

# **MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2021**

On Wednesday, March 24, 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 Chuck Gast; 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. Absent: Commissioner Brian Boles and Commissioner Lenny Moore. This was a virtual meeting due to COVID-19 pandemic public restrictions, with all Commission members and Commission staff calling in telephonically.

### **APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

Commission minutes for the Commission meeting held on February 17, 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 (3-0) to approve the February 17, 2021 minutes of the Commission.

### **MICHAEL VALENTYNE - RENEWAL OF PROMOTER LICENSE**

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Michael Valentyne recently applied to the Commission to renew his promoter’s license as a promoter of professional wrestling events in the State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella noted that Mr. Valentyne has promoted several events in the Montgomery County area and has cooperated fully with Commission regulations.

Commissioner Moore and Mr. Pannella interviewed Mr. Valentyne as a condition of licensure. They reviewed the license application and corresponding

documentation submitted by Mr. Valentyne, and were satisfied that the promoter's application complies with the Commission's licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the renewal of the licensure of Michael Valentyne as a promoter.

## **PROTOCOL FOR FUTURE VIRTUAL COMMISSION MEETINGS**

Chairman Norman announced that, starting with its April 21, 2021 virtual meeting, Commission members will be requested to utilize the Google "meet" option whenever possible as opposed to calling in telephonically.

Commission Morgan noted that, for consistency purposes, all virtual meetings for boards and commissions with the O&P Division will emanate from, and be broadcast from, the O&P Division third floor conference room located at 500 North Calvert Street in Baltimore, Maryland.

## **WELCOMING DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAUSAR SYED**

The Commission welcomed Deputy Commissioner Kausar Syed, who was recently appointed as Commissioner of the O&P Division within the Department of Labor.

Executive Director Pannella noted that Deputy Commissioner Syed, who was selected by Commissioner Morgan after an extensive interview process, comes to the O&P from her previous position in the Office of Administration of the Department of Labor.

Mr. Pannella stated that he recently met with Deputy Commissioner Syed, providing her with a general overview of the Commission while explaining how the Commission's experienced staff of physicians, referees, judges and inspectors perform their various regulatory duties and functions at Commission-sanctioned events.

Mr. Pannella stated that Deputy Commissioner Syed is very interested in the workings of the Commission and expressed a desire to attend a Commission-sanctioned event to observe how the Commission regulates such events.

Chairman Norman, on behalf of the Commission, welcomed Deputy Commissioner Syed as she assumes her new position.

Chairman Norman stated that, when the pandemic ends and the Commission's regulation of boxing, MMA and wrestling events resumes at full capacity, he looks forward to inviting Deputy Commissioner Syed to attend a boxing event or MMA event and to observe the Commission's staff at work.

Mr. Pannella reported that Deputy Commissioner Syed's mother recently passed away, which was the reason why she did not attend today's Commission meeting.

The Commission expressed its deepest condolences to Deputy Commissioner Syed and her family.

The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of the mother of Deputy Commissioner Syed.

**UPDATING COMMISSION MEDICAL PROTOCOLS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROTOCOLS FOR COVID-19 TESTING – TWO TESTING OPTIONS AND CHANGES TO HOTEL “BUBBLE”**

The Commission held a discussion concerning its intention to update its “COVID-19 Medical Protocols and Administrative Protocols for Professional Wrestling Events Without Spectators in Attendance” with regard to:

- (1) creating two COVID-19 testing options for a promotor to consider; and
- (2) requiring participants to be sequestered in an isolation “bubble” at the hotel beginning upon arrival at the hotel and throughout the course of the wrestling event, but not later than immediately prior to undergoing, and successfully passing, a rapid antigen swab test.

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 which are under consideration. He noted that Executive Director Pannella will inform each Commission member individually of the

language for the proposed changes for the purpose of providing Commission members with an opportunity to review the new language and to make suggestions if desired.

Chairman Norman stated that these protocol changes, anticipated to be completed in time, will be applicable to the Commission’s regulation of the upcoming two-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 May 11 - 12, 2021 at The University of Maryland Baltimore County (“UMBC”) Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

### **MARYLAND STATE COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**

The Commission reviewed the March 12, 2021 executive order issued by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan pertaining to COVID-19 restrictions within the State of Maryland, which includes increasing capacity limits for sports events held at large indoor venues and outdoor venues to fifty percent.

Commission reaffirmed its intention to:

- (1) continue to interpret ongoing executive orders issued by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan pertaining to COVID-19 restrictions within the State of Maryland; and
- (2) monitor any additional COVID-19 restrictions which Maryland counties and Baltimore City have the authority and discretion to impose.

### **REQUEST FOR COMMISSION SANCTIONING – TWO-DAY SERIES OF TAPED ROH WRESTLING MATCHES TO BE HELD WITHOUT SPECTATORS FROM MAY 11 - 12, 2021 AT THE UMBC EVENT CENTER**

The Commission held a discussion in response to the formal request made by licensed promoter Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC (“ROH”) for Commission sanctioning of a two-day series of taped wrestling matches being held without spectators in attendance on May 11 - 12, 2021 at The UMBC Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Shull, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the request of Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC (“ROH”) to hold a two-day series of taped wrestling matches without spectators in attendance on May 11 - 12, 2021 at The UMBC Event Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:41 p.m..

**Patrick Pannella**  
**Executive Director**