

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

The Boxing, Martial Arts, and Professional Wrestling Advisory Board (BMAW) met on April 8, 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

Citizen

Ellen Thacker

Samuel Nicholson

Martial Arts

Brian Pisani

Jerome Wilson

Boxing

Eric Irizarry

Members absent from the meeting with regrets:

Boxing

Mark D’Atillio

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
Eric Beidel, Communications & Digital Media Manager
Kyle Mathews, Regulatory Operations Administrator
Davon Jones, Administrative Coordinator

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 present at the meeting.

Mr. Metheny, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 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. Pisani moved to approve the agenda with an amendment to remove the Armor Medieval Martial Arts Update. Ms. Thacker seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Irizarry, Metheny, Nicholson, Pisani, and Thacker.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Pisani moved to approve February 26, 2026, Advisory Board Meeting minutes. Ms. Thacker seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by: Irizarry, Metheny, Nicholson, Pisani, and Thacker.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Nosbisch welcomed and introduced Mr. Tim Taylor as the new Board for Professional and Occupational Regulations Liaison and Mr. Eric Beidel as the new Communications & Digital Media Manager for DPOR.

Welcome and Introductions

There were no public comments.

Public Comment Period

Mr. Mathews presented to the Board that the regulatory review remains in progress. He further noted that any proposed fee adjustments are currently on hold until further notice; therefore, no regulatory changes are being made at this time.

Regulatory Update

Mr. Gray provided the Board Federal Muhammad Ali Expansion Act, noting recent amendments that limit mandatory drug testing to world title fights, with other bouts subject to random testing. The legislation passed the U.S. House on March 24, 2026, and is currently under consideration in the Senate. Discussion also addressed how the act may affect the assignment of officials and the balance between promotion-selected and commission-approved officials.

Muhammad Ali Act Update

Mr. Gray informed the board that this item remains on hold due to the promoter's failure to submit a complete set of rules for review. Mr. Gray indicated ongoing communication with the promoter, and the matter is expected to return for consideration at a future meeting.

Redneck Brawls Update

Mr. Gray informed the board that the "Dirty Boxing" promotion is also on hold. While rule sets have been submitted, the promoter has not responded to requests to change the event name, as the use of "boxing" is not permitted for non-traditional boxing events in Virginia. Approval will not move forward until compliance with naming requirements is achieved.

Dirty Boxing Update

Mr. Wilson arrived at the meeting at 10:23 a.m.

Arrival of Board Member Transgender Fighting Update

Ms. Nosbisch and Mr. Gray provided an update to the board regarding the ongoing research regarding transgender athlete participation. Ms. Nosbisch emphasized that no decisions have been made and that the board remains in the information-gathering phase, reviewing medical research and industry practices. Key considerations include safety risks, competitive fairness, and the absence of current regulations addressing this issue. The board acknowledged the likelihood that future policy or regulatory action may be necessary and expressed a desire to be proactive before situations arise.

Ms. Nosbisch introduced an informational initiative highlighting national and international recognition days for various combat sports and professions:

Celebration of Occupations

- World Wrestling Day – May 23, 2026
- International Boxing Day – August 27, 2026
- World Taekwondo Day – September 4, 2026
- World Karate Day – October 25, 2026
- World Judo Day – October 28, 2026
- World Martial Arts Day – November 27, 2026

The effort aims to promote and recognize licensed professionals, with plans to expand outreach through the agency’s website and communications. Mr. Wilson suggested to include additional disciplines, such as National Muay Thai Day – February 6, 2026, and Nai Khanom Tom Day (Boxers Day) – March 17, 2026.

Mr. Gray provided an overview of upcoming combat sports events across Virginia, noting an increase in scheduled events. Additional dates and promotions were announced, including nationally recognized bouts. The board discussed logistical challenges such as staffing and venue availability, acknowledging that increased activity reflects growth in the industry.

2026 Event Update

The licensee counts as of March 1, 2026:

Temporary Boxing	00
Boxers	36
Boxing/Wrestling Promoters	24
Trainers, Seconds, Cutmen	44
Boxing/Wrestling Managers	03
Boxing/Wrestling Matchmakers	22
Boxing Events	07
Martial Artists	07
Temporary Wrestler	00
Wrestlers	350
Wrestling Events	11

Licensed Population

Ms. Nosbisch conducted a comprehensive training session for board members, covering roles and responsibilities, the Administrative Process Act, Freedom of Information Act requirements, conflict of interest disclosures, and proper procedures for meetings and decision-making. Emphasis was placed on transparency, due process, quorum requirements, and the advisory nature of the board, with final authority resting with the Director.

**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 10:52 a.m.

Adjourn

Brandon Metheny, Chair

Laura V. McClintock, Secretary