Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

ISSUANCE OF COMMISSION LICENSES

Counsel London and Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report.

The O&P Division is considering collectively issuing licenses by PDF file as opposed to the current practice of the printing of licenses still being utilized by several boards and commissions.

Mr. London opined that there is no language or reference in either the Commission's statutes or regulations precluding PDF files from being sent to licensees.

Mr. Pannella stated that the majority of Commission licensees are licensed at boxing and MMA weigh-in activities or immediately prior to the start of a wrestling event. He opined that no licensees would be adversely impacted by the Commission issuing licenses to them in a PDF file via email, adding that a paper license can be printed from a PDF license file for those requesting, or requiring, the same.

COMMISSION UPDATE ON THREE-DAY SERIES OF TAPED RING OF HONOR WRESTLING MATCHES TO BE HELD WITHOUT SPECTATORS IN ATTENDANCE ON MARCH 16 -18, 2021 AT THE UMBC EVENTS CENTER

The Commission held a discussion in regard to the three-day series of taped

wrestling matches without spectators in attendance which is being promoted by licensed promoter ROH, being sanctioned by the Commission, and being held on March 16 - 18, 2021 at The UMBC Events Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

The three days of taped wrestling matches will be preceded on March 15, 2021 by ROH wrestlers and referees utilizing a designated wrestling “dojo” gym to practice in a ring and to engage in taped interviews for television purposes.

Executive Director Pannella reported that he and Commission Inspector Stan Cheung will once again be sharing duties in ensuring that all wrestling participants and others working at the wrestling event adhere to the Commission’s strict social distancing requirements by maintaining a regulatory presence at the hotel, gym and venue.

COMMISSION’S FEBRUARY, 2021 **“RING & CAGE” NEWSLETTER**

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report concerning the Commission’s February, 2021 “Ring & Cage” newsletter which was distributed via email to all Commission licensees.

All boards and commissions within the O&P Division have recently begun issuing e-newsletters on a monthly or bimonthly basis as a means of communicating directly with their respective licensees to keep them informed of various regulatory developments affecting the industry or industries which each respective unit serves.

The newsletter referenced the Commission starting the year 2021 “on an encouraging note” by sanctioning and regulating a fourth professional wrestling events without spectators in attendance.

The newsletter referenced the Commission and licensed promoter ROH “working closely together” concerning such wrestling events “to place the safety of participating wrestlers and others working at wrestling events as their highest priority”.

The newsletter quoted licensed ROH referee Todd Sinclair who, referring to his job, stated: “Thanks to the many precautions taken by the Commission and ROH

from the very moment we arrive and until we leave for home, we get to continue to do what we love to do and to do it as safely as possible”.

Chairman Norman recommended that this e-newsletter be forwarded to representatives of other athletic commissions and trade organizations familiar with the Commission to “make everyone aware” the Commission is “open for business”.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:17 p.m..

Patrick Pannella
Executive Director