

**Minutes of the Montana Cutting Horse Association (MCHA)
Board of Directors' Meeting**

*January 13th, 2024
Via Zoom*

President Michelle Van Dyke called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

Directors Present: President Michelle Van Dyke, Vice President Doug Pearce, Peri Suenram, Mike Hoffman, John Delmonte, Josh Keimig, and Cindy Fraser

Directors Excused: John Seymour and Clayton Miller

Others Present: Secretary/Treasurer Kelly Fraser

The minutes of the December 18th, 2023, Board of Directors' meeting had been distributed to the Board members prior to the meeting. Minutes were approved on a voice vote.

OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

President Michelle Van Dyke welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked the past Board members and past President Peri Suenram for their service, and welcomed the new Board members.

President Michelle Van Dyke proposed to the Board continuing a standing BOD meeting each month. She asked if the first Wednesday of every month would be convenient for everyone at 7:00 p.m. The Board felt that it was a good idea continue with the standing meeting as was done in 2023 and on the day and time. Michelle noted that if there was nothing pressing to discuss the meeting may be canceled and there would be flexibility for a change if need be.

NEW BUSINESS:

2024 Show Schedule

President Michelle Van Dyke asked all the Board members if they were able to review the tentative show schedule that was listed on the MCHA web site. She said there was a possible show addition in Corvallis (July 19-21). There is ongoing discussion on facility price and changing the ground to make the show feasible for MCHA. Michelle and Josh will continue pursuing a possible show.

Peri Suenram made the motion to approve all Montana in State shows and Big Piney for MCHA year end awards, seconded by Josh Keimig, passed unanimously on a voice vote. The Big Piney show will not be a qualifier show, which coincides with what was approved in 2023. Only in state shows shall be qualifier shows.

President Michelle Van Dyke opened the floor to a discussion on any out of state show approvals. Doug Pearce felt that two Wyoming CHA produces shows should be approved. Peri Suenram asked the Board to consider a Utah CHA produced show, so they may approve our Dillon show. Doug Pearce made the motion for the two Wyoming CHA produced shows and the Spring Ogden Utah CHA produced show to be MCHA approved shows (i.e. earnings will count towards year end awards). Peri Suenram seconded, passed unanimously on a voice vote.

President Michelle Van Dyke said that Andi James and Theresa Nelson had been putting some possible numbers together for a change in added money. They are suggesting for the money to go from \$1000 and \$500 to \$1500 in the Open aged event classes and \$750 in the Non-Pro aged event classes. Weekend classes would remain the same. The Aged event would be three shows over 4 days and the weekend would be 2 shows over 3 days. MCHA has not added any sand for several years and it would be time for new sand to be added/changed out for 2024. For this year the portable stalls will be moved to a dirt area instead of concrete. The Judges would change for the Aged Event and the Weekend show and Theresa Nelson would like the option to hire additional secretarial help. MCHA does not wish to increase the number of entries, just would like to see the flow of the show to be easier for everyone with nights being not as long. The Board agreed that new ground needed to be changed and more added money in the LAE would be agreeable. Michelle said that she has asked Andi and Theresa to put together some hard numbers by the next BOD meeting for further discussion.

2024 Approved Classes

President Michelle Van Dyke asked the Board if they felt there was a need to change the list of approved classes for the 2024 show year. The Board felt there was no need to change the class list for 2024. Our MCHA 2024 Approved Classes for Year End Awards will be as follows:

Open
Non-Pro
\$50,000 Amateur
Unlimited Amateur
\$25,000 Novice Horse
\$25,000 Novice Horse Non-Pro
Junior Youth
Senior Youth
\$35,000 Non-Pro
\$15,000 Amateur
\$5,000 Novice Horse
\$5,000 Novice Horse Non-Pro
\$2,000 Limit Rider
**Open Derby
**Non-Pro Derby
**Open Classic
**Non-Pro Classic

**It will be up to the show producer whether to offer these classes. All other approved classes must be offered in order for a show to receive MCHA approval.

**1,500 Novice Horse or a Rancher Class may be offered by the show producer; however, it is not an approved MCHA class and will not be eligible for year-end awards.

NCHA Show Rules Update

President Michelle Van Dyke asked the Board if they had some discussion on the rule changes that were provided. The main point that may affect MCHA members is the requirement to report all earnings regardless of the club or association the money was earned from. The Board would like to make sure the membership is aware that it is their duty to report earnings outside of NCHA and to remember that when they enter their classes. It was suggested to post it on the website, Facebook and a notice at the shows.

Never Won A Buckle Class (NWAB)

President Michelle Van Dyke asked Peri Suenram to lead the discussion on the 2024 NWAB shows. Peri said that the original goal of the Shootout was to make it a “big deal”, cross over to multiple affiliates, bring in more awards, allow people to qualify and to have the final in Big Piney since it was a central location. This year the plan is to again have the Shootout in Big Piney with the same qualifying basis. This year the Shootout will take place before the banquet at Big Piney.

Doug Pearce moved that MCHA give \$1000 to the NWAB Shootout, seconded by John Delmonte and passed on a voice vote. Peri said that in 2023 the NWAB class was offered at every show as long as the show was prior to Big Piney. She suggested to hold the NWAB Class at both Deer Lodge shows, Dillon and the May Millers show, the Board agreed. Kelly noted that she had 3 buckles left, Peri said she may have one as well.

2024 Year End Awards

Minimum Participation

President Michelle Van Dyke asked the Board if they would like to continue with the participation rule used in 2023. The Board said they felt last year worked out well for awards and competitors. Cindy Fraser made the motion to implement the three in state show participation rule for 2024, seconded by Mike Hoffman and carried on a voice vote.

Membership Deadline

Membership deadline will remain May 1st per Article II, Section 4 of the MCHA bylaws. Members must buy their membership by this date for any earnings prior to May 1st to count towards year end standings.

Special Awards

President Michelle Van Dyke asked Doug Pearce and Peri Suenram to discuss ideas for Open Horse of the Year and Non-Pro/Am Horse of the Year. Peri said with the issues over the last 4 to 5 years, she feels it would be best to no longer give Open/Non-Pro/Am horse of the year awards. The Board agreed that in order to eliminate some hard feelings and discord it is in MCHA's best interest to not give Horse of the Year awards in 2024.

The Special Awards for 2024 will be as follows:

- Adult Rookie of the Year. Eligible candidates include adult MCHA members in good standing, having \$0 NCHA lifetime earnings at the beginning of the show year and ending the show year with the most money won.
- Kim Asay/Most Inspirational (Voted on by the Board of Directors). The award goes to someone thought to be a fierce competitor, showing great sportsmanship both in and out of the arena, while continuing to place a high value on family, friends, and faith.

MCHA Approval Fees

#10 of the MCHA Rules and Regulations states that there is a \$4/run approval fee. The Board felt that at this time it is not in the best interest of MCHA or its associated show producers to ask for approval fees in 2024. Peri Suenram moved to waive the rule for the 2024 show season, John Delmonte seconded and passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2024 Operating Budget and Current Financials

Secretary/Treasurer Kelly Fraser provided the Board with the 2023 year-end P and L as well as the yearly comparison and the show finals for 2023. She stated currently there is \$30,654.85 in the checking account and \$170,000.00 in CD's. There has not been much activity to discuss since the December meeting. Peri Suenram moved to approve the 2023 financials, Doug Pearce seconded, passed on a voice vote.

Kelly Fraser said that the Budget is a guestimate on what may come in 2024, and those numbers provided are simply an average over the last few years. She said the main discussion would be on 2024 year-end awards. Josh Keimig said he felt the 2023 budget was sufficient and the awards were great. Peri said she and John Seymore along with Josh were on board to work on year end awards again for 2024. Josh said he had some ideas for some awards to give out throughout the year such as something for the Futurity in Big Piney. Peri asked the Board to allow the committee flexibility on award placings to give. Doug suggested that the committee bring to the Board ideas of places to give awards to once the show season has started. The Board agreed that a budget of \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00 would be great to work with in 2024, this will be revisited if need be later in the year.

President Michelle Van Dyke told the Board that Wyoming CHA would like to see the Big Sky Circuit Finals to be held at Miller's Horse Palace instead of holding their Gillette fall show. With the show in Billings, the finals may draw more participants. There are some options for

Miller's to hold the finals either at the September show or at a later date in October. The October date needs to be discussed further with Clayton Miller before any decisions is approved.

President Michelle Van Dyke asked the Board if they would like to continue offering free memberships to the prior year's sponsors of \$400 or higher. Doug Pearce made the motion to continue offering free memberships to the MCHA Sponsors at a level of \$400 or higher, seconded by John Delmonte and carried on a voice vote. It was decided by the Board that in 2024 it will be required that a Ranch and the Owner/Rider will both need to have a MCHA membership as consistent with NCHA rules.

Annual Review of Secretary/Treasurer Compensation

President Michelle Van Dyke said that Kelly would continue as the Sec/Tres through the end of January. Valee Miller will take over as Sec/Treas starting Feb. 1st, 2024. It was agreed the compensation for the MCHA Secretary/Treasurer position would remain at \$1000.00/Month.

2024 Committee Assignments

President Michelle Van Dyke assigned the following committees:

Show Committee: Per Constitution Vice President Doug Pearce is Chairman, Peri Suenram, and Mike Hoffman

End Awards: John Seymour, Josh Keimig and Peri Suenram

Year End Banquet: Cindy Fraser

Sponsorship: John Delmonte, Peri Suenram, and Josh Keimig **Goal of \$20,000 for 2024**

Nominating: Michelle Van Dyke, Cindy Fraser and Doug Pearce

Rules Committee: All Board Members

Issues for National Directors

Doug Pearce noted to the Board that Kristen York will be stepping down as a National Director for Wyoming and will be coming off the EC. He asked if perhaps John Seymour or Suzanne Nellen could look into who would become our Region 1 Director. President Michelle Van Dyke will also reach out and let it be known that we would like a person from our area to be appointed to the EC.

President Michelle Van Dyke said that we will again provide our National Directors \$1000 each to attend the NCHA Convention. The purpose is to reimburse them for their expenses as a thank you for their great representation.

Encouragement of New Membership

President Michelle Van Dyke asked all Board members to be thinking of ways to encourage membership throughout the year.

Signatory on MCHA Wells Fargo Checking Account

President Michelle Van Dyke, past President Peri Suenram and Secretary/Treasurer Kelly Fraser are currently on the Wells Fargo checking account. Peri Suenram will be removed, and new Vice President Doug Pearce will be added. Kelly will contact our Wells Fargo account manager and start the paperwork for Doug to be added and will get herself removed and Valee Miller added as new Secretary/Treasurer.

After Action Review of Voting Procedures

President Michelle Van Dyke said that she would like to see more confidentiality in the voting results. She said that she will reach out to Big Sky Internet Design and see if there are any changes, we may be able to make when the results are sent over to MCHA.

Affiliate of the Year Application

Peri Suenram has been working on the application to submit to NCHA. She said that the application is due in March. Peri would appreciate feedback from the Board on the Gratitude Report she has provided. President Michelle Van Dyke said she would work on getting letters of support to submit with the application. The Board told Peri the report was very well put together, explaining everything that was done in 2023.

Other New Business

None

President Michelle Van Dyke adjourned the meeting at 1:48 p.m.