



MAURA HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIM DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ERIC PALEY
SECRETARY, EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Occupational Licensure
State Athletic Commission

One Federal Street, Suite 600
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-2012

LAYLA R. D'EMILIA
UNDERSECRETARY, CONSUMER
AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS
REGULATION

SARAH R. WILKINSON
COMMISSIONER, DIVISION OF
OCCUPATIONAL LICENSURE

Massachusetts State Athletic Commission
Virtual Meeting Minutes
Date: February 11, 2026
Time: 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

1. Roll Call

Josh Zakim - Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> present X absent
John Navien	X present <input type="checkbox"/> absent
Brett Miller	X present <input type="checkbox"/> absent
Melissa Kelly	X present <input type="checkbox"/> absent
Sean Pierce	X present <input type="checkbox"/> absent

- 2. Discuss / Vote Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 14, 2026, and January 23, 2026**
 - Commissioner Navien made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 14, 2026, and January 23, 2026, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierce. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

- 3. Executive Director Report**
 - Executive Director Bryan Freitas reported that the Boxers' Fund current balance as of 2/09/2026 is \$170,621.02
 - Executive Director Bryan Freitas reported that DOL is working on adding an emergency contact field to all license applications.

- 4. Board Counsel Report**
 - Nothing to report.

- 5. Applications**
 - a. Dr. Edgar Ballenas. Boxing Second's Application**
 - b. The Commission discussed this application with the applicant during the January meeting and tabled it. Commissioner Miller made a motion to approve the Boxing Second's Application for Dr. Ballenas, which was seconded by Commissioner Navien. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.**

 - b. Dr. George Velasco, Ringside Physician's Application**
 - After a brief conversation with the applicant, Commissioner Navien made a motion to approve the Ringside Physician's Application for Dr. Velasco, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierce. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

 - c. Gunnar Swierkowski, Boxing Judge Application**
 - After a brief conversation with the applicant, Commissioner Navien made a motion to approve the Boxing Judge Application for Gunnar Swierkowski, which was seconded by Commissioner Miller. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

 - d. Danny Vella, Boxing Promoter Application**
 - After a brief conversation with the applicant, Commissioner Navien made a motion to approve the Boxing Promoter Application for Danny Vella, which was seconded by Commissioner Miller. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

 - e. Ricky Gonzalez, Boxing Referee Application**
 - After a brief conversation with the applicant, Commissioner Navien made a motion to approve the Boxing Referee Application for Ricky Gonzalez, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierce. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

 - f. Brendan Cohn, MMA Judge Application**
 - After a brief conversation with the applicant, Commissioner Navien requested that the applicant submit recommendation letters on the applicant's behalf; the applicant agreed and the application was tabled.



6. Variance Requests

- Variance request from Rick Caldwell for February 20, 2026, CombatFC Event
 - Rick Caldwell submitted a variance request from 523 CMR 23.02 and 10.05, regarding “Requirements for Ring, and Minimum Number of Rounds for Program” to allow the option of SEAK matches in a cage, and to allow the number of rounds required to be combined combat and use the current MMA requirements

After a brief discussion with the requestor, Commissioner Navien made a motion to approve the variance as submitted, which was seconded by Commissioner Miller. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

- Variance request from Michael Polvere for February 21, 2026, Cage Titans Event
 - Michael Polvere submitted a variance request from 523 CMR 23.08, 10.06 and 10.05, regarding minimum number of rounds for program to use current MMA requirements, maximum number of unarmed combatants for program to be 36, and to not require shin guards for amateurs.

After a brief discussion with the requestor, Commissioner Miller made a motion to approve the variance as submitted, which was seconded by Commissioner Navien. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

7. Hearing on Request of Change of Decision pursuant to 523 CMR 14.20 (Gabriel Mercedes)

- The Commission began the hearing at approximately 1:28 p.m. Mr. David Dole, manager for Gabriel Mercedes, appeared on his behalf. Mr. Mercedes’ opponent for this contest did not attend but was notified of the hearing. After the hearing, Commissioner Navien made a motion to change the result of this contest to TKO in Mercedes’ favor and Commissioner Miller seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

8. Disciplinary Hearing for complaint C25-00094 (Akeem Jackson)

- Board Counsel advised the Commission that Complainant and Respondent jointly requested to postpone this hearing because they are in the process of resolving their financial dispute and want to appear before the Commission after that has concluded. The hearing will be postponed to a future date.

9. Discussion of 523 CMR 6.08 – licensing of officials

- Commissioners continued discussing licensing requirements for ring officials. The discussion focused on experience and considered whether letters of recommendation or different specific requirements for different license types would be appropriate. This topic will be added to the March 11, 2026, MSAC Monthly meeting agenda to continue the discussion.

10. Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

- Counsel advised that the list of Deputy Commissioners needs to be updated. The Commission delegated the task of reviewing the list and identifying those who are no longer appropriate deputies to Commissioner Kelly working with staff. The motion was made by Commissioner Miller and seconded by Commissioner Pierce. A roll call vote was conducted, and the motion passed unanimously, 4-0.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Navien to adjourn the public meeting and move into closed session and adjourn the meeting from there, which was seconded by Commissioner Miller. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

- The public meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

11. Investigatory Conference - CLOSED per M.G.L c. 112, § 65C

- C25-00133

12. Quasi-Judicial Session - CLOSED per M.G.L c. 30A, § 18(d)