



**AMERICAN SADDLEBRED HORSE AND BREEDERS ASSOCIATION, INC.  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, January 13, 2025 at 5:00 PM EST Via Zoom

**1. Call to Order – Allen Bosworth**

- a. Roll Call – Board Members Present: Kristen Bagdasarian, Julie Behrends-Jones, Allen Bosworth, Sandy Currier, Jennifer Dixon, Larry Hartsock, Diane Hauslein, Anna Marie Knipp, Smith Lilly, James Nichols, Joe O'Brien, Christy Parker, Clif Paulsen, John Scheidt, Chris Schubert, Rachel Seifert, Joan Todd, Malissa Welke. ASHBA Staff Present: Katriona Adams, Katie Porter, Samantha Robinson, Kim Skipton, Amber Moon.
- b. Adoption of Agenda – Bosworth made suggestion that we amend the agenda to include review and adoption of the November 18, 2024 Board meeting minutes as well as adding a discussion of the bylaw proposal from a member in the additional business. Motion made to adopt agenda with the proposed changes and seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.
- c. Approve November 18, 2024 Board Minutes – Motion made to approve and seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.
- d. Approve December 16, 2024 Board Minutes – Motion made to approve and seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.
- e. Declare Conflict of Interest — None declared.

**2. Reports and Updates**

- a. Transition Team Update – The team discussed the impact of the snow events on operations, including delays in prize programs submissions and the need for contingency plans to ensure continuity of services. They also considered the potential for remote work during severe conditions to maintain productivity.
- b. Prize Programs – It was discussed that there had been a discussion with World Championship Horse Show officials regarding the possibility of moving the prize programs back there. But the response is on pause as of now. Given that, it was discussed to extend the deadline for prize programs submissions from January 31, 2025 to March 31, 2025 and communicate that to membership as soon as possible. Motion was made to extend the deadline to March 31 and communicate as soon as possible. Motion was seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

c. Awards

- i. Sport Horse Awards – It was reported that the Discipline Steering Committee made three recommendations for Sport Horse awards:
  1. ASHBA Sport Horse of the Year – CH-SH Hart's Divine Memories owned by Jody Swimmer;
  2. ASHBA Sport Horse Owner/Breeder of the Year – Claire Nana
  3. ASHBA Emerging Sport Horse of the Year – Cat on Fire owned by Rebecca Stewart

Motion was made to ratify the recommendations and seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

- ii. Joyce Webster \$20,000 Instructor Grant: Received 8 applications and 7 met the requirements. Katie Porter met with Mark Webster on the committee and made the recommendation to make the award to Laney Gawarecki of Florida. Motion was made to ratify the recommendation and seconded. All in favor with one abstention. Motion carried.
  - iii. Sally Jackson Youth Ambassador Award: First year of this award. Received 6 submissions. Sam and Katie are going to work with Malissa and Sally to pick the winner based on the criteria and announce at the Youth Conference in February.
  - iv. Breed Ambassador Awards: These awards recognize and celebrate those who help promote the American Saddlebred. This awards a national title and reserve within 4 categories: the amateur individual, the horse, the Charter Club, and the barn group. We have received 34 submissions which is 12 more than in 2023. In the process of reviewing and once picked will use social media to honor the winners.
  - v. High Point Awards: Working on pulling points from this that results in about 50 national and reserve winners and about 300 regional winners. We will mail out ribbons and certificates after the Youth Conference.
- d. Committee Assignments: There was discussion that the deadline for Committee Applications is January 15, 2025 and the importance of active participation. Board members must serve on a committee and members must be active to serve on a committee. Board members discussed strategies to encourage more members to be involved and the benefits of diverse perspectives in committee decisions. The Board also discussed the need for clear communication about the roles and responsibilities of committee members. It was reported that we have only received 35

applications to date and that we'll send out another social media blast to remind people to apply.

- e. Youth Convention: The board discussed the Youth Convention scheduled for February 14 and 15 in Lexington. There are 64 registrations as of today and early bird deadline is January 15. The board discussed strategies to increase registrations and enhance the convention experience. Ideas included targeted marketing campaigns, engaging activities, and special guest speakers. The also considered feedback from previous conventions to provide event's structure and content.
- f. Executive Director Search Committee: 56 applications were received and finalists were being interviewed. The board deliberated on the qualities and experience needed for the new Executive Director to lead the organization effectively. It was emphasized the importance of finding a candidate with strong leadership skills, industry knowledge, and a vision for the future of the organization.
- g. Competitions Council: The board reviewed the forms for shows to apply for show status: either USEF/USEF Lite, Star, or non-affiliate. The new forms were shared and discussed. There was no vote necessary as the parameters were already voted on and approved in a previous meeting. There was some discussion about how to construct the Select Series classes differently but that is being referred back to Competitions Council.
- h. Development Council: Kim reported that we have 100% board participation in giving. Other checks and pledges are coming in for the end of the year. Kim reported working on the sponsorships for the Youth Conference and that we're at \$57,500 and bumped the goal to \$75,000.
- i. Marketing Council: Katie reported that the first round of Journal mailings will go out this week and are expected to reach mailboxes soon. We were able to keep expenses low this year and anticipate making a profit around \$30,000, should everyone pay for their ads. This is an improvement from the previous years under the partnership with Innovative, our profit was around \$6,500.
- j. Programs Council: Sam reported on the Judges Clinic the ASHBA arranged at the UPHA conference in New Orleans. We did printed booklets for instruction. There were about 28 attendees on Sunday with about 32 on Saturday for the equitation clinic.
- k. Registry Council: There will be a Registry Council meeting coming up and it will be discussed to have a later deadline of January 15 for registrations to be postmarked or submitted for futurity eligibility. Registrations picked up at the end of the year and ended up with 1,351 applications which is 62 fewer than the year before. Notably there were 219 applications in

December. 1,331 horses were registered in 2024 which is an increase since the previous year's horses registered. Transfers are trending downward with a decrease of 396 versus year ago to 2,480 with a significant number of 302 transfers received in December.

- I. Finance Council: Reported that working on closing the year along with the other tasks including the requests from outside of the organization. Preliminary financial reported that the Association ended the year with net ordinary income of \$26,427.10 with revenues of \$2,592,043.68 and expenses of \$2,565,616.58. This was due to a strong December including a significant uptick in registrations and transfers, strong profit on the Journal, and year end contributions and pledges coming in. On the expense side, there were some savings in some areas and some increases in others, especially legal fees. The balance sheet is holding steady. The board continued to discuss how to maintain our duty to the corporation while being as transparent as possible. There was also discussion of a letter received by the IRS that questioned employee headcount for the 1Q 2021. Association attorney submitted a response by the deadline and we asserted that their information was inaccurate. We have not heard back yet. This was regarding PPE funds received.
- m. Governance Council: There was discussion around a potential proposal that would increase member direct participation in electing members to the Board. There was discussion around whether to consider this in the context of the member proposal that was received the previous week, even though much work had already been put into this proposal. There was concern that if this were to be advanced to the membership it might confuse people. This proposal would have two slots per year to be directly elected because we want the membership to directly vote but we also want to have a diverse board. There was significant conversation around the logistics and the transition if it were to be adopted.

Two other proposals were to be considered:

--Rim Pads Proposal: This proposal as advanced by the USEF Saddlebred committee. The proposed rule change would allow ASB Country Pleasure horses to have "rim pads," as noted in the proposed language attached. Motion was made and seconded to adopt the proposal. All in favor. Motion carries.

--Experience Qualifications for Western and Hunter Pleasure Prospects: This proposal as advanced by the USEF Saddlebred

Committee. This proposal is meant to clarify the limitations of calling Hunter and Western Pleasure prospects as noted in the attached proposal. There was discussion for clarification and suggested to change the language to broaden the level types of competitions and expand it beyond just formal Hunter divisions and to include the type of tack. Motion was made with those amendments and seconded to adopt the proposal. All in favor. Motion carries. Rachel to fix language and send to representative at USEF for incorporation.

### 3. President's Report

- a. Annual Meeting Date and Time: It was reported that we had already approved the annual membership meeting for February 13, 2025 at 10 am. However, it was subsequently determined that the hotel can't accommodate the meeting until 2 pm EST. Motion made and seconded to move the time to 2 pm EST on February 13, 2025. All in favor. Motion carries.
- b. UPHA Convention Report: It was a great convention filled with great informational meetings. We also had the honor of presenting ASHBA awards to recipients, most of whom were there in person and extremely honored.
- c. Board Consulting RFP: Allen and Malissa reported that they had issued the Board consulting RFP to multiple consultants and look forward to receiving responses at the end of the month.
- d. Staff Performance Reviews: There was discussion around the process for doing performance reviews. Given the unique circumstances without an Executive Director and the fact that there is not as much familiarity of with the day-to-day performance. It was determined to send to the Finance Council where the responsibility for personnel now resides.
- e. USEF Affiliate Agreement: The ASHBA affiliate agreement with USEF was discussed. It was reported that the USEF has given us latitude to record all shows in the Registry regardless of affiliation. We are constrained in terms of those types programs that qualify for other shows and accumulate points for awards, things that ASHBA owns. The Governance Council had weighed in before the next round of discussions with USEF as requested. We the ASHBA brand is attached to something, then the USEF and Safe Sport banned and suspended list has to be honored on those grounds. There was discussion about the term and that, after discussion, it was reduced to a one year agreement. There was discussion about whether the prize programs would be allowed back at the WCHS if we sign this. The path to do so is possible if we don't have the ASHBA

brand attached to it. There was also discussion about the provision of revealing financial information to USEF. It was discussed that these are just normal public record type of information and that this provision has been in the agreement for a number of years. The motion was made and seconded to sign the USEF affiliate agreement for one year. All in favor with three abstentions. Motion carries.

- f. Dean Dorton Interim Report: The board reviewed an interim report from the accounting firm, highlighting concerns about financial oversight and internal controls. Members emphasized the need for due diligence in responding to findings while ensuring accuracy before public disclosure. Discussion included the fiduciary responsibilities of board members, potential liability issues, and the importance of transparency with stakeholders. The need for clearer financial policies and internal controls was acknowledged, along with concerns about past management practices. Members also considered hiring a crisis PR firm to improve communication. The board agreed on the necessity of thorough investigation and maintaining confidentiality until a final report is completed.
  - g. Member Proposal for Bylaw Change: The board reviewed a proposed bylaw amendment submitted by a member, which will be distributed to the membership as required. The board discussed strategies to ensure members are informed, including a potential town hall meeting for discussion and clarification. Concerns were raised about the impact of the proposed amendments, including governance structure changes and procedural implications. It was noted that the proposal must be presented as written, with no modifications. The board also discussed sending a follow-up communication with proxy materials and considered the possibility of presenting an alternative bylaw amendment for the annual meeting. A motion was made and seconded to not endorse the bylaw proposal by the member. A roll call vote was conducted. Motion carried with one abstention.
4. Adjourn
- a. Motion to adjourn and seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.
  - b. Adjourn at 9:17 pm EST

### **Governance Council Item for Board Consideration**

Proposed Rule Change to permit ASB Country Pleasure horses to have “rim pads,” as noted in the highlighted language below. This proposal comes from Sandy Currier, Melissa Moore, and Christy Parker. The concept received general approval by the

USEF Saddlebred Committee on November 25, 2024. Note: English Country Pleasure includes Country Pleasure Driving.

SB 152.2 English Country Pleasure horses must be plain shod or unshod. Permissible as plain shod shall be a shoe (inclusive of caulks), which may be thicker at the heel and may include toe clips and side clips. **One leather rim pad, no thicker than 1/4" allowed. The rim pad is not to be any wider than the shoe.** Also permissible is an eggbar shoe. Not permissible as plain shod: bands, bars, **synthetic** pads of any kind, wedges, lead, springs, any attachment that extends below the bottom of the shoe, and any foreign substance not specified as permissible. The sole and entire frog of the foot must be visible. Any animal with prohibited shoeing must be disqualified from further competition at that competition and forfeit all entry fees and winnings. Quarter boots and bell boots are permitted only in Five-Gaited classes.

SB157.2 Western Country Pleasure horses must be plain shod or unshod. Permissible as plain shod shall be a shoe (inclusive of caulks), which may be thicker at the heel and may include toe clips and side clips. **One leather rim pad, no thicker than 1/4" allowed. The rim pad is not to be any wider than the shoe.** Also permissible is an eggbar shoe. Not permissible as plain shod: bands, bars, **synthetic** pads of any kind, wedges, lead, springs, any attachment that extends below the bottom of the shoe, and any foreign substance not specified as permissible. The sole and entire frog of the foot must be visible. Any animal with prohibited shoeing must be disqualified from further competition at that competition and forfeit all entry fees and winnings. Quarter boots and bell boots are permitted only in Five-Gaited classes.

SB 162.2 Hunter Country Pleasure horses must be plain shod or unshod. Permissible as plain shod shall be a shoe (inclusive of caulks), which may be thicker at the heel and may include toe clips and side clips. **One leather rim pad, no thicker than 1/4" allowed. The rim pad is not to be any wider than the shoe.** Also permissible is an eggbar shoe. Not permissible as plain shod: bands, bars, **synthetic** pads of any kind, wedges, lead, springs, any attachment that extends below the bottom of the shoe, and any foreign substance not specified as permissible. The sole and entire frog of the foot must be visible. Any animal with prohibited shoeing must be disqualified from further competition at that competition and forfeit all entry fees and winnings. Quarter boots and bell boots are permitted only in Five-Gaited classes.

**USEF Saddlebred Rule Change Proposal**  
**Approved by the Board of Directors of ASHBA on January 13, 2025**

SB 166 2. HUNTER COUNTRY PLEASURE PROSPECT. Open only to horses competing during their first or second year **of competing in any level of competition (including without**

**limitation USEF licensed competitions, Affiliate associated shows, or open shows) as** ~~Hunter Country Pleasure horses~~ **utilizing hunt seat tack.** May be shown by a professional, amateur or junior exhibitor. To be shown at a walk, trot, extended trot, canter and extended canter both ways of the ring. For safety reasons, the judge may limit the number of horses required to extend the canter at one time. Entries must be asked both ways of the ring to halt and stand quietly on the rail. To be judged on suitability as a Hunter, manners, performance, quality and conformation. In the line, horses must stand quietly with all four legs perpendicular to the ground. Horse shall be required to back readily in the line.

SB 161 3. WESTERN COUNTRY PLEASURE PROSPECT. Open only to horses competing during their first or second year **of competing in any level of competition (including without limitation USEF licensed competitions, Affiliate associated shows, or open shows) as** ~~Western Country Pleasure horses~~ **utilizing western tack.** May be shown by a professional, amateur, or junior exhibitor. Hackamores and snaffle bits are permitted. To be shown at a flat walk, jogtrot, and lope. To stand quietly and back readily. Only one hand may be used on reins (two hands are permitted for Hackamores and snaffle bits) and hands must not be changed. The rider's hand is to be around reins. When end of split reins fall on side of reining hand, one finger between reins is permitted. When using romal or when ends of split reins are held in hand not used for reining, no finger between reins is allowed. Rider may hold romal or end of split reins to keep them from swinging and to adjust the position of the reins provided it is held with at least 16" of rein between the hands. To be judged on manners, performance, quality and conformation.