

Pima County Fair Horse Racing Commission Meeting  
20March2019  
Rillito Clubhouse

<b><u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u></b>	<b><u>OTHERS PRESENT</u></b>
James Collins            District 1	Diane Frisch
Ronnie Reyna, Chair    District 2	Michelle Flanagan
Tim Kelly                District 3	Joann di Filippo
John Ochoa              District 4	Jaye Wells
Geronimo Ramirez      District 5	Frank DeFazio

**1. Welcome and Introductions – Chairman Ronnie Reyna**

Call to Order at 5:33pm. Pledge of Allegiance recited by all.

**2. Approval of 20February2019 Minutes**

Minutes review and approval. Move to approve by **Commissioner Kelly**; seconded by **Commissioner Ramirez**.

**3. Financial Report – Commissioner Tim Kelly**

\$2500 purse came in for the pony horses and \$10,000 for the El Moro; same level as prior month with \$12,500 coming in and \$12,500 going out.

**4. County Fair Legislative Update – Jaye Wells**

Bill landed in the Land and Agricultural Committee; not enough votes to come out of committee and no opportunity to bring back for this legislative year. Churchill Downs is up and offsetting the loss of Turf Paradise. Governor asked new Commissioner Coolidge to convene a meeting. First meeting held Friday. Turf Paradise wants control of OTB parlors in the state. Jerry Sims said since no investment from board that runs Rillito Racetrack, do not have the right to have parlors or could even be seen as a comparable permittee as Arizona Downs and Turf Paradise to which Jaye replied as erroneous as over a million dollars was raised. All permittees should have same rights.

**Commissioner Ramirez:** Can local government have a say in this?

**Jaye Wells:** They can say no and they have. They have and should continue to block any effort to open additional parlors. Application has been submitted by Midtown Bar & Grill to open up another OTB parlor. Even one parlor open would be a loss.

**Chairman Reyna:** Advised that Vice Mayor Fimbres reiterated he would take the same stance as the County in that if Rillito Racetrack was not included, then you're not coming in. Has meeting planned with City Manager Mike Ortega. Also, upon speaking with the Mayor's staff, it is Chairman Reyna's understanding that they would also support the County.

## 5. Review of 2019 Season if Available – Jaye Wells

Provided the Commission with Rillito Meet Comparison sheet to review. Will see bigger numbers for 2017 as there was two extra days. Total attendance for 12 days was 46524. People left early due to cold weather which was reflected in the handle. Paid attendance increased by over 2000 people due to the installation of new ipad check-in control. Live handle down from 788 to 77. Did \$91,000 on Sunday and was highest day. Off-track wagering was down at \$700,000 due to the small fields; over 28 horses were scratched as result of the Equine Wellness program. Zero race breakdown was mentioned in lead online article. Spent over \$30,000 in sand this year. Long term goal plan is to run Rillito late afternoon to early evening. Concept is to run thoroughbreds late in the afternoon with a 4 or 5pm post time and turn the lights on for the quarter horse races; during that time there would be no one else on TV due to Daylight savings time. Food service was better as reflected in the sales. Still have antiquated beer lines. Big problem was people buying a season table then not showing up. Revenue per Cap increased from 15.86 in 2016 to 22.07 in 2019.

## 6. County Fairs Update – Commissioner Jim Collins

2008-2009 left for New Mexico. A couple of years later stock was lost. Huge opportunity this year and next year with two racetracks. Spoke with Duncan and they are prepared to run. Safford is a bit undecided as money was lost. Going to run in Sonoita, Douglas and Globe. Have opportunity to run five races next year. This is great for horsemen and Rillito. Huge crowd at El Moro in Douglas and usual crowd in Sonoita. Conversation about wanting to run in Duncan as new businesses are growing in that area. If we run these four meets, maybe five next year, we need stock, we need horses ready to run. Paramount to run in Sonoita and Douglas; will help Rillito. Then circle to Globe, then to Prescott. Run a circuit and make money as you go along with your stock; run in Rillito, fairs then up to Prescott.

**Commissioner Ramirez:** Disappointed cannot handle running a large race. May not be here next year. The program listed committees in the country except Pima County Horse Racing Committee.

**Jaye Wells:** Better off in Cochise County as that is where it started.

## 7. New Business

Introduction of Michelle Flanagan, Senior Secretary for Pima County, Attractions & Tourism.

## 8. Call to Audience

**Joanne di Filippo:** Thank you to Vic, Track Manager. Sicilian Slammer brought in close to \$25,000 and the El Moro brought in close to \$28,000. Gave Rillito \$1000 and blanket for Memorial Race. Was never mentioned as memorial race. Pony Express had issues at gate. Going in second leg at Sonoita and third leg at Douglas. Had to have raced first in Rillito. Two slots left though difficult finding a pony 40' or smaller. Thank you to Rillito for helping out with pony race.

## 9. Adjournment:

Moved to adjourn by **Commissioner Ramirez**, Seconded by **Commissioner Kelly**. Meeting adjourned at 6:28pm.

**Next meeting is 17April2019 @ 530pm**