

BOXING, MARTIAL ARTS, AND
PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Boxing, Martial Arts, and Professional Wrestling Advisory Board (BMAW) met on February 26, 2026, at the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

Members present for all or part of the meeting:

Wrestling

Brandon Metheny

Martial Arts

Brian Pisani

Citizen

Ellen Thacker

Samuel Nicholson

Boxing

Mark D’Atillio

Members absent from the meeting with regrets:

Martial Arts

Jerome Wilson

Boxing

Eric Irizarry

Staff present for all or part of the meeting were:

Laura McClintock, Director
Steve Kirschner, LRPD Director
Kate Nosbisch, Executive Director
Jermaine L. Gray, Commissioner
Davon Jones, Administrative Coordinator
Kyle Mathews, Regulatory Operations Administrator
Jennifer Sayegh, Policy and Legislation Affairs Manager

Barbers and Cosmetology, Hearing Aid Specialists and Opticians Section:

Ashley Reed, Executive Director
Wendy Duncan, Licensing Operations Administrator

Josh Laws, Senior Assistant Attorney General with the Office of the Attorney General, was present at the meeting.

Tim Taylor, Board for Professional and Occupational Regulations Liaison, was not present at the meeting with regrets.

Mr. Metheny, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. A quorum was present to conduct official Board business. **Call to Order**

Mr. Metheny and Ms. Nosbisch advised the Board of the emergency evacuation procedures. **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

Mr. D’Atillo, moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Thacker seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by: D’Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. D’Atillo, moved to approve July 30, 2025, Advisory Board Meeting minutes. Ms. Thacker seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by: D’Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Nosbisch welcomed and introduced Ms. Laura McClintock as the new Director, Mr. Sam Nicholson as the new Citizen Board Member and Mr. Kyle Mathews as the new Regulatory Operations Administrator. Ms. Nosbisch introduced observers from another DPOR board. Board members, DPOR staff, and Counsel introduced themselves.

Welcome and Introductions

There were no public comments.

Public Comment Period

Mr. Mathews presented to the Board that the general regulatory review of the Boxing, Martial Arts, and Professional Wrestling regulations remained in progress. He also reported that the fee adjustment action was currently on hold until further notice. Staff reviewed the legislative amendments reflected in HB 2573/SB 1245 and noted that the changes became effective November 19, 2025.

Regulatory Update

Ms. Sayegh provided a legislative update on the current General Assembly session, including agency legislation affecting DPOR boards. She summarized proposed changes to the Callahan Act fee-setting process under HB 796/SB 680, including annual fee assessments, streamlined regulatory procedures, and related oversight requirements, as well as cost-recovery provisions for disciplinary actions. She also reviewed HB 1305, which would expand deferred disposition authority for minor or first-time violations.

General Assembly Update

Mr. Gray provided the Board an informational update on proposed federal legislation, the Muhammad Ali Revival Act (HR 4624), including potential additional medical and drug testing requirements. The Board discussed possible impacts on smaller promotions and noted federal preemption if enacted. No action was taken, and the matter will remain on a future agenda for monitoring.

Muhammad Ali Act

Ms. Nosbisch advised the Board to consider how existing regulations and statutory definitions apply to emerging and non-traditional contest formats. Staff reviewed the applicable provisions and referenced prior Board discussions on similar classifications.

Regulations Regarding Item E, F, G

Mr. Gray provided the Board information regarding Armor Medieval Martial Arts event. The Board reviewed materials and discussed whether the activity falls within the statutory definitions of boxing, professional wrestling, or mixed martial arts. Mr. Laws advised that, due to the use of weapons and statutory limitations, the activity does not appear to fall within the Board's jurisdiction and may require legislative authorization if pursued as a professional event. The Board also discussed event format, safety considerations, and amateur versus professional oversight distinctions.

**Armor Medieval
Martial Arts**

Mr. Metheny moved that Armor Medieval Martial Arts be recognized as an amateur competition. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: D'Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

Mr. Gray provided the Board information regarding the Redneck Brawls event. The Board discussed its proposed format, participant screening, and medical requirements. Discussion focused on the distinction between amateur and professional status, particularly where compensation is involved. Mr. Laws referenced statutory definitions of professional participation, and the Board considered how the activity might be categorized and regulated under existing authority.

Redneck Brawls

Ms. Thacker moved to obtain the promoter's rules and regulations and direct staff to review and return with a recommendation regarding classification and appropriate regulatory category for the Director's consideration. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: D'Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

Mr. Gray provided the Board with information regarding the Dirty Boxing event. The Board reviewed a proposed rule set for "Dirty Boxing," described as a modified stand-up contest permitting strikes beyond traditional boxing. Discussion focused on whether the activity meets the statutory definition of boxing and whether use of the term "boxing" presents legal concerns if inconsistent with statutory requirements. Mr. Laws advised that the designation may raise statutory issues, and staff noted the need to confirm participant compensation and intended classification of amateur or professional.

Dirty Boxing

Mr. Metheny moved to direct staff to contact the promoter to confirm whether participants are paid and to notify the promoter of the relevant statutory concern regarding naming/designation for the Board's consideration. Mr. Pisani seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: D'Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

The Board recessed from 11:43 a.m. to 12:07 p.m.

Recess

Mr. Laws departed the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

Departure of Counsel

Ms. Nosbisch reported implementation of updated vendor agreements for event officials and that the revised agreements eliminate routine expirations while allowing termination by either party. Mr. Gray noted that Agreements will be reviewed biannually, with updates required only for status changes. Mr. Gray also noted regulatory changes reducing prior licensure requirements for ringside physicians to expand eligibility and recruitment. Required documentation includes current licensure verification, controlled substance registration, and malpractice insurance.

Official Contract

Ms. Nosbisch and Mr. Gray provided an update on the proposed San Shou Challenge event, including safety concerns related to the raised platform. The promoter agreed to limit the platform height to three feet and add additional matting. No event date has been set, and staff advised that additional training may be required for officials prior to the event.

**San Shou Challenge
Event Update**

Mr. Gray provided the Board with an event recap and multi-year trend overview, including the increased volume of boxing, MMA, bare knuckle, and professional wrestling events during the last several years. Discussion addressed post-COVID recovery, promoter activity, and operational impacts. Staff explained that the elimination of second weigh-ins contributed to increased interest and alignment with broader industry standards, particularly for boxing. The Board discussed the high volume of wrestling events, noting that wrestling is scripted entertainment and DPOR cannot have a presence at every wrestling event due to the volume. The boxing/MMA events have different regulatory requirements and involves wide variability in venue size and attendance.

2025 Event Recap

Mr. Gray provided the Board with information on an event-level financial overview comparing direct costs and revenues for boxing, MMA, and bare-knuckle events. Wrestling events were excluded due to minimal direct staffing expenses. The Board discussed the impact of indirect program costs and emphasized the importance of attracting larger national events to support overall financial health.

2026 Event Update

Mr. Gray provided the Board with an update on topics discussed at the 2025 ABC Conference, including evolving medical and safety standards, proposed uniform hand wrap requirements, updates to MMA rule interpretations (including grounded opponent revisions), and officiating training considerations.

**Association of Boxing
Commission 2025
Conference Update**

Mr. Gray informed the Board that the 2026 ABC Conference is scheduled for July 31st through August 6th in Orlando, Florida and emphasized the importance of continued national collaboration and regulatory consistency among state commissions and tribal authorities.

**Association of Boxing
Commission 2026
Conference Information**

The licensee counts as of February 18, 2026:

Temporary Boxing	00
Boxers	07
Boxing/Wrestling Promoters	17
Trainers, Seconds, Cutmen	17
Boxing/Wrestling Managers	27
Boxing/Wrestling Matchmakers	02
Boxing Events	16
Martial Artists	07
Temporary Wrestler	00
Wrestlers	201
Wrestling Events	06

Licensed Population

Ms. Nosbisch and Mr. Gray provided an informational update on cross-gender and transgender participation in combat sports, including a summary of state approaches and national discussions. The Board discussed safety considerations and noted the absence of a current Virginia policy, acknowledging the need for clearer guidance in the future.

**Transgender Fighting
Update**

Ms. Nosbisch conducted election of officers. Mr. Pisani moved to nominate Mr. Metheny to continue as Chair. Mr. D’Atillio seconded. As there were no other nominations from the floor, nominations were closed and the nomination of Mr. Metheny was unanimously approved by: D’Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

Election of Officers

Mr. D’Atillio moved to nominate Mr. Pisani to Vice Chair. Mr. Metheny seconded. As there were no other nominations from the floor, nominations were closed and the nomination of Mr. Pisani was unanimously approved by: D’Atillio, Metheny, Nicholson, Thacker, and Pisani.

Mr. Kirschner recommended that, due to the length of the meeting, Board Member Training can be deferred to the next scheduled meeting. By consensus, the Board agreed to defer the training to the next scheduled meeting.

**Board Member
Training**

Conflict of Interest forms and Travel Vouchers were completed by all Board members present.

**Conflict of Interest
Forms / Travel
Vouchers**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Adjourn

Brandon Metheny, Chair

Laura V. McClintock, Secretary

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