

MARYLAND STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

MINUTES - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2018

On Wednesday, January 31, 2018, the Maryland State Athletic Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Arnold “Arnie” Dansicker at 2:02 p.m.. Present were the following: Chairman Dansicker; Commissioner Charles “Chuck” Gast; Commissioner Lenny Moore; Commissioner David Norman; Commissioner David Shull; Patrick Pannella, Executive Director; Eric London, Assistant Attorney General and Counsel; and Dreama Anderson, Administrative Specialist.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER CHARLES “CHUCK” GAST

Chairman Dansicker announced that Charles “Chuck” Gast was recently appointed by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan to a six-year Commission term which commenced on July 1, 2017. Commissioner Gast was officially sworn in to serve in this position on January 24, 2018.

Executive Director Pannella noted that, in addition to maintaining a longstanding record of involvement in organized athletics including lacrosse and baseball, Commissioner Gast has work experience both in investigations and security matters.

The Commission welcomed Commissioner Gast as a member of the Commission.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

The following minutes of the Maryland State Athletic Commission, which were previously distributed to all Commission members for review, were discussed: January 25, 2017; February 22, 2017; March 29, 2017; April 19, 2017; May 24, 2017; June 14, 2017; September 27, 2017; and December 20, 2017.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Norman, seconded by Commissioner Moore, the Commission voted (4-0-1, with Commissioner Gast abstaining) to approve the following minutes of the Maryland State Athletic Commission: January 25, 2017;

February 22, 2017; March 29, 2017; April 19, 2017; May 24, 2017; June 14, 2017; September 27, 2017; and December 20, 2017.

LEGISLATIVE POLICY FOR THE MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LICENSING AND REGULATION

Counsel London provided the Commission with the following report. Kelly M. Schulz, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), announced the State departmental policy via written correspondence sent on December 13, 2017 to all DLLR employees regarding testimony before the Maryland General Assembly.

JAMES ELLSWORTH “JIMMY” MORRIS RENEWAL OF PROMOTER LICENSE

Executive Director Pannella provided the Commission with the following report. James Ellsworth “Jimmy” Morris recently applied to renew his promoter license with the Commission as a promoter of professional wrestling events in the State of Maryland. Mr. Morris typically promotes his wrestling events under the advertising name of Adrenaline Championship Wrestling (ACW). Mr. Morris has held a series of ACW wrestling events in Denton, Maryland, but also holds wrestling events in both the Baltimore, Maryland area and Western Maryland. Commissioner Moore and Mr. Pannella interviewed Mr. Morris as a condition of license renewal. They reviewed the license application and corresponding documentation submitted by Mr. Morris, and were satisfied that this applicant complies with the Commission’s licensing requirements.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Moore, and seconded by Commissioner Gast, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the renewal of the license of James Ellsworth “Jimmy” Morris 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 provided the Commission with the current schedule of Commission-sanctioned wrestling events for calendar year 2018.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Norman, seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the following professional wrestling event being promoted by James “Jim” Hardwick:

Professional Wrestling Event
Saturday, April 28, 2018 - 9:00 p.m. Starting Time
The Gold Club
5801 Pulaski Highway - Baltimore, Maryland
Promoter: James “Jim” Hardwick,
advertising as Micro Wrestling Federation (MWF).

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

Chairman Dansicker provided the Commission with the following report.

In 2017, the Commission continued to strongly reflect its “open door” policy of seeking to directly address the concerns of the licensees it serves. An example of this policy was the Commission’s professional handling of the formal protest of Jose Uzcategui relating to his professional boxing contest versus Andre Dirrell on May 20, 2017.

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to seek to build upon its “business friendly” efforts in helping licensed promoters to locate venues within the State of Maryland to hold combative sports events. To this effect, the Commission will be contacting venues including Maryland Live! Casino, Ocean Downs Casino and the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Event Center to inquire about the feasibility of major boxing and MMA events to be held there.

COUNSEL’S REPORT

Counsel London welcomed Commissioner Gast, noting that Commissioner Gast is joining a group of Commission members and support staff members who work very

well together in support of fighter safety and other sound regulatory objectives.

Counsel London reported that, with the exception of Commissioner Gast who just began his term and has attended the only meeting for which he has been eligible to attend, all Commission members are making their obligation set forth by the Maryland Legislature to attend two-thirds of scheduled Commission meetings in a rolling year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Pannella noted that he echoes Chairman Dansicker's interest in the Commission specifically contacting Maryland Live! Casino, Ocean Downs Casino and the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Event Center to inquire about the feasibility of major boxing and MMA events at these venues. Mr. Pannella stated that he will be seeking to schedule a tour of each of these respective venues, and will be inviting Commission members to join him in attending.

Mr. Pannella requested that, for the benefit of Commissioner Gast, Administrative Specialist Anderson give her perception of the Commission's work and mission.

Ms. Anderson provided the Commission with an overview of her part-time duties with the Commission, opining that all aspects of the Commission's daily functions and responsibilities are "geared toward fighter safety".

SHAWSTYLE PRODUCTIONS, LLC - STATUS OF UNPAID BILLS

Chairman Dansicker inquired as to whether the Commission received documentation regarding the status of unpaid monies owed by former licensed promoter Shawstyle Productions, LLC to various parties in relation to the Commission-sanctioned pro-am boxing event promoted by Shawstyle Productions, LLC and held on November 12, 2016 at The Clarence "Du" Burns Arena in Baltimore, Maryland.

Counsel London reported that the Commission made official inquiry to The Hartford, the insurance company issuing both the promoter "expense" bond and the promoter "boxing and wrestling tax" bond to Shawstyle Productions, LLC, in order

to proceed against these two respective promoter bonds for all documented unpaid invoices relating to the November 12, 2016 boxing event.

Executive Director Pannella reported that, in reference to the Commission proceeding against the referenced promoter “expense” bond and promoter “boxing and wrestling tax” bond, he received confirmation from the various parties claiming unpaid voices that such documented invoices have been paid in full.

Chairman Dansicker inquired as to the status of unpaid monies owed by Shawstyle Productions, LLC to the Maryland State Fairgrounds in relation to the Commission-sanctioned professional boxing event promoted by Shawstyle Productions, LLC and held on May 14, 2016 at The Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium, Maryland. The Commission noted that The Maryland State Fairgrounds was given the opportunity to receive compensation for all documented unpaid invoices through the Commission proceeding against the promoter’s promoter “expense” bond, but this potential means of resolution was not pursued further by the venue.

SCHEDULED COMMISSION MEETINGS

The Commission held a discussion regarding future Commission meeting dates. The Commission agreed to hold the following two meetings on the following dates and times in the Third Floor Conference Room, 500 North Calvert Street in Baltimore, Maryland:

Wednesday, April 25, 2018 at 2:00 p.m.; and
Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at 2:00 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Commissioner Gast, and seconded by Commissioner Shull, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 2:52 p.m..

**Patrick Pannella
Executive Director**