



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES, AND HOUSING AGENCY • GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM

**CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION**

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Members of the Commission

Peter R. Villegas, Chair

Dr. Vernon Williams, Vice Chair

AnnMaria De Mars

Ronald Fiore

Christopher Gruwell

Douglas Hendrickson

Scott Wetch

# COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ATHLETIC COMMISSION

## MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 9, 2024

10:00 a.m. - Conclusion of Business

Location:

**IN-PERSON LOCATION:**

Department of Consumer Affairs  
1625 North Market Blvd.  
El Dorado Room (220)  
Sacramento, CA 95834

**TELECONFERENCE LOCATION:**

Pechanga Resort and Casino  
Eagle View Ballroom  
4500 Pechanga Parkway  
Temecula, CA 92592

**Commissioners Present**

Vice Chair Dr. Vernon Williams  
Commissioner Ronald Fiore  
Commissioner Christopher Gruwell  
Commissioner Doug Hendrickson  
Commissioner Dr. AnnMaria De Mars

**Staff Present**

Andy Foster, Executive Officer  
Patrisha Blackstock, Assistant Executive Officer  
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 Vice Chair Dr. Williams. Executive Officer (EO) Andy Foster called roll. Commissioner Hendrickson joined via video conference and Chair Villegas was absent. Quorum was established.

**Agenda Item 2 - Review and Possible action to approve the June 10,2024 Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Vice Chair Dr. Williams presented the June 10, 2024, Commission meeting minutes for approval.

*Commissioner Gruwell moved to approve the meeting minutes.*

*Commissioner Fiore seconded the motion.*

Commissioner Dr. DeMars asked whether the Commission received the headgear data mentioned in the previous meeting and the information from Benefit Resources regarding the pension benefits. EO Foster stated the Commission has not but is working on getting it.

*The motion passed 5-0 by roll call vote.*

**Agenda Item 3 - Welcome – Commission Chairman’s Opening Remarks.**

Vice Chair Dr. Williams stated that he spoke to Chair Villegas and shared the Chair’s regrets that he could not attend and well wishes for a productive meeting.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams congratulated EO Foster and the Commission on winning the North American Boxing Federation’s Commission of the Year 2024.

Vice Chair Dr. Williams also congratulated the Commission on the passing of SB 1456, the Commission’s Sunset bill. EO Foster stated that it is now awaiting signature from the Governor.

**Agenda Item 4- Welcome- Pechanga Development Corporation President’s Opening Remarks.**

Pechanga Development Corporation President Ken Perez welcomed the Commission to Pechanga tribal land on behalf of the tribe. Vice Chair Dr. Williams presented Mr. Perez with a Declaration from Governor Newsom.

**Agenda Item 5 - Discussion, Review, and Possible Action regarding the adoption of the revised Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts as adopted by the Association of Boxing Commissions at their annual meeting in Louisville, KY in August 2024.**

EO Foster explained that the MMA Rules Committee approved changes to the Unified Rules that would remove the ban on 12-6 elbows and clarify the rules of a grounded fighter at the recent Association of Boxing Commissions Conference. EO Foster explained that the grounded fighter rule is now a less restrictive rule set, and the Committee believes that by removing the hand to the ground rule it would cause fighters to instead use that hand to block their head. EO Foster believes the rule change would make fights safer and would make them easier to officiate. EO Foster recommended that the Commission approve the changed rule set.

*Commissioner Dr. DeMars moved to adopt the revised Unified Rules as adopted by the ABC at the 2024 Conference.*

*Commissioner Gruwell seconded the motion.*

Commissioner Dr. DeMars asked what the plan is to let fighters and the public know when the rule change is effective. EO Foster stated that he has been working with DCA to produce a video PSA that explains the new rules and will release it to the public in the upcoming month.

*The motion passed 5-0 by roll-call vote.*

**Agenda Item 6 – Discussion regarding ways the Commission can continue to build and maintain relationships with the Tribal Councils and Gaming Commissions in California.**

Pechanga Vice President of Public Affairs and Executive Director of Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations (TASIN), Jacob Mejia explained that there are 109 federally recognized tribes throughout the State of California and of those 66 operated tribal casinos that provide jobs for tribal members and citizens. Statewide, tribal gaming had an economic impact of \$17.2 billion and employed over 85,000 Californians last year.

Mr. Mejia suggested the Commission meet with the various tribal alliances and associations and attend meetings. Mr. Mejia offered to place them on the TASIN meeting agenda and suggested they meet with the California Nations Indian Gaming Association.

Commissioner Gruwell explained that he and Commissioner Dr. DeMars spoke to the Governor's Tribal Affairs Secretary and were given some best practices on how to approach the tribes and they are looking forward to sharing this knowledge with Commission employees and officials. Commissioner Dr. DeMars added that the Commission is also looking forward to learning more about each tribe and growing relationships between the Commission and the tribes.

**Agenda Item 7 – Executive Officer's Report**

***a. Budget Update for the Support Fund, the Neurological Fund, Pension Program and MMA Benefit Fund.***

EO Foster stated that the Commission has deposited \$347,000. EO Foster stated that it is early in the fiscal year, but that it appears that the Commission is on track.

EO Foster let Vice Chair Dr. Williams know that the contract with C3 Logix has been approved for the research project discussed earlier in the year. EO Foster thanked the Department for their assistance with the contract and with the travel the Commission requires.

The Commission has deposited \$17,000 into the boxer's pensions fund and \$10,000 into the MMA pension. The pension investment account is currently at \$4.65 million, back up from \$4.3 million.

**a. Update on the Specialty License Plate.**

EO Foster and AEO Blackstock have been working with the Department to get the license plate in place. EO Foster is confident that it will be submitted to the DMV by the first of next year.

Commissioner Dr. DeMars asked if the Commission would be allowed to get fighters to promote the specialty plates. EO Foster stated the Commission would be able to, but the plate needs to be approved by the state first.

**b. Status Update of Delegated Entities**

- **California Amateur Mixed Martial Arts Organizations (CAMO)- J. T Steele:** Mr. Steele has submitted CAMO's quarterly report which can be found in the meeting materials.
- **USA Boxing (USA Boxing)- Mike McAtee:** Mr. McAtee has submitted USA Boxing's quarterly report which can be found in the meeting materials.
- **United States Fight League (USFL)-Joe Stevenson:** Mr. Stevenson has submitted USFL's quarterly report which can be found in the meeting materials.
- **International Kickboxing Federation (IKF)- Toni Fossum:** Mrs. Fossum has submitted IKF's quarterly report which can be found in the meeting materials.
- **World Association of Kickboxing Organizations (WAKO) - Tom Henninger:** Mr. Henninger has submitted WAKO's initial quarterly report which can be found in the meeting materials.

**c. Staffing Update**

Chief Athletic Inspector Mark Relyea invited the attending officials and inspectors to introduce themselves to the Commission members.

The Commissioners thanked them all for their effort and hard work that allowed the Commission to become as well regarded as it is worldwide.

**d. Upcoming Event Schedule**

EO Foster stated the Commissioners should set aside December 21<sup>st</sup> on their calendars.

**Agenda Item 8 – Public Comments Not on the Agenda**

No public comments.

**Agenda Item 9 – Next Commission Meeting will be Monday, December 9, 2024**

EO Foster stated the Commission may be able to reserve a hearing room at the Capitol, and that he would look into it.

**Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment**

The meeting concluded at 12:00 PM.