

**FMC Meeting Minutes
August 18,2021
Zoom Meeting**

In Attendance:

Sharon Bechler- Central California Friesian Horse Club
Carrie Blair – Ohio Valley Friesian Horse Association
Will Bron – Northwest Friesian Horse Club
Marvel Jeffcoat – South Central Friesian Horse Association
Tiffany van der Kooi – Great Lakes Friesian Horse Association
Elizabeth Sharpe – Lone Star Friesian Horse Club and
Danielle Piascik– Northeast Friesian Horse Club
Anna Osinga – Atlantic Canada Friesian Horse Association
Kay Veinotte – Pacific Friesian Horse Club
Jennifer McClelland - Michigan Friesian Horse Club
Lisa Baker - FHANA Education Committee, FHAME Representative
Danielle Barrasso - Friesian Horse Association of New England
Jack Vanderkooy – Ontario Friesian Horse Association
Ruth Page – Sierra Nevada Friesian Horse Club
Nina Miller – West Coast Friesian Horse Club
Klazien Sietsma - Alberta Friesian Horse Association
Beatrice Whiteley – Friesian Horse Club of Southern California

Erin Miley – FHANA Board
Jo Ann Clough– Administrator
Kelly Twambly – Administrator

Members Not Present:

Allison Sable – Mountain Time Friesian Chapter
Lori Brock – North Michigan Friesian Club

1. **Call to Order-** The August 18, 2021, meeting was called to order by Ms. Bechler at 8:04 EDT.
2. **Approval of the July Minutes.** Ms. Bechler asked if there were any changes to the June minutes. It was noted that Lisa Baker did attend the meeting and the minutes were edited to reflect that. Ms. Sharpe motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. Page seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **New Business**

Concern of leadership and the future of the FMC during these difficult and changing times – Mr. Bron

Mr. Bron introduced his agenda item by noting that we have been dealing with many issues this year, specifically the Inspections and pandemic. He commented that in his view, the FMC Chair should be familiar with all the rules and regulations, should not speak of her own views, or put forward her chapter's interests. He indicated she should be leading, keeping things together. He commented that during the June meeting we spent too much time on social media issues, the discussion did not move along as it should. He expressed concern that Ms. Bechler appointed her son to the FMC and that we can only have one representative per chapter. He expressed concern that Mr. Jenkins was voted out of the BOD for violating the Code of Conduct and then without notice attended an FMC meeting. Mr. Bron indicated he did not have confidence in the Chair. **Mr. Bron made a formal motion that the FMC Chair be replaced immediately. Ms. Sharpe seconded the motion and the council moved to discussion.**

Ms. Clough noted that for this agenda item, the administrators would mediate the discussion and assist with questions. In order to move the discussion efficiently, the FMC would employ the following 'ground rules':

- FMC members were encouraged to provide their thoughts and perceptions openly and freely;
- Members were asked to keep comments brief and concise to ensure that each member who chose to speak would have the opportunity;
- Members should aim to limit speaking time to two minutes each to ensure sufficient time for all;
- Members were asked not to interrupt the member who had the floor until they reached their two minute limit;
- abstain from personal attacks.

Mr. Vanderkooy stated he was surprised by Mr. Bron's motion and that he found it to be inappropriate, that the issue could have been solved with a conversation. Under the circumstances, he felt it was only fitting to allow Ms. Bechler to respond to Mr. Bron's comments before discussion continued and asked her to do so.

Ms. Bechler indicated that she did not appoint her son, Mr. Jenkins, that he was appointed by her club. She stated that she has never actually represented her club's interests in the FMC as she felt it would be inappropriate to do so as the Chair. She stated that she has tried to get another club member to represent the club in the past, but no one wanted to do it. Mr. Jenkins stepped up to do it. Ms. Bechler said that after the meeting, the FMC administrators brought it to her attention that the rest of the FMC did not read the rules as she did, and several members were upset at what they viewed as her club having two Representatives, which is not how she saw it, since her club does not have a vote unless there is a tie. As a result of that conversation, Mr. Jenkins stepped out and she is once again the representative for her club. Ms. Bechler stated that she would respect the council's wishes in this matter, noting that she is proud of what the FMC has built and noting the council was highly respected by the FHANA Board of Directors. She indicated that her job was to be a moderator and again, respected whatever the council decided, indicating she considered the members friends and stating



that she felt she was approachable and reasonable, yet no one in the FMC had come to her to express their concerns to her personally.

Ms. Jeffcoat stated that Ms. Bechler had given the FMC four years of service and expressed her surprise about the criticism of Ms. Bechler's time management during recent meetings. Ms. Bechler indicated it was a fine line between controlling a meeting and allowing people to voice their concerns. She agreed things could have been better. She stated that running meetings is like herding cats and that she was surprised by people's reactions to Mr. Jenkins.

Ms. Sharpe read a statement indicating that during the past two FMC meetings in June and July, the Chair had a conflict of interest due to her relationship with Mr. Jenkins and related to a social media agenda item, and then in July asking him to attend a FMC meeting when ineligible, that Ms. Bechler did not adhere to the FMC rule of one representative per chapter, that she did not allow people to speak freely during the social media discussion as she said she would mute those she decided were inappropriate, and she engaged in personal drama.

Ms. Page said that the Chair has the right to make motions and can vote per Roberts Rules. She indicated that Ms. Bechler is listed as her club representative on FMC meeting minutes. She expressed concerns that Ms. Bechler was threatening to mute people during the meeting and indicated people should only be muted if they go over their allotted time. Ms. Page indicated that she was informed that Mr. Jenkin's club did not elect him, and that Ms. Bechler called club members to ask if they would mind if he took on that role.

Ms. Piascik stated she was conflicted on this. She stated that the last meeting was tough and difficult, but she had empathy for Ms. Bechler's position, noting she is professional woman. She stated Ms. Bechler's record over the last four years as FMC Chair speaks for itself.

Mr. Vanderkooy stated he agreed with Ms. Piascik and said Ms. Bechler had done a fantastic job as Chair. He said he felt the FMC needed stability and said again he was surprised by the motion. He stated that while he doesn't know what the administrators do, Ms. Bechler has two administrators to lean on and indicated they should take part of the blame for the fact the discussion of the new Chapter consumed the July meeting.

Ms. Baker stated she was surprised by the attack as well and that this occurred in a shocking manner. She indicated that she had had little time to take this in, that people make mistakes, She expressed her support for Ms. Bechler.

Ms. Jeffcoat noted that two months ago there was drama on social media. She indicated Ms. Bechler appropriately looked at this issue from the broader picture, rather than getting bogged down in personalities. She stated she was thankful for that. She indicated that the discussion on the social media issue quickly morphed into the FMC's concerns as to how grievances were handled by FHANA and that the follow-on discussion was a good outcome. She expressed her support for Ms. Bechler.

Ms. Miller expressed regret that she hadn't called Ms. Bechler directly to speak to her about these issues, saying she respected Ms. Bechler for her work on the Mare Show and other FHANA activities. Ms. Miller said she was in an untenable situation. She stated she felt Ms. Bechler did not use good judgement and that there was an appearance of a conflict of interest. She stated that in these situations Ms. Bechler should have let someone else take on the topic. She indicated that we need to trust all of our leaders. She indicated that Ms. Bechler made an error, and she was shocked Ms. Bechler ran the June meeting regarding the social media issue, and that it morphed into something else.

Ms. Twambly requested a moment to clarify a point. She stated the Chair and the administrators met prior to the June meeting to discuss the social media item, as FMC members were concerned about the incident and requested it be put on the agenda, however, the issue was essentially a FHANA issue and the FMC had not been asked to become involved. It was agreed that the means by which the FMC members' concerns could be addressed legitimately was if the discussion focused on FMC recommendations to FHANA as to how the code of conduct could be bolstered to include possible penalties for abuse of social media by FHANA members. Ms. Twambly stated that Ms. Bechler had advised FMC members of this, noting that if the discussion devolved into gossip and personalities, the discussion would be ended. The comment on 'muting' was not intended to be censorial, it was intended to keep the discussion focused.

Ms. Clough commented that members expressed that Ms. Bechler's comment to mute people for potentially saying inappropriate things was perceived as an action on her part to limit free speech.

Ms. Osinga stated that the last meeting was awkward and that there was a conflict of interest. Moving forward the Chair and her son should not both be on the council. She stated this is not a healthy situation. Ms. Osinga said she opposed one chapter having two representatives, but that she did not oppose Ms. Bechler.

The Council moved to a vote on the motion - *Replace Ms. Bechler as FMC Chair immediately*. A roll call vote followed. Three members supported Ms. Bechler's removal, eight members opposed her removal and four abstained. Ms. Bechler remains as FMC Chair.

Discussion to consider a subcommittee to review and update FMC rule, regs, and by-laws – Ms. Page suggested a subcommittee be formed by the FMC to review rules and regulations and make recommendations to improve our processes. She stated that this action might have helped to prevent what had happened the past couple of months with the FMC. Mr. Vanderkooy commented that this item could be discussed during Roundtable. Ms. Page indicated that a subcommittee could develop recommendations for the FMC to review. **A motion was made by Ms. Page – To create a subcommittee to review FMC rules, regulations and bylaws. Ms. Sharpe seconded the motion, a vote followed, and the motion passed.** Ms. Page volunteered to lead the subcommittee. There were no further volunteers. Mr. Vanderkooy suggested one of the administrators should be on the committee. Ms. Bechler asked if the administrators would like to serve.

There were no volunteers for this committee.

Old Business

Grievance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Jeffcoat indicated that she thought the language was too harsh, e.g. members losing their membership status per the recommendations of the FMC subcommittee.

Ms. Sharpe indicated that this was a moot point, as she had forwarded a copy of the subcommittee's grievance recommendations to Jason Tice and Marques Laude at the same time she forwarded these to the FMC for review. Ms. Sharpe stated that these recommendations had in some part already been incorporated into FHANA's grievance policy. A discussion followed with concerns expressed that the report should have been reviewed first by the FMC before going to FHANA; ie, a recommendation from the FMC to FHANA must actually be a recommendation from the Council, vice from a subcommittee alone. Mr. Vanderkooy stated that the Board would know that this came from Ms. Page, Ms. Sharpe and himself. Ms. Page commented on the importance of this initiative, that there are too many grievances filed. Members who have a grievance filed against them do not even know why and in her opinion many are frivolous. Ms. Page stated that FHANA is using our membership dollars to hire attorneys to help sort through these grievances. Ms. Page indicated that the why, what, when, where, and timelines for grievances needed to be addressed. Ms. Bechler asked if the FMC would like to review the suggestions and send an amended recommendation from the FMC, even if it was after the fact. FMC members declined. Ms. Bechler noted that in future, recommendations by the FMC will be reviewed and voted on by the FMC prior to distribution outside FMC as per standard practice with subcommittees.

Review of Revised Chapter Application: Cascadia Friesian Horse Club (CFHC, attached) Ms. Bechler indicated that this will be the first agenda item for our next meeting.

FHANA Board Updates – Ms. Miley indicated that the 2021 Inspections were delayed by the KFPS until early 2022, that the KFPS will accept videos, and that FHANA is asking the KFPS if it would be acceptable to also video IBOPs for the judges to review. She indicated she is now videoing her horses since they are in peak condition and will bring the videos to the winter FHANA Inspection, so the judges have the opportunity to see the horses when they are in top condition. The 2023 AGM will not be in Phoenix due to cost, two other sites will be considered. Mr. Tice is currently sending out Inspection refunds. Finally, the BOD has decided that moving forward, the BOD will select the committees and their members.

Roundtable Discussion –Deferred

Next Meeting Date – Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Motion to Adjourn – Ms. Veinotte motioned to adjourn, and Ms. Miller seconded the motion.



Recorder – Jo Clough