

# MAINE STATE HARNESS RACING COMMISSION

**IN RE: RENEWAL OF LICENSES FOR )**  
**OFF-TRACK BETTING FACILITIES )**  
**FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2026-2027 )**      **DECISION AND ORDER**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On November 19, 2025, the Maine State Harness Racing Commission (“Commission”) held an adjudicatory hearing at the Deering Building, 90 Blossom Lane, Augusta Maine pursuant to Title 8 M.R.S. §§ 271, 275-D, 275-N and 5 M.R.S. §§ 9061 – 9064. The purpose of the hearing was to consider applications for renewal of licenses to conduct pari-mutuel wagering at off-track betting facilities (“OTB”) for calendar years 2026 and 2027. Applications for renewal licenses were filed by Pioneer Gaming, LLC, d/b/a Sanford OTB in Sanford; Pioneer Gaming, LLC, d/b/a Favorites OTB in Waterville; and, LRI, Inc., d/b/a Winners’ Circle OTB.

A quorum of the Commission was present during all stages of the proceedings. Harry B. Center, Barry Norris, Patricia Varnum, Chandler Woodcock, and Don Marean participated and voted as Commission members. Chairman Center acted as the Presiding Officer of the hearing.

Following the determination that none of the Commission members had a conflict of interest that would prevent them from participating in the hearing, the Presiding Officer admitted Exhibits 1 – 11 into the record without objection. Exhibits 1 – 11 are reflected in the Table of Contents attached as Exhibit A to this Decision and Order. The Commission heard testimony from the following witnesses: Shane Bacon, Executive Director of the Maine State Harness Racing Commission, Christian A. Smith, CPA, CFE, of WIPFLI, LLC.

## **II. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. The applicants have timely filed renewal applications for calendar years 2026 and 2027.

2. All the applicants either already have or will comply with the requirements of 8 M.R.S. § 272, by providing a bond or irrevocable letter of credit for calendar year 2026 prior to the issuance of a physical license.
3. The applicants have substantially complied with the harness racing laws in Title 8, Chapter 11 and the rules prescribed by the Commission during the past year and are expected to fully comply with same during the coming years,
4. The applicants have satisfied the criteria under 8 M.R.S. § 275-D(6)(A)(1)-(9).
5. The applicants have satisfied the criteria under 8 M.R.S. § 275-D(6)(C). Mr. Smith testified that all three licensees have sufficient financial stability and he concludes that they are all financially responsible and, barring any unforeseen circumstances, can be for a two-year licensing period.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The Commission subsequently applied the following statutory and rule provisions to the above-stated findings of fact, and concluded that:

1. The applicants have substantially complied with 8 M.R.S. § 271, § 275-D, and Chapter 15 of the Commission Rules which set out the relevant criteria that govern the re-licensing of Off-Track Betting facilities.
2. The applicants already have or will comply with 8 M.R.S. § 272 for calendar year 2026, pursuant to which the Commission may issue an Off-Track Betting license to any of the applicants after they provide a bond or irrevocable letter of credit in an amount fixed by the Commission. All applicants will provide a bond or irrevocable letter of credit for 2027. Failure to provide such bond or irrevocable letter of credit will result in non-issuance of the license.

4. Pursuant to 8 M.R.S. § 275-D(6)(A)(1)-(9), the Commission may license the subject OTB facilities because the applicants have satisfied the criteria contained therein.
5. Pursuant to 8 M.R.S. § 275-D(6)(C), the Commission may license the subject OTB facilities because the applicants have satisfied the criteria contained therein.
6. Pursuant to 8 M.R.S. § 275-D(12), the Commission may license the subject OTB facilities because the applicants have satisfied the criteria contained therein.

#### **IV. DECISION AND ORDER**

After considering the evidence and the criteria set forth in the above statutes, the Commission is satisfied that all the necessary requirements have been met to renew the licenses for calendar year 2026 and 2027 for: Pioneer Gaming, LLC, d/b/a Sanford OTB in Sanford; Pioneer Gaming, LLC, d/b/a Favorites OTB in Waterville; and, LRI, Inc., d/b/a Winners' Circle OTB. The 2026 and 2027 licenses for the applicants are conditioned upon receipt of payment of the bond required by § 272 for the applicable year. Based on the applications, the evidence presented by the parties and staff, the reasons stated on the record at hearing, and the additional evidence in the record not specifically referred to herein, the Commission voted unanimously to renew each of the Off-Track Betting licenses for the purpose of conducting pari-mutuel wagering and to allow interstate simulcasting on the dates listed in their applications for calendar year 2026 and 2027.


#### **V. NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHTS**

Any party to these proceedings may seek review of this Decision, to the extent that review is permitted by law, by filing a petition for review in Superior Court pursuant to 5 M.R.S. § 11001, *et seq.*, within thirty (30) days after receiving notice of this Decision.

The petition shall specify the person seeking review, the manner in which they are aggrieved and the final agency action which they wish reviewed. It shall also contain a concise statement as to

the nature of the action or inaction to be reviewed, the grounds upon which relief is sought and a demand for relief. Copies of the Petition for Review shall be served by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested on the Maine State Harness Racing Commission, all parties to the agency proceedings, and the Attorney General. Any other person aggrieved by this Decision may seek judicial review in like manner by filing a petition for review in Superior Court within forty (40) days after the date of this Decision.

DATED: 12-14-2025

  
Chairman Harry B. Center, II, Esq.  
Maine State Harness Racing Commission