



**Delaware Jockey's Health & Welfare Benefit Board  
Minutes of Regular Meeting Held On  
July 18, 2018**

The Delaware Jockey's Health & Welfare Benefit Board held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, July 18, 2018, at 9:30 a.m., in the Horsemen's Office, Delaware Park, 777 Delaware Park Blvd, Wilmington, DE, 19804.

**The following Board members were present:**

Edward J. Stegemeier, Chairman
W. Duncan Patterson, Jr., DTRC Chair, Ex-Officio Member
John E. Mooney, Delaware Park, Executive Director of Racing
Bessie Gruwell, DTHA Executive Director
Pedro Lizarzaburu, DJH & WBB Board Member
Mario Pino, DJH & WBB Board Member

**The following individuals also were present:**

Andrew Kerber, Deputy Attorney General
Teena Appleby, DTRC Chief Inspector
Robert E. Colton, Delaware Jockey's Association, Director, and DTRC Safety Steward
Tom Windley, CEO, Premier Physical Therapy and Sports Performance
Molly Church, DTRC (recording minutes)

**1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Stegemeier called the meeting to order at approximately 9:31 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (June 20, 2018)**

Upon a motion duly made (Mooney) and seconded (Gruwell), the minutes from the June 20, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

No Board Members had any Old Business to discuss at this time.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Athletic Trainer for Jockeys (Robert Colton)**

At this time, Mr. Robert Colton presented the Board with a proposal from Premier Physical Therapy and Sports Performance to provide athletic training services to Delaware Park. Chairman Stegemeier announced that Premier Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine is a Delaware company that has done a lot of work in providing coverage to high schools and local sports organizations since 2009.

Chairman Stegemeier expressed that Premier is interested in a 3.5 year contract, at \$65/hour for an athletic trainer, based on about 6 hours a day on race days. Mr. Colton and Chairman Stegemeier met with a Premier Representative and provided him information in regards to what the Board's budget was (around \$28-32,000/year). Premier responded with a number just a little over \$32,000 due to cost of living increases over the 3.5 years.

Chairman Stegemeier and Mr. Colton also spoke with ATI Physical Therapy about 2 months ago. ATI has not since responded and have cancelled 2 meetings with Mr. Colton.

Chairman Stegemeier expressed that he was hesitant to sign on to a company that the Board was not familiar with, and was not comfortable agreeing to the proposed raises when the Board could not guarantee the level of performance.

Chairman Stegemeier did not expect the proposal to be on the higher side of the Board's budget, because though this is a great opportunity for Delaware Park, it is also an opportunity for Premier to expand their horizons.

Mr. Andrew Kerber informed the Board that they do not have to put the contract out for bids since it is under \$50,000.

Ms. Bessie Gruwell asked what the salary was going to be for an Athletic Trainer from University of Delaware. Mr. Colton answered that they were never given a clear answer from the University, though it was around \$32,000.

At this time, Mr. Colton introduced Dr. Windley of Premier. Dr. Windley thanked the Board and said he was honored to be at the meeting. Premier was started in 2007 with another physical therapist. The company has since expanded into 6 partners. There are 6 locations throughout Delaware in Wilmington, Middletown, Smyrna, Milford, Lewes, and Dover. The Wilmington office is closest to Delaware Park. Premier provides coverage to 6 local high schools: Middletown High School, Appoquinimink High School, Caesar Rodney High School, Polytech High School, and First State Military Academy. They are now also the sole provider of Athletic Training and Rehabilitation services to the Delaware Turf complex in Frederica. Premier has one of only 40 accredited sports residency programs in the country.

Dr. Windley's biggest challenge is staffing. Premier is currently hiring an athletic trainer for Polytech and still has to hire more athletic trainers for Delaware Turf. Athletic trainers are kept busy with school sports around the pre-season. Dr. Windley said that he wanted to disclose this with the Board and keep communication as open as possible. He assured the Board that by the 2019 race meet, all the appropriate staff will be hired and available to work at Delaware Park. Mr. Colton notified the Board that he is the one who encouraged Dr. Windley to bring the athletic trainer to the racetrack 2-3 days a week in the 2018 meet, even though the proposal originally stated that the athletic trainer not come to work at Delaware Park until 2019.

Dr. Windley said that if someone is injured, they may be seen at any of the Premier facilities. They are usually able to get in within 24 hours, sometimes right away. Dr. Windley expressed that it would be difficult to start the athletic trainer at the racetrack in 2018, but Premier has other resources such as this.

Chairman Stegemeier asked Dr. Windley if Premier plans on expanding out from Delaware. Dr. Windley answered that they do. Premier has a corporate partner called US Physical Therapy that joined in 2015. They provide accounting and legal assistance that will help the business branch out. He suspects that Premier will continue to grow. A new clinic will also be built at Delaware Turf within the next 2 years.

Chairman Stegemeier noted that this is a great opportunity for both parties and explained to Dr. Windley how concussions have been an ongoing topic of concern and discussion in racing. Mr. Duncan Patterson asked Dr. Windley what Premier's capabilities were in identifying and treating concussions. Dr. Windley said that Delaware Athletic Association (DIAA) has a very well-written protocol. Dr. Sandella and Dr. Bley are very active in writing these protocols. Premier is very comfortable with these guidelines. Most of the athletic trainers also use the SCAT assessment. Dr. Windley stressed that concussions have become more prevalent and more important to accurately diagnose and treat. Fortunately, Delaware has taken a serious approach to concussions. Mr. Patterson said that concussions are one of the main concerns to the Jockeys Guild and in racing overall.

Mr. Patterson also said that many states are looking into raising weight limits for jockeys. Many jockeys purge so that they may keep their weight down. Mario Pino asked Dr. Windley how he would determine if a jockey was dehydrated or sick. Dr. Windley said that they do a specific gravity test of the urine at the beginning of the meet and also set an allowance for how much weight an individual can safely lose. Dr. Windley said though their expertise is not nutrition-based, they could identify the problem and refer individuals to resources that can help.

Mr. John Mooney asked Dr. Windley how Premier would maintain the athletic trainer in the off-season. Dr. Windley answered that it works out because most other school sports take place in the off-season for racing, with an exception to August when pre-season sports begin. Many athletic trainers could also assist physical therapists when they are not out in the field.

Chairman Stegemeier informed Dr. Windley that the Board runs on funds from the casino in order to pay for jockeys' healthcare. The funds are not very flexible and as previously discussed, the budget is at \$28-32,000. Chairman Stegemeier said he would be more comfortable starting the athletic trainer at \$60/hour rather than \$65/hour due to the fact that the program will have flaws and there is the possibility that the agreement might not work for one party or the other. Dr. Windley agreed that he thinks it would be best to see how things work out first and agreed to \$60/hour. Dr. Windley said that he will draft a final publication of the proposal and will be back in touch with Delaware Park.

Mr. Andrew Kerber said that Delaware Park, aside from this Board, will want to discuss liability and guidelines. Mr. Colton stated that he already sent Dr. Windley all the applicable paperwork.

Mr. Patterson expressed that he believes the biggest challenge will be getting the jockeys to utilize the athletic trainer. Riding is their livelihood and they may not want to miss days or miss a chance to get more mounts in the future because of an injury. If they do not ride, they do not make money. Dr. Windley understands that concern and though it will be challenging, Premier plans to work through it to ensure the jockeys that the program is for their safety and welfare.

Dr. Windley thanked the Board for their time and said he will be back in touch.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion duly made (Mooney) and seconded (Gruwell), the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:14 AM.