

Legislative & Gaming Committee Minutes  
April 5, 2022 – 2:30 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Raymond; Committee Members Jack Lawler, and Mo Wright; Supervisors Tom Richardson; Steve Bulger, Ridge Harris, Matt Rose, Audra Hedden, Christine Rush, Stephanie Hodgson, County Administrator; Michael Hartnett, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Craig Hayner, County Clerk; Skip Carlson, Saratoga Casino Hotel; Jeff Cannizzo, NYRA.

Chairwoman Raymond called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Wright, the minutes of the November 9, 2021 Legislative meeting were approved unanimously.**

Mr. Lawler made the motion for housekeeping purposes but said he was not at the meeting.

Mrs. Raymond announced the appointment of Mike Smith as Committee Vice Chair.

*New York Racing Association Update*

Mr. Cannizzo gave an update on what NYRA is working on, including trying to secure 30 year bonds backed by the state to utilize VLT funds to redo Belmont Park, legislation that relates to wagering as it correlates with mobile sports betting to put horse racing side by side with other sports, and actively opposing the diversion of VLT revenues from racing. Mr. Lawler asked who in the Senate is sponsoring the bill to end VLT payments and Mr. Cannizzo said it's Senator Jackson from downstate and also said there is another bill introduced by Assemblyman Rosenthal and in the Senate by Senator Salazar that would modify the tax structures by instituting a sales tax for horses sold and taxing out of state horses for racing within New York State. A discussion took place on the economic benefits of racing to the local economy.

*Saratoga Casino Hotel Update*

Mr. Carlson said the group that is trying to destroy horse racing are a formidable opponent because they are well funded, politically connected, and are going after racing financially and he thinks the human element of horse racing should be highlighted. Mr. Carlson provided an overview of what's going on at the Casino Hotel, including their best day ever which happened on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> with \$13.4 million in revenue. They are up 13% over where they were in 2019 and 23% over 2021 with labor shortages and rising costs being their biggest issues currently. Mr. Carlson said that for July and August the number of dollars they have in advance are up 300% over last year and it's going to be a great summer. Mr. Wright asked how mobile betting effected the casino, Mr. Carlson said he thinks it's helped, and discussions took place regarding how people use mobile betting. Mr. Bulger thanked Mr. Carlson and his team for partnering with the County for vaccination clinics and said they were a tremendous success.

**A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Lawler, to authorize a snowmobile registration fee increase. Unanimous.**

Mr. Kemper said that currently the county has five snowmobile clubs that manage over 180 miles of trails and when people register their snowmobiles with New York State, the money goes into a dedicated fund that is administered back to the clubs at the end of the year for the purpose of trail maintenance. The New York State Snowmobile Association and the Saratoga County Association of Snowmobile Clubs support the legislation which would raise the registration fee from \$90 to \$125 for non-club members and from \$35 to \$55 for club members, establish a vintage snowmobile registration, and improve reporting requirements for the snowmobile clubs and the County. Discussion took place regarding the amount of money going to the trail fund from the State and the positive effects snowmobilers have on local economies.

**On a motion made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Wright, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget Rider  
Deputy Clerk of the Board