USHJA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
Monday, March 9, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. ET

Board Members Present: Mary Babick, John Bahret, Katie Benson, Richard Cram, David Distler, Joseph Dotoli, Margie Engle, Dianne Johnson, Brooke Kemper, Anne Kursinski, Britt McCormick, Tobey McWilliams, Betty Oare, Mike Rosser, Robin Rost Brown, Cheryl Rubenstein, Charlotte Skinner-Robson, James Urban, Caroline Weeden, Sissy Wickes

Board Members Not Present: None

Staff Present: Kevin Price, Mary Hope Kramer, Lisa Moss, Marianne Kutner

I. Welcome
Mary Babick welcomed the Board and the meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. ET.

II. Roll Call
Roll call was conducted and it was established that there was a quorum present.

III. Approval of Agenda
Ms. Babick noted that the agenda required amendment to add a new item XV for discussion of the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab funding. Additionally, the ZJTC and Platinum Jumper Championships requests were moved to the beginning of the Program/Committee Proposals section to accommodate a member that might need to be excused from the meeting early.

Charlotte Skinner-Robson made a motion to amend the agenda as noted above. Jim Urban seconded, and the motion to amend the agenda was unanimously approved. Dianne Johnson then made a motion to accept the amended agenda. Tobey McWilliams seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
John Bahret made a motion to put the January 13, 2020 and February 24, 2020 meeting minutes on the floor for discussion and vote. Ms. Johnson seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.
Hearing no discussion, the meeting minutes for were unanimously approved, with three abstentions noted for the January minutes, and two abstentions noted for the February minutes.

V. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
The Executive Committee meeting minutes for December 2, December 9, and January 6 were presented as informational content. A question was asked about why one mandatory fee collection was approved and the other was not, and it was noted that the approval was in error. There was brief discussion about mandatory fee collection, and it was noted that USHJA was likely to continue to disapprove all such requests for the remainder of the year. Ms. Babick added that USEF planned to discuss ending mandatory fee collection requests for associations after this year. The USEF Board would also consider writing a rule to prohibit associations from hiding mandatory fees within office fees. There was an
additional comment made with regard to the January meeting’s New Business section, indicating that the WEF fee mentioned for insurance was optional.

VI. Conflict of Interest
No conflicts of interest were identified on the part of any Board member in attendance.

VII. USHJA Meeting Schedule – Revised
It was noted that the schedule was updated to clearly indicate that the September Board meeting would be an in-person meeting if there was more than one candidate for USHJA President. Additionally, the November meeting date was corrected to November 9, so that it would not occur during the USHJA National Championships (as listed on a prior edition of the schedule).

VIII. President’s Report
Ms. Babick presented a verbal President’s Report regarding recent activities.

• Town Halls: Ms. Babick noted her attendance at several recent town hall events, including one during the Gold Star Clinic where she was joined by Ms. Skinner-Robson. She mentioned there was discussion at that town hall about eliminating the Amateur Owner Jumpers in favor of just having Amateur Jumpers. She also held a town hall in Arizona which raised many good questions, and noted we should visit that area more frequently. She also announced that preparations were underway to launch a virtual town hall series beginning in April. She requested that any Directors willing to participate in a virtual town hall during the May Board meeting contact her to indicate their interest.

• Automated Declarations: Ms. Babick shared that USEF was working to create a new system for automating declarations, and that she would be meeting to discuss the progress made on the system in the next few days. She pointed out that an automated system it would benefit USHJA by eliminating the $2 fee for each declaration.

• Para-Show Jumping: Ms. Babick continued to note that she had met with several individuals to investigate the concept of launching para-show jumping as a part of USHJA, and that discussions would be ongoing.

• Amateur Owner Championship: Ms. Babick commented that the USEF Board had voted to disapprove the Amateur Owner Championship in Sonoma.

IX. Executive Director’s Report
Kevin Price presented the Executive Director’s report that was provided in the meeting materials.

• IHSA: Mr. Price shared that he had recently attended the IHSA Collegiate Coach and Hall of Fame dinner in Florida with Ms. Babick. He added that USHJA was working to integrate IHSA website content with USHJA museum content to offer a more comprehensive representation of hunter jumper history.

• Events: Mr. Price noted his attendance at the East Coast Gold Star Clinic, as well as the Palm Beach Spectacular and the very successful Gala.

• USHJA National Championships: It was noted that USEF recently approved the National Jumper Championship component of the USHJA National Championships. Mr. Price added that there had been some delay due to date changes that were required of Blenheim. He also pointed out that the event was improving financially, highlighting that it operated with a significantly reduced loss compared with the prior year, and indicating that it was on track to break even or make a small profit in 2020.
• **Committee Work:** Mr. Price mentioned that Governance and Planning Committee work was ongoing, and that Nominating Committee work would begin shortly.

• **Office Updates:** Mr. Price shared that USHJA’s ranking on the Best Places to Work in Kentucky would be announced in April, and that many staff members planned to attend the banquet for that announcement. He indicated that the Education Department was making great progress with the Trainer Credential and Adult HQC, and that the Development Department was now fully staffed with the addition of Rob Jacobs as Development Coordinator and Penny Brooks as Development Director. He continued to note that USHJA had been evaluating responsibilities as an employer in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, that plans were being made to safeguard the office and staff, and that the situation would be monitored closely.

• **IT Initiatives:** Mr. Price provided an update on progress made in this area. He noted that he had met with two IT firms, and that USEF had assisted representatives from these firms as they worked to evaluate USHJA’s IT needs. He indicated that he expects a proposal to be ready for consideration at the May Board meeting. He noted that this proposal would cover the first steps towards fulfilling USHJA’s IT needs, primarily regarding the creation of separate infrastructure for phones, computers, and internet access.

X. **Treasurer’s Report**
Mr. Bahret presented the Treasurer’s Report which was provided in the meeting materials.

*Ms. Johnson made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report, seconded by Cheryl Rubenstein. The Board voted unanimously to approve the Treasurer’s Report, as presented.*

XI. **Informational Reports**
The Sport Department, Sport & Association Services Department, Zone & Affiliate Department, and Education Department reports were presented as informational content. No questions were asked.

XII. **Program/Committee Proposals**
Mr. Bahret made a motion to place all program/committee specifications and proposals on the floor for discussion and vote. Ms. McWilliams seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

• **2020 ZJTC & Platinum Jumper Championships Specifications**
The Board reviewed the materials provided in the meeting packet. Ms. Babick noted that an additional memo had been provided requesting an amendment to the submitted Platinum Specifications to allow draw reins during schooling.

In the 2020 ZJTC Specifications, Ms. Babick noted that there were now two format options: a three day format and a four day format. Ms. Skinner-Robson was invited to offer further insight into this change. She explained that the four day format was very similar to what had been done previously, with the exception of adding a mandatory rest day for all levels, when in the past it had not been mandatory for the lower levels. She noted that these competitions were held during the hot summer months and that this could be stressful on both horses and riders, so the Committee felt this change was warranted to ensure the welfare of all competitors. She continued to explain that for the three day format, the first day count would count as both the first individual qualifier and the first round of the team championship. On day two competitors would only jump one round, which would be the second round of the team championship. Again it was noted that this request was made to ensure welfare, and the Committee wanted to include the option for competitors to avoid jumping two full rounds on the same day under stressful conditions.
Ms. Babick noted that the three and four day formats were also included in the 2020 Platinum Specifications, and that there was an additional memo requesting that draw reins be allowed during schooling in section III B(2) of the Platinum Specifications.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the 2020 ZJTC Specifications, as presented.

The Board also voted unanimously to approve the 2020 Platinum Jumper Championships Specifications, including the exception to allow draw reins to be used during schooling.

- **2021 Stirrup Cup Program**
  Ms. Babick noted that the Zone Council had asked to put the Stirrup Cup on an “indefinite” hiatus. She indicated that the hiatus should be given a specific time period or that the program should simply be discontinued. Consensus was that this program was not working and was not well attended. There was a comment made that Zones which had higher levels of participation could potentially create their own version to encourage sport growth. Ultimately the Board agreed that it would be best to end the program, but that it was important to include the population it served as part of the ongoing conversations about strategic planning and outreach.

  Ms. Babick reminded the Board that the 2020 Stirrup Cup would still go on as planned, but if the Board voted to discontinue the program it would end as of 2021, and it would need to be replaced with another program to serve that population.

  The Board unanimously voted to discontinue the Stirrup Cup program as of 2021.

- **2021 National Hunter Derby Regional Championships Proposal**
  Ms. Babick noted that this proposal had been reviewed and postponed for revision a few times previously. It was pointed out that the budget had been tightened, so it would operate at a much smaller loss than previous editions of the proposal. Consensus was that this proposal was moving in the right direction.

  Ms. Babick pointed out that the version of the specifications included in the meeting materials limited competitors so that they could only show in one regional championship per year, which would not work for professionals who compete nationwide. Ms. Babick spoke with USHJA Sport Director Katie Patrick, who suggested that the language be amended to indicate that “horses may compete in one regional championship of the exhibitor’s choice per year.” This was the language used for the Green Hunter Incentive Regional Championship. The Board agreed that this language was appropriate.

  There was a great deal of conversation about splitting a championship. The Board was in favor of a pro/non-pro split, but was not in favor of the language saying “if the entries exceed 40 in either section, the section may be split. If the entries exceed 60 in either section, the section must be split.” They felt all the pros and all the non-pros should compete with their peers in a single championship.

  Conversation turned to the language regarding the awarding of HOTY points, and the fact that for the NHD Regional Championships a competitor was only required to compete once in the declared division to be eligible for HOTY points. This led to a general conversation about the number of times various programs required a competitor to participate to be eligible for HOTY points, and the fact that this number was not consistent between programs. There was general agreement there should be a move towards consistency across programs going forward, if an ideal number could be determined. It was emphasized that this conversation was only related to the awarding of HOTY points, and this would not impact a competitor’s ability to compete in the Championship in any way. There was a great deal of discussion about creating a 5x rule for
the awarding of HOTY points, but ultimately the Board decided it was too early to determine an exact number and that more data would be needed, so the idea would not be considered at this time. Ms. Babick indicated she would seek further data on this topic.

Discussion then turned to the fact that there was not a host fee included in this proposal. Ms. Babick noted that the hosts were providing the prize money, and the proposal might be seeking to make the requirement to provide prize money more palatable by not including a host fee.

Ms. Babick noted that she would discuss the suggested revisions with Ms. Patrick so they could be sent back to the Task Force. Suggested revisions included adding a host fee, having the pro/non-pro split, and removing the language about splitting further at 40/60 entries.

Ms. Oare made a motion to postpone the 2021 National Hunter Derby Regional Championships Proposal until the May Board meeting to allow for further revisions, including additional discussion regarding host fees, having a pro/non-pro split, and removing the language regarding further splits at 40/60 entries. Katie Benson seconded, and the motion to postpone the 2021 NHD Regional Championships Proposal until the May Board of Directors meeting to allow for further revisions was unanimously approved.

- **2021 International Hunter Derby Regional Championship Proposal**

Ms. Babick noted that this proposal had been reviewed and postponed for revision a few times previously. She added that if the Board was to approve this proposal, there should be a new addition under Membership and Participation Requirements as item J, stating that “horses may compete in one regional championship of the exhibitor’s choice per year,” which was the same language proposed for inclusion in the NHD Regional Championship Proposal. She also noted the proposal requested the right to hand select the host, a process that the Board had resolved not to allow previously. She continued to note that the program would be funded by mandatory enrollment at all International Hunter Derby events. It was estimated that the event would be profitable, if enrollment went as planned.

The first item discussed was the mandatory enrollment fee. It was noted that an earlier version of the specifications called for USHJA to provide prize money, which did not find favor with the Board, so the committee had moved to mandatory enrollment as a source of funding. It was suggested that competitors would feel the enrollment fee was justified with the addition of these Regional Championships, particularly for those who did not wish to travel to the IHD National Championship, and that it also provided more opportunity to compete. Some concern was expressed about escalating enrollment fees and how that impacts a competitor when their horse is purchased late in the year, and that they would have to pay the fee despite being past the cut-off date for eligibility to compete in that year’s Derby. It was noted that slots were included as an option, which would help alleviate this issue. The suggestion was made that enrollment could be changed to start immediately after the conclusion of the IHD Championship. Another suggestion was made that there could be a trial enrollment option that would allow competitors to pay a per-class fee, perhaps $50 or $100. This would allow them to test whether enrollment would be a good fit, especially for a newer horse, before enrolling at the full $750. A flat enrollment fee for the entire year was also suggested.

The conversation turned to the handpicking of hosts, and the argument was made that this would allow the selection of the best partner for promoting this event. It was pointed out that the Board had made and followed a resolution to not allow hand selecting and to require an open application process, and that if this was to be reversed it would require another resolution. There was some feeling that the open application process in general should be looked at more closely to ensure that the correct criteria were being considered to ensure the best hosts were selected for
various programs. It was also noted that USHJA’s calendaring process deserved a closer look as well.

The Board was in favor of sending the proposal back for further edits with regard to the enrollment piece. Ms. Babick indicated that she would determine whether enrollment by the class could be easily tracked before suggesting it as a recommendation to the Task Force.

Mr. McCormick made a motion to postpone the 2021 International Hunter Derby Regional Championship Proposal until the May meeting, to allow for further revision. Ms. Johnson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to postpone the 2021 IHD Regional Championship Proposal until the May Board meeting to allow for further revision.

- **2021 Children’s and Adult Amateur Hunter Championship Proposal**

It was noted that two versions of this proposal were being put forward: one from the Task Force and another for a “Children’s and Adult Team Challenge” that was drafted by USHJA staff. Ms. Babick noted that other Zones had expressed interest in the Zone 6 Championship overlay concept, so USHJA staff members had developed those concepts further to create the alternative Challenge proposal.

Discussion turned to the differences between the two options. The Task Force’s proposal was a true Championship involving enrollment, earning points, and qualification. The alternative Challenge proposal was an overlay that would be very inviting and allow for easy participation, and the budget was significantly lower. Both would serve the large 2’6” population well, and consensus was that both ideas had a great deal of merit. Ms. Babick noted that a suggestion had been made that for the Challenge, a team class would be held on the last day. There was some conversation about whether a hunter team class would find traction, since teams were relatively foreign in the hunters, but Ms. Babick noted that there had been feedback from members indicating that they missed the Child/Adult Team Championship. It was also noted that there had been interest expressed by several Zones. A question was asked about the Challenge where it mentioned 250 applicants, which would be nearly double past turnout, as to whether this was a realistic expectation. It was noted this was likely the maximum number expected.

Ms. Rubenstein made a motion to send the Team Challenge proposal to the Task Force for consideration, and to bring both proposals back for discussion during the May Board of Directors meeting. Ms. McWilliams seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to send the Team Challenge proposal to the Task Force for consideration, and to postpone both proposals for the 2021 Children’s and Adult Amateur Hunter Championship and Team Challenge until the May Board of Directors meeting.

- **2021 Amateur Hunter East and West Championship Proposal**

It was noted that Ms. Babick and Mr. McCormick had developed this idea with assistance from Ms. Patrick, and suggested that if it found favor it should be sent to the Amateur Committee and any other involved committees or interested Board members for comment and review. The proposal would create an adult version of the Gladstone Cup which would run on day 1 with a 3’ section, a 3’3” section, and a 3’6” section, and competitors would qualify by winning a ribbon in any adult age group equitation class. This would be followed by an Amateur Owner and Adult Championship that would be run under the National Championship format of welcome, handy, stake, and under saddle, with the top 12 going into the classic. It was noted that this program would operate at a fairly significant loss, but the goal was to create something easy to run and special to attend, with lots of prizes, to give opportunities to the currently underserved adult population. Ms. McWilliams volunteered to assist with the work on this proposal, and Ms. Babick added that any interested Board members were welcome to contribute.
Ms. Wickes made a motion to send the proposal forward to the committee for further development, and to postpone it for consideration during the May Board of Directors meeting. Ms. Oare seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to send the 2021 Amateur Hunter East and West Championship Proposal for further development, and to postpone the proposal until the May Board of Directors meeting.

- **2020 Adult Horsemanship Quiz Challenge**
  The program was briefly outlined as the adult version of the existing program for juniors. Ms. Babick also noted there was still discussion ongoing as to where the Finals would be held. She also highlighted that this was another program designed to benefit the underserved adult population of the sport.

  *The Board voted unanimously to approve the 2020 Adult Horsemanship Quiz Challenge*

XIII. **Review of Nominating Committee Requests**
Ms. Johnson made a motion to place the Nominating Committee requests on the floor for discussion and vote. Mr. Bahret seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

- **Nominating Committee Timeline Resolution**
  Ms. Babick briefly outlined the resolution request, indicating that the Board was being asked to allow a one-time exception to the timeline so that Nominating Committee members could resign if they wished to run for office, since the deadline was not announced to them during the Bylaw revision process.

  *RESOLUTION: The Board of Directors of the United States Hunter Jumper Association, this 9th day of March 2020, hereby approves the following resolution: Due to the unavoidable delay in timely notification of a change to our applicable Bylaws, a member of the Nominating Committee who wishes to seek an Officer or Board seat in the 2020 Election Year may resign from the Nominating Committee no later than March 16, 2020 and retain eligibility to seek the Officer or Board seat.*

  Hearing no discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Nominating Committee Timeline Resolution, as presented.

- **President, Vice President, and Director Job Descriptions**
  It was noted that these descriptions were updated by the Governance Committee for 2020.

  Hearing no discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the President, Vice President, and Director job descriptions, as presented.

XIV. **Review of Rule Change HU131**
Ms. Oare made a motion to put the Rule Change Request for HU131 Hunter Eligibility and Green Eligibility Status for Horses on the floor for discussion and vote. Ms. Rost Brown seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Babick reviewed the various language edits suggested by USEF for the HU131 rule change. She noted that “or” should not be struck in 3a where it referred to fence heights of 3’6” (1.10m), and the Board agreed. The Board also agreed with the comment regarding 3b that “Point 1 limits competing at 3’6” to 4 times before August 1. If the fifth time competing happens after August 1, you are no longer eligible for the 3’3” Greens.” In 3c, USEF asked whether under 5b the language should read “in the same competition year” or “before August 1.” The consensus on the Board was that the August 1 language should be inserted for consistency. Ms. Babick indicated she would meet with Leigh Anne Claywell to review the suggestions to be sure there was no alteration to the concept of this rule.
XV. Discussion of Virginia Tech Helmet Lab
Ms. Babick reminded the Board that at the Annual Meeting there had been discussion of giving a portion of USHJA’s budget surplus to the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab project. It was noted that some of this surplus needed to go to programming, education, and IT, but that this was an important cause to support as this safety initiative would benefit all members. The idea was put forward that USHJA would donate a certain amount and then match member contributions up to another amount. A comment was made that there was a collaborative fundraising effort in the process of being launched in partnership with other disciplines. It was noted that there would be three phases for the testing and each would run approximately $150,000. Ms. Babick suggested that USHJA could give $50,000 as a donation and match another $50,000 of member contributions, and consensus was that this was the correct amount.

Mr. Dotoli made a motion to **approve** the $50,000 donation and $50,000 in matching funds for the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab testing. Ms. Wickes seconded, and the Board voted to **approve** the $50,000 donation and $50,000 in matching funds for the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab testing, with one vote of opposition noted.

X. Old Business
There was a comment that there had been significant pushback about having ambulances and paramedics on site at shows, but it was noted that Tom Struzzieri deserved recognition for having on-site ambulances and paramedics every day at his events.

XI. New Business
None

XII. Adjourn
There being no further business, Ms. Oare made a motion to adjourn, and the March 2020 meeting of the USHJA Board of Directors was adjourned March 9, 2020 at 9:07 p.m. ET.

Respectfully submitted,

Dianne Johnson, Secretary