

## NYRA to Open Out-of-State Online Betting System

Non-New York residents will be able to have horse race betting accounts

By Rick Karlin

Courtesy TimesUnion.com



Photo: Cindy Schultz

Robert Williams, executive director of Gaming Commission and chair of the Franchise Oversight Board, right, speaks during NYRA franchise oversight board webcast meeting on Tuesday, May 3, 2016, at the Capitol in Albany, N.Y. (Cindy Schultz / Times Union)

### Albany

The state racing **Franchise Oversight Board** on Tuesday unanimously approved the New York Racing Association's plan to spend up to \$2 million to set up an online wagering platform that can be used by out-of-state bettors.

While New Yorkers can currently open up NYRA Internet accounts, bettors outside the state use other services such as Twin Spires, of Churchill Downs fame, St. Kitts-based RGS or any one of

several Oregon-based firms such as OGS or Game Play. By offering a NYRA site to outside bettors, the association hopes to capture some of the revenue currently going to other firms. A company called NewCo Ventures North America has already been set up and NYRA was awaiting approval of the plan.

NYRA spokesman **Patrick McKenna** said in an email that the service will be provided with **GBE Technologies**.

A Dublin, Ireland-based firm with operations in the U.S., the company specializes in remote wagering, according to its website. It also operates in the Philippines and Channel Islands. NYRA will control the operation and own 91 percent of the organization with GBE owning the other 9 percent.

The approval comes as NYRA prepares to emerge from control of the special state board that Gov. **Andrew Cuomo** put in place four years ago amid a fiscal crisis.

NYRA's state appointed board in April recommended that the organization revert to private control this year, but with a minority of members appointed by lawmakers and the governor. The state board has put the nonprofit organization in the black and launched a program of upgrades at the tracks.

NYRA operates Saratoga Race Course as well as the Aqueduct and Belmont tracks in Queens and Long Island, respectively.

Cuomo and the Legislature need to approve the reversion of NYRA to private hands. Under the proposal put forth by the board in April, the 15-member board would have 10 private members chosen by its executive committee. Another two would be appointed by the governor with one each coming from the **Senate and Assembly** majority leader and speaker.

The five-member Franchise Oversight Board represents the interests of the state regarding the three NYRA racetracks.