

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2016

On Wednesday, July 20, 2016, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Arnold “Arnie” Dansicker at 2:06 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Dansicker; Commissioner Ben Alperstein; Commissioner Malone; Commissioner Lenny Moore; Commissioner David Norman; Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; Eric London, Counsel; Dreama Anderson, Administrative Specialist; John Papavasiliou, Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR); and Katherine Thompson, Assistant General Counsel, Maryland State Ethics Commission.

PASSING OF JACK OBERMAYER

The Commission held a moment of silence in honor of former boxing writer Jack Obermayer of Lindenwold, New Jersey, who passed away on June 24, 2016.

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Mr. Obermayer actively covered professional boxing on the East Coast for various boxing publications over the years, holding the distinction of having attended a boxing show in every state except Alaska. The undisputed “Iron Man” of boxing journalism, Mr. Obermayer attended a record 3,514 professional boxing events in over 400 cities. He was a familiar face at ringside for many Commission-sanctioned boxing events in Maryland, making a point of trying to never miss attending a boxing event in a new town so that he could add the location to the long list of cities from which he reported. Mr. Obermayer was in attendance at the boxing event held at The Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium on May 14, 2016, the last boxing event in Maryland which he attended. Timonium was another “new town” on Mr. Obermayer’s list.

Chairman Dansicker noted that, although Mr. Obermayer was ill in recent years, he still reported on boxing events and “was doing what he wanted to do” until shortly before his passing.

The Commission extended its condolences to the Obermayer family.

“MARYLAND PUBLIC ETHICS LAW” PRESENTATION

Katherine Thompson, Assistant General Counsel of the Maryland State Ethics Commission, addressed the Commission regarding “Maryland’s Public Ethics Law” and how the law impacts Commission members.

John Papavasiliou, Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing, Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, noted that the Maryland State Ethics Commission is currently arranging for a representative to speak to every board and commission affiliated with the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing.

Ms. Thompson stressed the importance of a Commissioner exhibiting “impartiality” and “transparency” in *all* matters relating to the Commission and Commission business.

Ms. Thompson commented that she did not realize the extent to which the Commission regulated combative sports, and recognized the Commission for its long-standing record over the years of maintaining high ethical standards.

The Commission thanked Ms. Thompson for speaking to the Commission and for offering her assistance and guidance in this manner.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 27, 2016 COMMISSION MINUTES

The April 27, 2016 Minutes of the Maryland State Athletic Commission, which were previously distributed to all Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Norman, seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the April 27, 2016 Minutes of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MAY 25, 2016 COMMISSION MINUTES

The May 25, 2016 Minutes of the Maryland State Athletic Commission, which were previously distributed to all Commission members for review, were discussed.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Alperstein, seconded by Commissioner Malone, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the May 25, 2016 Minutes of the Commission.

RING OF HONOR WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT, LLC **RENEWAL OF PROMOTER'S LICENSE**

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC recently renewed its promoter's license with the Commission as a promoter of professional wrestling events in the State of Maryland. Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC advertises its wrestling events as "Ring of Honor (ROH)" shows. Chairman Dansicker and Mr. Pannella interviewed Gary Juster, the representative for Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC, as a condition of license renewal. They reviewed the license application and corresponding documentation submitted by Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC, and were satisfied that this applicant complies with the Commission's licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Chairman Dansicker, and seconded by Commissioner Norman, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the license renewal of Ring of Honor Wrestling Entertainment, LLC as a promoter.

APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING EVENTS

Executive Director Pannella led a Commission discussion in regard to the professional wrestling events currently scheduled to be held in the State of Maryland.

Mr. Pannella reported that, via a telephone polling of Commission members, the Commission approved the change of venue for the July 8, 2016 professional wrestling event promoted by licensed promoter James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III from The Elks Lodge in Hagerstown, Maryland to G Boone's Restaurant and Bar in Boonsboro, Maryland.

Mr. Pannella reported that licensed promoter James E. "Jim" Hardwick has requested Commission sanction of a wrestling event to be held outdoors in the side parking lot of the Putty Hill Shopping Center next to McAvoy's Sports Bar and Grill in Parkville, Maryland on September 2, 2016.

The Commission determined that it would not consider approving the proposed September 2, 2016 wrestling event until, and unless Mr. Hardwick provides the Commission with written documentation of: (1) a "security plan" detailing the amount of, and type of, security representatives who will be hired by the promoter to work; and (2) evidence of a policy of liability insurance for the shopping center.

Mr. Pannella informed the Commission that he will be conducting a "walk through" meeting in reference to the proposed September 2, 2016 wrestling event with both Mr. Hardwick and a representative of McAvoy's Sports Bar and Grill to discuss: (1) matters relating to the ring and the ring enclosure area; (2) event security; and (3) the location for conducting physical exams and inspector interviews of the participating wrestlers and referees.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Norman, seconded by Commissioner Malone, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events being promoted by James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III:

Professional Wrestling Event
Friday, September 30, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
The Elks Lodge
11063 Robinwood Drive - Hagerstown, Maryland
Promoter: James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III, advertising as
Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (ACW);

Professional Wrestling Event
Friday, October 7, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Crown Sports Center
28410 Crown Road - Eden, Maryland
Promoter: James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III, advertising as
Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (ACW); and

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, October 22, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 69 - "The Lodge"
2832 Frederick Road - Catonsville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III, advertising as
Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (ACW).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Malone, seconded by Commissioner Alperstein, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the following professional wrestling event being promoted by Event Services, Inc., A Wholly-Owned Subsidiary of World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.:

Professional Wrestling Event
"Monday Night Raw"
Monday, September 12, 2016 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
The Royal Farms Arena (The Baltimore Arena)
201 West Baltimore Street - Baltimore Street, Maryland
Promoter: Event Services, Inc., A Wholly-Owned Subsidiary of
World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. (WWE).

Upon a motion by Commissioner Alperstein, seconded by Commissioner Malone, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the following professional wrestling events being promoted by James E. "Jim" Hardwick:

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, January 21, 2017 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. "Jim" Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (EWA);

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, March 18, 2017 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland

Promoter: James E, “Jim” Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (EWA);

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, April 22, 2017 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. “Jim” Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (EWA);

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, May 27, 2017 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. “Jim” Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (EWA);

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, September 23, 2017 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. “Jim” Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (EWA); and

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, October 28, 2017 - 7:30 p.m. Starting Time
Tall Cedars Hall
2501 Putty Hill Avenue - Parkville, Maryland
Promoter: James E. “Jim” Hardwick,
advertising as Eastern Wrestling Alliance (EWA).

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Chairman Dansicker provided the Commission with the following report.

The Commission will have regulated one of its largest number of professional

wrestling events held in a calendar year in 2016.

The Commission continues to actively meet with current promoters and potential promoters in an effort to encourage the holding of combative sports events in the State of Maryland. Chairman Dansicker and Executive Director Pannella met recently with an individual who may be interested in promoting professional boxing events in Harford County, Maryland. Chairman Dansicker, referencing his own experiences as a former boxing promoter, provided this individual with an overview of the key steps which need to be considered in order to promote a successful boxing event.

IBHOF INDUCTION WEEKEND - MARC RATNER **- DISCUSSION WITH UFC EXECUTIVES**

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report in regard to his attending the 2016 induction ceremony of the International Boxing Hall of Fame (IBHOF) in Canastota, New York in June. Mr. Pannella has been making his “boxing pilgrimage” to attend this annual induction ceremony for over 24 years.

Marc Ratner, the former Executive Director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission and a current executive with Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), was honored as an inductee of the IBHOF Class of 2016. Mr. Ratner was a mentor to Mr. Pannella when Mr. Pannella started in his current position, kindly providing assistance regarding a number of regulatory matters whenever requested. Mr. Ratner also played an instrumental role in UFC deciding to hold “UFC 172” in Baltimore, Maryland on April 26, 2014.

The Commission commended Mr. Ratner on his induction into the IBHOF and thanked Mr. Ratner for his noteworthy support of the Commission over the years.

Mr. Pannella had a discussion concerning the possibility of UFC returning to the State of Maryland with several UFC executives who were in attendance to observe Mr. Ratner’s induction, include Lorenzo Fertitta, Dana White and Kirk Hendrick. These UFC executives all attended UFC 172, and all indicated to Mr. Pannella how pleased they were with the overwhelming success of this MMA event. Mr. White

and Mr. Pannella discussed the fact that the majority of the spectators comprising the sellout crowd were in their seats well before the preliminary MMA contests had even started. Mr. Pannella encouraged the UFC executives to considering holding another UFC event in the State of Maryland. They appeared to be receptive to the idea.

The Commission directed Mr. Pannella to prepare written correspondence addressed to UFC President Dana White, to be sent under the signature of either Chairman Dansicker or Mr. Pannella, noting Mr. Pannella's discussion with UFC executives during the IBHOF Induction weekend and encouraging UFC to hold another MMA event in Baltimore, Maryland.

JUNE 25, 2016 ACW WRESTLING EVENT - DENTON, MARYLAND

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report in regard to certain actions which occurred at the Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (ACW) wrestling event promoted by James E. "Jimmy" Morris, III and held on June 25, 2016 at the Denton Volunteer Fire Company in Denton, Maryland.

A spectator was observed carrying a sledge hammer on his person which the individual later indicated was a prop that he typically carries to events. At the end of the last match, this individual made an attempt to proceed around the barrier leading to the wrestler dressing room and to enter the dressing room. Mr. Morris, whom was also wrestling in this match, saw what was occurring and immediately, and on his own, prevented this individual from proceeding any further.

The Commission sent written correspondence to Mr. Morris directing him, as a promoter, to: (1) make arrangements to have promoter's security representatives placed in strategic positions including, but not limited to, by the barrier on at least two opposing sides of the wrestling ring, along the walkway barriers leading from the dressing room to the ring, and at both the entrance to the dressing room and at the steps proceeding into the ring; and (2) not allow any spectators to bring in any object or objects into the venue which may be used as, or construed as, a weapon; this would include, but is not limited to, a sledge hammer; and (3) provide the Commission with a written security plan via e-mail which specifically addresses these two concerns.

A promoter is required by regulation to provide the Commission with a "security plan" to ensure the safety of licensees and spectators alike. Further, Commission regulations require that the promoter is responsible for conducting a wrestling event in a safe, peaceable and orderly fashion.

On at least two occasions during this wrestling event, a participating wrestler encouraged several spectators sitting in the front row to physically hold another wrestler while the first wrestler hit, or slapped, his opponent. The Commission does not permit a wrestler to extend himself or herself over a barrier in a manner which would allow for physical interaction between a wrestler and spectators, nor does the Commission permit any physical interaction between a wrestler and spectators during the course of a wrestling match. The Commission directed Mr. Morris, as a promoter, to cease allowing any further physical interaction between a wrestler and spectators during future wrestling events being promoted by him.

The Commission advised Mr. Morris that it is not desirous of pursuing these referenced matters any further, and that it anticipates his full cooperation in complying with these expressed Commission directives. The Commission advised Mr. Morris that any future violations of this nature may result in the Commission taking disciplinary action against his promoter's license and against the licenses of any wrestlers involved in these actions.

ASSOCIATION OF COMBATIVE SPORTS COMMISSIONS (ACSC) 2016 INAUGURAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Executive Director Pannella presented the Commission with the following report in regard to the 2016 Inaugural Annual Conference of the Association of Combative Sports Commissions (ACSC) which was held from July 9 - 12, 2016 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside in New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. Pannella attended the conference, as did John W. Stiller, M.D., the Commission's Chief Physician. The ACSC is beginning with a charter membership of 10 or more state and tribal athletic commissions located in jurisdictions throughout the United States.

The ACSC vision and mission statement reads as follows: "To serve as an

organization which provides continual improvement and standardized processes in combative sports throughout the world. To promote quality health and safety standards in combative sports, while working to standardize the procedures in which combative sports commissions worldwide function through effective communication and equal representation among its membership."

Dr. Stiller made the following two medical presentations: "Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy" and "Concussions in Combative Sports".

Dr. Stiller and Dr. Thomas G. Ferguson, M.D., a member of the Louisiana State Athletic Commission, provided their medical opinions and perspectives as ringside physicians concerning a number of pertinent fighter safety issues being addressed at the conference.

There were several productive discussions pertaining to various boxing and MMA matters, including, but not limited to:

- "Weight Cutting in MMA and Boxing"
- "The Appropriate Time to Conduct a Weigh-In"
- "Navigating the Process for the Medical Testing of Combative Sports Contestants"
- "Fraud in the Submittal of Required Medical Exams and Tests"
- "The Enforcement of Bout Contracts for Boxers and MMA Contestants"
- "The Commission Process for Reviewing and Approving Boxing Bouts, and Conditions for Boxers With Diminished Skills/Poor Performances/Poor Records"
- "The Commission Process for Reviewing and Approving MMA Bouts, and Conditions for MMA Contestants With Diminished Skills/Poor Performances/Poor Records"

- “Verification/Documentation of a Debuting Amateur Boxer’s Training and Skills”
- “Verification/Documentation of a Debuting Amateur MMA Contestant’s Training and Skills”.

An informative discussion was held among representatives of commissions which regulate professional wrestling events in some capacity regarding the following topics:

- “Current Issues Involving The Regulation of Professional Wrestling”
- “Defining Professional Wrestling; Matches vs. Staged Plays, Performances, etc.; ‘Choreographed’ vs. ‘Fake’”
- “Physicians Performing Pre-Match Physical Exams vs. Physicians Attending Event”
- “Licensing Wrestlers (Requiring Physical Exams) and Promoters vs. Licensing Promoters”
- “Seconds/Valets Engaging in Physical Contact During a Match”.

The New Jersey Athletic Commission, through the noteworthy organizational efforts of Commissioner Larry Hazzard, prepared and presented insightful ACSC officials training seminars for attending referees and judges working in the sports of boxing and MMA. Mr. Pannella commended Commissioner Hazzard for the support which he has given to the ACSC.

Mr. Pannella commended Buddy Embanato, Chairman of the Louisiana State Athletic Commission, and Tim Lueckenhoff, Administrator of the Missouri Office of Athletics, for their combined efforts in organizing the logistics for the conference.

To raise funds to support costs attendant to the conference, Mr. Pannella organized the ACSC silent auction and was responsible for the creation and printing of ACSC

logo t-shirts.

SCHEDULED COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission held a discussion regarding Commission meetings scheduled to be held through Calendar Year 2016. Chairman Dansicker announced that, in regard to dates which have not been scheduled as of yet for Commission meetings for the remainder of Calendar Year 2016, the Commission will be holding meetings on the following dates and times in the Third Floor Conference Room, 500 North Calvert Street, in Baltimore:

Thursday, October 27, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.;
Wednesday, November 16, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.; and
Wednesday, December 21, 2016 at 2:00 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Chairman Dansicker, and seconded by Commissioner Norman, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 3:28 p.m..

Patrick Pannella
Executive Director