**MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

**MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, December 20, 2023**

On Wednesday, December 20, 2023, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Carl Wilson at 3:02 p.m. Present were the following: Commissioner Carl Wilson (Acting Chair); Commissioner Dr. Kristi Hall, Commissioner James “Binky” Jones, Commissioner Brian Boles, John Dove, Commission for O&P, Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; Matthew McKinney, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Olga Escobar, Administrative Officer, Jason Curtis, Administrative Assistant, and Executive Director Nino Ovial. Chairman David Norman was absent. This was a hybrid meeting with Commission members, Commission staff, and the public calling into Google Meets, as well as joining in person.

**APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

Minutes from the November meeting were approved unanimously, with Commissioner Jones making a motion to approve the minutes that were seconded by Commissioner Hall

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman (Acting) Carl Wilson remarked to the Commission that the recent boxing event held on December 9, 2023th promoted by Ponytail was a success and stated that he was impressed with the efforts of Executive Director Nino Ovial, Administrative Officer Olga Escobar and Administrative Assistant Jason Curtis at the event.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Executive Director Nino Ovial shared the news of the passing of boxer Anwar Wingate. A moment of silence was held by the Commission for Mr. Wingate. Mr. Ovial also advised that referee Bill Clancey will be inducted into the National Boxing Hall of Fame next April. He further commented that referee Tameka Beverly would serve as a referee for the Commission. He also noted judge Brent Bovell received the Outstanding Judge Award at the Junior Olympic Trials in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Executive Director Nino Ovial stated that he has a meeting in the New Year with a potential new drug testing agency, ARCPoint Labs for events in 2024.

Executive Director Nino Ovial stated to the Commission that he plans to attempt to lower the combative sports sales tax for the state of Maryland in an effort to increase the number of events and the quality of events in the state of Maryland.

Executive Director Nino Ovial ended his report by stating that the Commission has been working with the Comptroller's office to create a digitalized tax system for promoters, so that promoters can now file their taxes online with the state.

**REVIEW OF COMMISSION SANCTIONED EVENTS**

Executive Director Nino Ovial advised the Commission about the wrestling and boxing events in the previous month. Those events included the following:

EWA Wrestling, November 17th, Halethorpe

MCW Wrestling, November 18th, Ridgley

ACW Wrestling, November 26th, Glen Burnie

EWA Wrestling, December 1st, Baltimore

MCW Wrestling, December 2nd, Joppa

AWA Wrestling, December 9th, Waldorf

MCW Wrestling, December 9th, Frederick

Ponytail Promotions Boxing, December 9th, Baltimore

EWA Wrestling, December 15th, Halethorpe

CZW Wrestling, December 17th, Havre de Grace

Upcoming Events

Executive Director Nino Ovial led in a discussion of upcoming events, which included the following:

WWE Wrestling, December 26th, Baltimore

MCW Wrestling, December 30th, Baltimore

Flying V Wrestling, January 27th, Silver Springs

Flying V Wrestling, January 28th, Silver Springs

ACW Wrestling, February 2nd, Hagerstown

EWA Wrestling, February 3rd, Bel-Air

MCW Wrestling, February 3rd, Hollywood

MCW Wrestling February 4th, Joppa

ACW Wrestling, February 9th, Glen Burnie

AWA Wrestling, February 10th, Waldorf

Jeter Promotions Boxing, February 24th, Maryland Live (40 rounds)

A motion to approve the upcoming WWE event on December 26th was made by Commissioner Jones and was seconded by Commissioner Boles. The event was unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the upcoming MCW events on December 30th, February 3rd, and February 4th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The events were unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the upcoming ACW events on February 2nd and February 9th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Boles. The events were unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the upcoming CZW event on January 7th, Flying V events on January 27th and January 28th, EWA event on February 3rd, and AWA event on February 10th was made by Commissioner Jones and was seconded by Commissioner Hall. The events were unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the upcoming Jeter Promotions Boxing event for 40 rounds on February 24th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The events were unanimously approved by the Commission.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Executive Director Nino Ovial explained to the Commission to consider approving the promoters license for David Markland of CZW Promotions. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The application was unanimously approved by the Commission.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

 At 3:18pm the meeting was opened to public comment to the Commission, those comments were as follows:

Matthew Van Valkenburgh opened a discussion on the sport of Muay Tai on behalf of the WBC Muay Tai with the goal of running professional Muay Tai tournaments in Maryland. Counsel to the Commission, Eric London, explained to Mr. Van Valkenburgh that due to statutory and regulatory restrictions, approving professional Muay Tai in Maryland would be a process.

Christen Jeter of Jeter Promotions discussed the Jeter Promotions business model and how it uses a fighter’s social stature to sell tickets. Ms.. Jeter also discussed a potential middle ground of increasing her show to 56 rounds for the upcoming event at Maryland Live! Casino.

Ryan Eller, the Executive Vice President of Maryland Live! Casino, discussed the competitive environment of the Jeter Promotions shows and discussed the revenue that their shows generate.

Don Majeski elaborated on the “employment” aspect of the Jeter Promotions shows with regards to the fighters, trainers, corner men, and promoters, as well as to the necessary personal needed at the casino in order for the show to run. He also stated that the promoter would front the costs needed for additional staff for the Commission, if needed, in order to for their shows to run.

Professional Boxer, Joe Veazey, spoke from the perspective of a fighter and discussed the opportunities that the Jeter Promotions events open for young and local boxers.

Professional trainer, Alan Blyweiss spoke to the character of Anthony and Christen Jeter and stated how he, as a trainer, would love to have his fighters featured on a Jeter Promotions card, but with a round restriction, he would be unable to showcase all his fighters.

Professional Trainer, Ron Pisano, discussed with the Commission that a round restriction of 40 rounds would cripple the sport of boxing. Mr. Pisano stated to the Commission that due to the current round restriction, another boxing promoter is considering no longer running shows in Maryland.

Christen Jeter spoke for a second time and stated that their track record of promotion should warrant a round restriction exemption and also explained that her business has never had a round restriction while operating in Maryland.

Matchmaker, Nick Tiberi, expressed to the Commission that 56 rounds is a fair compromise for both sides, because he believes that consistently running shows in a casino should come with the distinction of being considered a “big show.”

Lawyer, Eddie Pounds, Esq.  explained to the Commission that in a recent conversation with Secretary Portia Wu, she would like a compromise to be had between the Commission and Jeter Promotions while also stating that the regulation for round restrictions is outdated.

Finally, Jason Ferrell of Level up Boxing stated his desire for the Commission to regulate Muay Thai soon.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman (Acting) Carl Wilson calls for adjournment at roughly 4:08pm that was approved by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Hall.in which the Commission unanimously approved.

Approved by David Norman

Chairman

/s/ David Norman

January 17, 2023