**MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

**MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, March 20, 2024**

On Wednesday, March 20, 2024, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman David Norman at 3:01 p.m. Present were the following: Chairman David Norman, Commissioner Carl Wilson, Commissioner James “Binky” Jones, Commissioner Dr. Kristi Hall, Commissioner Brian Boles, John Dove, Commission for O&P, Sarah McDermott, Assistant Commissioner for O&P, Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; Matthew McKinney, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Olga Escobar, Administrative Officer, Jason Curtis, Administrative Assistant, and Executive Director Nino Ovial. This was a hybrid meeting with Commission members, Commission staff, and the public calling into Google Meets, as well as joining in person.

**APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES**

Minutes from the February 21, 2024 meeting were discussed. Commissioner Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes that was seconded by Commissioner Jones. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman Dave Norman commended Executive Director Nino Ovial on the work he continues to do to in scheduling training for officials both locally and out of state.

 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Executive Director Nino Ovial advised the Commission that he has scheduled training with the Association of Boxing Commissions for MMA training for state officials, which is scheduled for May 11, 2024. Mr. Ovial shared with the Commission that referee and judge, Bill Clancey, will be honored with the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award in North Carolina on March 22, 2024. Mr. Ovial gave a recap of last month’s Jeter Promotion’s Boxing show to the Commission. He stated that he received positive feedback from the public regarding the success of the event. He advised the Commission in the leadup to the show that the weigh-in for the event started late due to fighters not being present at the scheduled start time. He stated to the Commission that mismatched bout proposals will not be accepted from matchmakers. Mr. Ovial advised the Commission that after the show, the Commission received 3 failed drug tests for THC. Mr. Ovial ended his recap by advising the Commission that although the promoter agreed to provide food to Commission staff, no food was provided. Further, he noted that the event ended after the agreed upon time. Mr. Ovial ended his comments by advising the Commission that it was his recommendation to implement a cutoff of 78 hours for substitute opponents (12 noon on the Wednesday prior to the event) due to blood lab and medical turnaround times.

**REVIEW OF COMMISSION SANCTIONED EVENTS**

Executive Director Nino Ovial advised the Commission about the boxing and wrestling events in the previous month. Those events included the following:

Jeter Promotions Boxing, February 24, 2024, Baltimore

F1ght Club Wrestling, February 25, 2024, Cheverly

MCW Wrestling, March 2, 2024, Galena

CZW Wrestling, March 3, 2024, Havre de Grace

CZW Wrestling, March 9, 2024, Power Plant Live!

MCW Wrestling March 9, 2024, Joppa

Pay your Dues Wrestling, March 15, 2024. Halethorpe

ACW Wrestling, March 17, 2024, Glen Burnie

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Executive Director Nino Ovial led in a discussion of upcoming events, which included the following:

Shogun Fights 27, March 30, 2024, Baltimore

AWA Wrestling, March 30, 2024, Waldorf

Micro All-Stars Wrestling, April 2, 2024, Baltimore

Micro All-Stars Wrestling, April 3, 2024, Perryville

EWA Wrestling, April 13, Bel Air

MCW Wrestling, April 13, Frederick

A motion to approve the upcoming Shogun Fights 27 event on March 30th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The event was unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the AWA Wrestling event on March 30th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The event was unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the Micro All-Stars Wrestling events on April 2nd and April 3rd was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The event was unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the EWA Wrestling event on April 13th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The event was unanimously approved by the Commission.

A motion to approve the MCW Wrestling event on April 13th was made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The event was unanimously approved by the Commission.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Executive Director Nino Ovial addressed the Commission on three promoters who are applying for their promoters’ license. John Rallo of Shogun Fights Promotions, Center Stage Entertainment of Dwarfinators, and Lamont Roach Sr. of No Xcuse Promotions. A motion to approve the license renewal of Shogun Fights Promotions was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission. A motion to approve the license application of Center Stage Entertainment of Dwarfinators was made by Commissioner Boles and seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission. A motion to approve the license renewal of Lamont Roach Sr. of No Xcuse Promotion was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Jones. The motion was unanimously approved by the Commission.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ron Pisano, a matchmaker, stated that Maryland has become difficult to get fights approved. He also spoke to how a 72-hour scratch limit for substitute fighters will negatively impact boxing in Maryland.

Christen Jeter addressed the Commission about how the state is becoming resistant to boxing promoters. She stated how current regulations will push promoters out of state. She asked the Commission to look at how other states regulate bloodwork and medicals. Ms. Jeter advised that she will be reaching out to officials for their opinions on staying late during their shows.

Alan Blyweiss, a manager, stated how having a 78-hour approval for substitute fighters is not fair for fighters. He noted that if Maryland wants to grow in the boxing community, the round restrictions must be removed. He stated that he had never seen officials in the fighter’s locker room before fights. He stated that the same inspector who told his fighter to cut off their hand wraps was also the judge in his fighter’s bout, which he had also never seen before.

Eddie Pounds, representing Jeter Promotions, apologized for the lack of food provided to the MSAC staff and for the show going over the agreed upon time. He suggested that a stakeholder group be created in the state that would greatly benefit the growth of boxing in Maryland.

Don Majeski, a promoter in New York, stated that the 78-hour scratch limit would be unwise for the Commission. He suggested that a 24-hour period from the time of the weigh-in is a more reasonable timeframe. He also stated how lowering the limit on rounds for events hurts everyone involved with the fight, from the officials to the fighters.

Brandon Chambers, a boxer, stated that not being able to fight an appropriate number of rounds locally inhibits the fighter’s ability to grow. He stated that there should be a system in place to review fights if a fighter would need to protest a result.

Don Majeski stated that if the state has the technology and ability to have instant replay during fights, then it should be used for boxing to make sure fights are scored accurately.

Emmanuel Aleem, a boxer, stated how having a world class ranking should come with 10-12 round bouts. He stated that the round limitation for promotions is hindering a boxer’s ability to advance.

Nick Tiberi, a matchmaker, stated how match making with the Commission is difficult, as the Commission takes too long to communicate whether a fight is approved. He stated that he does not believe the Commission is promoter friendly and that the state does not support him with promoting fights.

Marvin McDowell, a manager, stated how the Commission turning down fights for his fighter could financially impact not only his fighter but other fighters who depend on the money made by boxing.

Joseph Veazey, a boxer, stated that the 78-hour approval for a substitute is a bad idea, as fights usually fall out the last two days before the bout. He stated that restricting rounds does not allow for the growth of fighters. He ended by stating that some of the Commission staff may not be qualified to watch hand wraps.

Matthew Van Valkenburgh, a Muay Thai trainer, suggested that when Muay Thai regulations are drafted, “experts” should be involved in drafting the regulations. He presented a letter to the Commission from the WBC about amateur Muay Thai in Maryland.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman David Norman called for adjournment at roughly 4:24pm that was made by Commissioner Wilson and seconded by Commissioner Jones, the Commission unanimously approved the motion.

/s/James Binky Jones

 Acting Chairman

Date: April 17, 2024