

Minutes of the Montana Cutting Horse Association (MCHA)

General Membership Meeting

October 7th, 2022

Miller's Horse Palace – Billings, MT

President Doug Pearce called the meeting to order at 4:44 pm

Directors Present: President Doug Pearce, Vice President Peri Suenram, Darrell Lee, Wylie Fraser, Rob Fraser, and Roy Oliver

Directors Absent: Rick Anderson, Tanya Dvarishkis, and Kelsey Fraser

Others Present: Secretary/Treasurer Kelly Fraser
MCHA Members (Appendix A)

Report of the Officers, Directors, Committees & Other Reports

Vice President Peri Suenram read both the NCHA Mission Statement and the MCHA Mission Statement.

As proof of due notice, President Doug Pearce stated the meeting notice was made available on the MCHA website, Facebook and in an email, 30 days prior to the meeting.

President Doug Pearce noted to the members that the minutes of the September 17th, 2021 General Membership Meeting were posted on the website. The motion was made by Darrell Lee to approve the minutes, seconded by Roy Oliver, and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

Reports of Officers

National Directors Report

As one of Montana's National Directors, John Seymour updated the membership on issues brought to the Directors from NCHA. He spoke about the "Run For A Million" that Taylor Sheridan has put forth. John discussed the earnings and how NCHA will handle the amount of money that will be paid out. He said there are still several issues to work out so nothing has been set yet and votes still need to go through the EC Committee. John said NCHA is listening to the grassroots cutters with regard to the money not being allowed to count for World standings but will go to the lifetime earnings of the horse and rider. He said that the "Run For A Million" will be a good thing for the sport of cutting as it will bring additional recognition for those that may not have been involved before.

John told the membership that the \$50,000 Amateur class will be a TRUE \$50,000 class for 2023. There will be no age exceptions and no "roll-backs". The Unlimited Amateur class will

continue and those with earnings over \$50,000 and holding an Amateur card would fall into that class.

John said there is continued discussion regarding the NCHA Circuits and dividing the state of Montana mainly because of the distance across the Big Sky Circuit. He asked the membership for some feedback he could take to NCHA. The MCHA membership had a very passionate discussion on the pros and cons of dividing the state. Some felt that dividing the state would put further strain on the East/West division some members are feeling currently. Others felt that it would simply make it easier for those wanting to attend a Circuit Finals because of less travel distance. John noted that nothing is set in stone, and he would like to hear from everyone on ideas to make the Circuits better. He also noted that any member may designate their desired circuit and that would allow a cutter to attend a Circuit Finals that may be geographically closer for them, this would keep the state from getting divided. Rob Fraser said that one idea may be for each State to designate two or three shows each year that would count towards Circuit points. He said Minnesota produced a large number of shows giving their competitors a huge point advantage over those of us coming from Montana to our Big Sky Finals. Rob thought this may take the “trailer race” out of the Circuit. Shaun Musselman said he would hate to see a national organization dictate the division of the State, he would like to see everyone come together as a community to keep the state intact and if you want to designate a different Circuit to compete in, go that route. Doug Pearce noted there had been discussion regarding dual Circuit approval to shows. He said in his opinion dual approval is important for our Montana shows and if that was taken away it may have a negative affect on show attendance.

The membership discussed the importance of everyone supporting cutting in Montana and if the Circuits or the possible splitting of the State would impact those supporting the current cuttings MCHA has. It was noted that Montana is a large State, but a small population of cutters and the shows will not survive without the continued support MCHA is currently receiving. There were thoughts from both views, some feel that even if the State was split it would not affect people attending cuttings across Montana. Others feel that if it is split, we will no longer have the support at the shows. Peri Suenram said that this is a very hot topic for everyone at the moment, she said it could be debated for hours but that nothing would be solved or set at this meeting. Peri suggested to the membership that if they would like their opinion to be noted, please get with John and give him feedback to be taken to NCHA.

Financial Report

President Doug Pearce asked Secretary/Treasurer Kelly Fraser to update the membership on the current financials. Kelly Fraser presented to the membership the current MCHA profit and loss through September 30th, 2022; the 2021 corrected financials; as well as a yearly comparison of income and expenses from 2018 through September 30th, 2022. Kelly noted that there was a complete financial review and audit of the 2021 books. She said each show produced in 2021 was gone through and there were indeed some corrections. Kelly said in 2021 the financials

were not presented in a complete and accurate format at the 2021 GM meeting, so they are being re-presented to the membership for accuracy and transparancey.

The 2022 P and L was presented and noted that the Year End Show and some awards were not yet accounted for/paid for. All the shows held prior to this show had been closed and a complete P & L for each show was presented. Kelly noted to the membership that the redesign of the MCHA license plate had been a success. She said the minimum number of plates needed to continue with the program is 400 and currently MCHA is at 586. Kelly said MCHA needs to be thankful for Todd and Lee Wirthlin and their continued efforts toward the plate such as the giveaway's they have done. She said Lee is constantly keeping up with the plate numbers and staying involved.

Peri Suenram spoke about the MCHA produced shows. She said the first show in Deer Lodge was a fantastic show but did have a slight loss. There were a lot of positives out of that show and next year we hope to have a better and profitable show. Peri said the first Dillon show did have a loss but the second show in Dillon had a good profit that more than made up for the loss at Deer Lodge and Dillon #1. She said Deer Lodge 2023 will be a three day show and the community is looking forward to MCHA coming back. Peri said there will be a show in Vaughn for 2023, it may be a learning process for the first show, but the facility is working hard to be set up and is excited for us to be there. Peri said the shows in 2022 all had circuit awards which was requested and appreciated by the membership. She said the Board is always looking for input from the membership and wants to take suggestions and implement them.

Committee Reports

President Doug Pearce said for 2022 the MCHA BOD implemented a rule that in order for members to be eligible for year-end awards you must attend three IN STATE shows. Doug noted that even though Big Piney was a MCHA produced show it was not included in the "IN STATE" shows that were required for award eligibility. Peri said that Big Piney does not need any help in gathering attendance, it stands on its own. She said the focus was on the Montana shows, especially with the two new shows for 2022 and the Board wanted to encourage attendance. Rob Fraser further noted that when you attended the three venues you needed to show in the same class at all three venues in order to qualify for year-end awards.

Vice President Peri Suenram touched on sponsorships for 2022. She said that it is always hard to ask for money but sponsors are so important for MCHA. Peri asked all the members to approach vendors for sponsorship. Gayle Weber said that she feels there are a lot of people that do not get asked but would be interested in sponsoring MCHA. She said any type of support is appreciated in any amount of money. For 2022 there was just over \$12,000 in sponsorships received which was the best year we have had in over 4 years. Peri hopes that more members will be involved with generating sponsorship money in the future.

Voting Process for MCHA Elections

President Doug Pearce reminded the membership that there was a bylaw change voted on in 2021. He said that 2022 is the first year that the change will be implemented. Doug said there would be a third party responsible for the vote tally. The results will be sent to Doug and Peri and then released to the membership. He said votes will have to be done electronically and no paper ballots will be sent or accepted. Kelly Fraser said that Big Sky Internet Design will be the third party for 2022. She said it is going to be the members responsibility to check their spam or promotional email folders for the ballot, once the ballot is sent there will be no way to resend to the members. The ballot will be sent out 7 days following this GM meeting and the results will be finalized 30 days from that date.

Angela Bauer Scholarship

Jessica Lee gave an update on the Scholarship fund. She said students can qualify either by competing in a scholarship cutting or by submitting a written application. She said students must be Montana residents to qualify for the scholarship. Currently there is around \$15,000.00 in the checking account as well as funds in a savings account. She said we have not had much activity or applicants for the fund, and she would like to see that change in the coming years. Jessica said there is a lot to offer kids and it is a great opportunity for them. Clayton Miller said as a show producer he would be willing to put on a youth cutting at no cost to the youth participants. Doug Pearce said part of the problem this year for the youth class, was most of the MCHA shows were during MT High School Rodeo's, so we didn't have attendance. Clayton noted that in the past if there was a Rodeo close by and the dates coincided, he had tried to have a High School cutting at the Horse Palace in conjunction with the NCHA show.

Election

President Doug Pearce explained to the membership that he, as current President, would move into a Board position for 2023; Vice President Peri Suenram would move into the President position for 2023. Doug said the Board members coming off the Board at the end of the year are Kelsey Fraser, Wylie Fraser, Tanya Dvarishkis and Rick Anderson, there are three open Board positions and the Vice President Position for 2023. The Nomination Committee has commitments from the following individuals who are willing to run for 2023 positions:

Vice President Candidate: Michelle Van Dyke

Board Of Directors: Josh Keimig and John Seymour

One more person was needed to run for the BOD, President Doug Pearce opened the floor to nominations. Shaun Musselman nominated Clayton Miller. The membership held a discussion regarding the MCHA bylaws for a show producer to be on the BOD because of the possible

financial benefit to the producer. It was decided that Clayton would have to abstain from voting on the approval of all shows, Clayton agreed.

President Doug Pearce asked the membership if there were any other individuals who may like to add their name to the ballot or if there were any additional nominations. Kelly Fraser nominated Darrell Lee for Vice President, noting his time on the Board and his ability to work with people. While Darrell appreciated the confidence he respectfully declined. However, Darrell did assure the membership he would work closely with the incoming Vice President in helping with the shows and especially work hard on the Deer Lodge shows for the future. Dorothy Seymour made the motion for all nominations to be closed, seconded by Roy Oliver and passed on a voice vote. Doug told the membership that the ballot will allow for a write in candidate per our bylaws.

Old Business

Vice President Peri Suenram let the membership know how well received the Never Won A Buckle Shootout was in Big Piney this year. She said that Utah and Montana went in together to produce qualifying shows and to promote the Shootout. Peri said that there were sponsorships in the amount of \$3000.00, she said that there were new cutters in the associations because of the NWAB class. She said that the feedback was that the class was spectacular and fun for everyone. Peri wants to see this continue in 2023 and looks forward to the memberships support.

New Business

Michelle Van Dyke asked John Seymour how the Circuit Finals and NCHA Days location is determined. She suggested a central location may be more beneficial to the show producers and the competitors. Kelly Fraser noted that it is a show producer that puts in an application to produce those two shows and then NCHA determines the producer from the application process. Unfortunately, neither the general membership nor the affiliates have any say in the final location, it is solely in the hands of NCHA. Shaun Musselman said it is important for the membership to bend the ear of the National Directors so the shows can benefit everyone in a more central location. Shaun said there is a push to have the Circuit Finals held in Rapid City every year, he does not feel that is fair to the other producers that would like the chance to put the show on. Gillette Wyoming is in the process of building a barn that would be cutting and cow horse specific. After the High School National Finals are over for Gillette, the Cam-Plex will be available to hold those larger shows. The membership will need to be proactive to make sure NCHA Day's and the Circuit Finals are more accessible to everyone.

Vice President Peri Suenram feels strongly that it is now more important than ever for Montana to have a voice at the National Convention. With that she made the motion for MCHA to allow a stipend of \$1000.00 for each of the Montana National Directors to attend the convention. She said it is going to be important for our Directors to be there lobbying in the best interests of the membership, such as where NCHA Days are held or where the Circuit Finals are to be held. If

we do not have the Directors there, we will not have a voice in the National Association. Shaun Musselman seconded the motion, motion carried on a voice vote.

President Doug Pearce adjourned the meeting at 6:51 pm

Appendix A

Cindy Fraser
Jeanne Reyher
Joann Bimat
Sarah Bauer
John Murdock
Jessica Lee
Cody Lee
Ashley Lee
Michelle Van Dyke
Gayle Weber
Gordy Bray
Audra Crouse
Sandra Brown
Joel Peterson
Esther Peterson
Shaun Musselman
Michelle Musselman
Justin Johnson
Lynn Moore
Bruce Keller
John Seymour
Dorothy Seymour
Hoby Hogue
Joan Hogue