



**CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

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Members of the Commission

Peter R. Villegas, Chair  
Dr. Vernon Williams, Vice Chair  
Dr. AnnMaria De Mars  
Christopher Gruwell  
Michael Hardeman  
Douglas Hendrickson

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**Agenda items may be taken out of order the  
agenda except public comment.  
Action may be taken on any item listed on**  
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# MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

## MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 24, 2022  
10 A.M. - Conclusion of Business

**Location:**

*Teleconference*

**Commissioners Present**

Chair Peter Villegas  
Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams  
Commissioner Dr. AnnMaria De Mars  
Commissioner Christopher Gruwell  
Commissioner Michael Hardeman  
Commissioner Douglas Hendrickson

**Staff Present**

Andy Foster, Executive Officer  
Patrisha Blackstock, Assistant Executive  
Officer  
Mark Relyea, Chief Athletic Inspector  
Kenneth Swenson, Legal Counsel

**OPEN SESSION**

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order / Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chair Peter Villegas. Executive Officer (EO) Andy Foster called roll and a quorum was established.

**Agenda Item 2 – Welcome-Chairman’s Opening Remarks.**

Chair Villegas welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke about his trip to England as a guest of the British Boxing Board of Control (BBBofC). He added that he was grateful to be in attendance to watch an all-female fight card at the sold-out O2 Arena. Chair Villegas praised the BBBofC for their hard work on the event.

**Agenda Item 3- Approval of the June 28, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes.**

EO Foster presented the June 28, 2022 Commission meeting minutes for approval.

*Commissioner Gruwell moved to approve the minutes*

*Commissioner Dr. De Mars seconded the motion.*

**No Commission or Public Comments.**

*The motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.*

**Agenda Item 4- Review and Discussion of the Commission's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan**

EO Foster presented the Commission's Strategic Planning Goals for 2019-2023, which were included in the meeting materials. EO Foster informed the Commission that they will need to work on a new Strategic Plan early next year.

**Commission Comments**

Commissioner Dr. De Mars asked for clarification on the weight cutting example EO Foster used in Goal 1.1. EO Foster explained the weights of the two fighters of the fight that was cancelled were about 155 lbs. and 180 lbs.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams informed the Commission that the Medical Advisory Committee agreed that a 15% weight cut target is reasonable. Vice Chair Dr. Williams reiterated that the issue was not the amount of weight cut by the fighter, but the amount of weight gained back in the 24 hours after the weigh in.

Chair Villegas praised the efforts of the Commission staff to keep everyone safe within the COVID Bubble presented in Goal 1.1.

Chair Villegas asked for more information on the requirements to qualify for the Boxers Pension Plan. EO Foster explained the Boxers Pension Plan requirements and added that some Boxers who fought prior to the start of the Pension Plan in the 1990s were grandfathered in.

Commissioner Gruwell asked EO Foster if any of the goals from the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan will need be carried over to the next Strategic Plan. EO Foster stated that he believes the health and safety goal will carry over, as well as the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Pension Plan goal.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars suggested EO Foster look in to attending the Native American Economic Development Conference being held in Pechanga next year.

**No Further Commission Comments**

## **No Public Comments**

### **Agenda Item 5- Review and Possible Action regarding the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Pension Plan to include Muay Thai and Kickboxing and Specialty License Plate Selection for Funding of the Boxers Pension Plan and other Combat Sports.**

EO Foster informed the Commission that the design drafts for the specialty license plates were not able to be publicly presented due to DMV regulations. EO Foster recommended for the MMA Pension Subcommittee to discuss specific vesting requirements to add Muay Thai and Kickboxing to the possible MMA Pension Plan.

## **Commission Comments**

Commissioner Gruwell advised the Commission to keep future changes to legislation and combat sports in mind when proposing legislation.

## **No Public Comments**

## **No Further Commissions Comments**

The Agenda Item was tabled for a future Commission meeting based on the advice of Legal Counsel, Ken Swenson.

### **Agenda Item 6- Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Licensees that are in Default on Monies Owed to the Commission**

EO Foster presented a situation that occurred earlier in the year in which a promoter was short over one million dollars after their event. EO Foster explained that he suspended the promoter's license and did not allow them to run events until the Commission received full payment. EO Foster asked the Commission if putting the license "on hold" was something the Commission would allow in situations such as the one presented. Legal Counsel, Mr. Swenson, advised that this should be up to the EO on a case-by-case basis, but that it would be helpful to have some guidance from the Commission.

## **Commission Comments**

Chair Villegas supported EO Foster's recommendation.

Commissioner Dr. De Mars suggested requiring a significant amount to be owed to the Commission before action is taken upon their license.

Chair Villegas asked EO Foster to provide a range of what he considered a significant amount. EO Foster stated he believed over one thousand dollars was significant considering the Commission's budget.

*Chair Villegas moved that if the monies owed to the Commission by any licensee exceeds \$3,000, the Executive Officer can take action including suspension upon their license.*

*Commissioner Gruwell seconded the motion.*

**No Commission or Public comments**

*The motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.*

**Agenda Item 7- Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Requesting COVID Pandemic Relief Funds from the Administration or Legislature**

EO Foster moved discussion of Agenda Item 7 to Agenda Item 12a.

**Agenda Item 8- Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legislation Needed for the Commission.**

EO Foster recommended that the Commission raise the Box Office Gate cap to two million dollars. EO Foster suggested that it would raise revenue for the Commission without having to raise fees for other licensees. EO Foster explained this increase would require a legislative change.

**No Commission or Public Comments**

**Agenda Item 9- Subcommittee Update**

Commissioner Gruwell stated that some of their comments regarding the Mixed Martial Arts Pension had been covered in earlier agenda items. Commissioner Gruwell suggested that the Commission should consider adding an increase to gate caps within the pension plan legislation.

EO Foster presented the MMA Pension Plan Subcommittee's hypothetical design for the plan which was included in the meeting materials. EO Foster stated that the Subcommittee is looking for ways to enable more fighters to qualify for the proposed pension plan.

**Commission Comments**

Commissioner Dr. De Mars suggested that it would be good public relations to allow for grandfathering in of more MMA fighters to the Pension Plan.

**Agenda Item 10- Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Maximum Number of Bouts for Amateur Kickboxing Events and Headgear Requirements for Amateur Kickboxing.**

EO Foster explained to the Commission that the International Kickboxing Federation (IKF) and kickboxing stakeholders have given pushback to a previous recommendation that kickboxing events have a maximum of 14 bouts. EO Foster suggested that the Commission recommend that the maximum number of bouts for kickboxing events be 17 plus one reserve bout.

EO Foster deferred to IKF's requirement of three verified kickboxing matches before fighters can fight without headgear.

*Commissioner Hardeman moved to approve the recommendations of 17 plus one maximum bouts for kickboxing and the requiring of 3 verified kickboxing bouts before kickboxers can fight without headgear.*

*Commissioner De Mars seconded the motion.*

### **No Commission Comments**

### **Public Comments**

Promoter, Mr. Francis stated that he would like the maximum number of bouts to be 20 or above but is okay with EO Foster's recommendation of 17 plus one.

*The motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.*

### **Agenda Item 11- Discussion, Review, and Possible Action regarding the Delegation of Amateur Kickboxing to the International Kickboxing Federation (IKF).**

Agenda Item 11 was tabled.

### **Agenda Item 12 – Executive Officer's Report.**

#### **a. Budget Update for the Support Fund, Neurological Fund, and Pension Fund**

EO Foster explained that the Commission took a hit during COVID. EO Foster estimated that the Commission had incurred about a \$3.7 million revenue loss during this time and has still not recovered. EO Foster presented the number of Boxing events and title bouts held over the last year and explained that the Commission has not yet recovered to Pre-COVID levels.

DCA Budget Officer, Robert De Los Reyes, stated he had been working with the Commission to monitor the budget and expenditures. Mr. De Los Reyes stated the Commission's revenue is unique within DCA and is hard to predict.

Mr. De Los Reyes told the Commission that the Commission's Fund Balance is currently at \$465,000 and slowly building back up. Mr. De Los Reyes added that the Budget Office is monitoring the fund weekly and are closely monitoring the litigation costs the Commission has incurred.

Commissioner Gruwell asked how other departments handle the cost of litigation. Mr. De Los Reyes explained that other departments have fixed Attorney General budgets and pay based on hourly rates. Mr. De Los Reyes stated that requesting additional funds is an available option, but more challenging due to the Commission's unpredictable revenue stream.

Mr. De Los Reyes explained that the Corona Virus Relief Fund was dedicated to departments that are combatting the COVID-19 Pandemic and that the Commission would not be eligible under those requirements. Mr. De Los Reyes explained that there were other options to explore if insolvency were anticipated, but they do not anticipate the Commission will go insolvent. Mr. De Los Reyes presented three options to the Commission in the event that litigation costs exceed the Budget Office's expectations.

1. Control Section 14 Loan: Would allow DCA special funds to provide loans to other special funds to address cash flow issues. This option has a 24-month payback with interest.
2. Budget Act Loan: The Budget Office would work with the Administration to work on a loan with a more feasible payback schedule.
3. Request for General Fund Assistance: The Commission would request General Fund assistance from the Administration and the Legislature. Assistance would depend on the health of the General Fund, which is currently not performing as well as it has in the past.

Chair Villegas thanked Mr. De Los Reyes for the information he provided to the Commission and for explaining the options the Commission has.

### **No Commission of Public Comments**

EO Foster presented the Commission with the updated revenue numbers as of October 14, 2022 and added that he believes the Commission will have \$1 million deposited by the end of 2022. This fiscal year the Commission has deposited \$766,851 to the support fund, \$10,862 to the neurological fund, and \$29,039 to the Boxer Pension Fund.

EO Foster stated the Pension Investment account has approximately \$4.185 million dollars as of September 30, 2022.

### **b. Report on Pending and Proposed Regulations**

EO Foster presented the pending and proposed regulations. EO Foster explained that the initial Dehydration and Rehydration regulation documents are currently at DCA Regulations Unit awaiting review and approval. EO Foster explained that the Commission staff are working with DCA Regulations Unit and Benefit Resources to finalize the proposed language for the proposed Pension Plan regulation. EO Foster explained that the removal of the break in service requirement of the Pension Plan may allow for more female athletes to qualify.

AEO Blackstock informed the Commission that the regulations for the increase of the Ticket Assessment for the Neurological Fund and medical changes passed and took effect on July 1, 2022.

**c. Status Update of Delegated Entities**

EO Foster informed the Commission that he asked the Delegations to look into giving their Officials a pay increase.

- **California Amateur Mixed Martial Arts Organization (CAMO)**

JT Steele, President of CAMO, submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Steele informed the Commission that he feels CAMO is currently recovering from the effects of the pandemic. Mr. Steele thanked EO Foster for keeping his finger on the pulse of amateur MMA as it benefits both the fighters that move on to become professionals as well as the officials that go on to work with CSAC.

Mr. Steele agreed with EO Foster that it is now time to explore giving Officials a pay raise. Mr. Steele submitted a proposed pay scale, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Steele proposed a mileage reimbursement for officials as well as paying pro-officials a pro-rata rate for any amateur bouts they officiate on a pro-am card. Mr. Steele also proposed a discount for small events with limited capacity.

Mr. Steele informed the Commission that EO Foster has always invited amateur officials to CSAC officials trainings. Mr. Steele stated that CAMO will also be holding its own officials training in November and invited the Commission to attend. Mr. Steele submitted the upcoming CAMO events calendar, which is contained in the meeting materials.

- **USA Boxing**

Mr. Mike McAtee, Executive Director of USA Boxing, submitted his written report to the Commission which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. McAtee discussed the report USA Boxing provided to the Commission on nationwide injury data for amateur boxing and the safety of Olympic style amateur boxing compared to other sports. Mr. McAtee informed the Commission that USA Boxing will be seeking a grant to host the first USA Boxing all-female tournament where they will also be holding seminars for attendees. Mr. McAtee informed the Commission that USA Boxing just held their first regional junior camp in Chula Vista and has entered into an agreement with the City of Chula Vista to make a training center located there be the regional training center for USA Boxing.

Mr. McAtee informed the Commission that USA Boxing's enrollment numbers for 2022 will exceed the enrollment numbers from 2019. Mr. McAtee added that USA Boxing has 2,400 registered gyms which surpassed 2019 numbers.

- **United States Fight League (USFL)**

Jon Frank of USFL submitted his written report to the Commission, which is contained in the meeting materials. Mr. Frank informed the Commission that USFL held 2 more events in California since the report was submitted. Mr. Frank informed the Commission that since the USFL's delegation in 2014 they have held 1,610 bouts with only 40 injuries. Mr. Frank informed the Commission that USFL was able to take a team of 39 children to the 2022 IMMAF World Youth MMA Championships in Abu Dhabi where the USA team finished 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 42 nations.

Mr. Frank informed the Commission that the USFL has been speaking with Cedars-Sinai Kerlan-Jobe Institute about creating a study on the benefits and risks of competing for USFL athletes.

- **International Kickboxing Federation (IKF)**

Toni Fossum of IKF did not submit a written report to the Commission. Mrs. Fossum thanked the Commission for their condolences on the passing of her husband, Steve Fossum. Mrs. Fossum informed the Commission that in 2019 IKF sanctioned 52 events, with 10 being Pro-Am events. Mrs. Fossum stated that by the end of 2022, IKF will have sanctioned 46 events. Mrs. Fossum stated that they have been making a steady comeback from COVID and are nearly at pre-pandemic numbers. Mrs. Fossum informed the Commission that IKF is planning a 20-25% increase to officials pay starting in 2023. Mrs. Fossum added she will include more information on the exact amount of the increase in her report that she will submit to the Commission at a later date.

Mrs. Fossum informed the Commission that IKF sanctioned 70 bouts for female fighters in 2022, 9 being title fights, and found that there were no female fights in the pro bouts.

Mrs. Fossum thanked the Commission for their vote regarding the bout limit and headgear rule.

Mrs. Fossum informed the Commission that to date, IKF has sanctioned 569 bouts with only had 4 ambulance transports. Mrs. Fossum informed the commission that IKF has brought on four new full-contact amateur Muay Thai promoters this year and will be adding 2 more in 2023. She added that 8 individuals have contacted IKF wanting to become officials, the majority of which have experience in other combat sports or are already shadowing other officials. Mrs. Fossum informed the Commission that IKF will be bringing back the IKF West Coast Classic Tournament at the end of February.



**d. Staffing Update**

EO Foster informed the Commission that the Commission was currently in operation with 4 office staff and that a tentative offer of employment for the Assistant Chief Athletic Inspector had been made. EO Foster added that the Commission is running a lean office support staff and is hoping to hire in the first quarter of 2023.

**e. Upcoming Event Schedule**

EO Foster pointed out five upcoming events that the Commission may be interested in attending; Paco Presents at Cache Creek Casino, 360 Promotions in Montebello, Roy Engelbrecht Promotions in Orange County, MarvNation Promotions in Carson, and Golden Boy Promotions in December with no location decided. EO Foster provided the Commission with articles pertaining to the World Boxing Association (WBA), which are included in the meeting materials. He added that if the allegations against the WBA are true, he will bring the issue to the Commission for discussion.

**Agenda Item 13- Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda.**

Cameron Frizzell updated the Commission on his progress in training in his efforts to become a professional referee.

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Agenda Item 14- Pursuant to Government Code section 11126(e)(1), the Commission will confer with and receive advice from legal counsel and deliberate regarding the following matter: Gilbert W. Hedgpeth, et al. v. California State Athletic Commission, et al., Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles, Case No. 18STCV05608.**

**OPEN SESSION**

**Agenda Item 15- Next Commission Meeting will be Tuesday, December 12, 2022, Location TBA.**

**Agenda Item 16- Adjournment.**

Meeting Adjourned at 12:30 p.m.