

Stephanie B. Nixon, *Chair*  
John F. Tanner, Jr., *Vice Chair*  
Bette Brand  
Gillian Gordon-Moore  
Stuart C. Siegel

Waqas Ahmed  
*Executive Secretary*



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### **Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held June 4, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**

Location: State Corporation Commission, Tyler Building, Courtroom C, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia

#### In Attendance

Commission Members      Stephanie B. Nixon, Chair  
                                  John F. Tanner Jr., Vice Chair (attending remotely due to distance)  
                                  Bette Brand  
                                  Gillian Gordon-Moore  
                                  Stuart C. Siegel

Commission Staff & Presenters      Waqas Ahmed, Executive Secretary  
    Kimberly Mackey, Director of Operations  
    Israel Saavedra, Director of Licensing and Investigations  
    Frank Hopf, Colonial Downs  
    Aidan Turnage-Barney, Virginia Equine Alliance  
    Al Griffin, Virginia Gold Cup Association  
    Dulany Morison, Great Meadow (Virtual)

The regular meeting of the Virginia Racing Commission was called to order at 1:00 p.m. on June 4, 2025, by Chair Stephanie B. Nixon. A roll call was conducted, and with all commissioners present, a quorum was established. To begin, Commissioner Gillian Gordon-Moore provided a summary of her attendance at the Association of Racing Commission International Conference, highlighting key industry topics such as veterinarian shortages, track surface safety, HISA testing, and aftercare programs. She noted that other states were envious of Virginia's Historical Horse Racing (HHR) status.

The floor was opened for public comment. Mr. Berman addressed the Commission regarding the Virginia HBPA Benevolence Budget, noting a significant increase in the "Dental, Medical, and Optical" line item over the past three years and requesting clarification later in the meeting. Following the public comment period, a motion was made by Commissioner Siegel and seconded by Commissioner Brand to approve the minutes from the March 26, 2025, meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Commission then heard reports from industry partners. Mr. Berman of the VHBPA and Mr. Frank Hopf of the Colonial Downs Group provided an update on the upcoming 2025 Colonial Downs summer race meet. Mr. Berman reported that the track and new dormitories are in excellent condition. Mr. Hopf presented a comprehensive update on the expanded 44-day meet, which includes a stakes race every Saturday, the

rebranding of the Virginia Derby to the "Old Dominion Derby," and a robust promotional calendar featuring unique events like Camel, Ostrich, and Zebra racing. Next, Mr. Al Griffin of the Virginia Gold Cup Association reported that the 100th running of the event was a success, with attendance between 30,000 and 35,000 people. He acknowledged issues with the turf course's turns, after which Mr. Dulany Morison of the Great Meadow Foundation outlined a multi-year plan to renovate and re-grade the turns to improve safety. An alternate route and a "schooling day" will be used in the interim.

Under new business, a motion was made by Commissioner Gordon-Moore and seconded by Commissioner Brand to approve requests from Colonial Downs regarding the roster of racing officials, wagering takeout rates, and rules for Pick 5 and Pick 6 carryovers; the motion passed unanimously. A second motion was made by Commissioner Brand and seconded by Commissioner Siegel to approve the 2025 Virginia HBPA Benevolence Budget. Representatives from the HBPA provided a detailed breakdown of the budget and, in response to the earlier public comment, outlined new control measures to manage the dental/medical/optical fund by focusing on emergency care. The motion was approved unanimously.

A second public comment period was opened, with no members of the public coming forward. A motion was then made by Commissioner Siegel and seconded by Commissioner Brand for the Commission to convene in a closed session to discuss personnel matters and receive consultation from legal counsel, as permitted under Virginia Code § 2.2-3711.A.1 and § 2.2-3711.A.8. The motion passed, and the Commission entered the closed session. Upon returning to open session, Chair Nixon moved to certify that only lawfully exempted matters were discussed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Siegel, and the certification was approved unanimously by a roll call vote. There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Siegel, seconded by Commissioner Gordon-Moore, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

