



GPAC Subcommittee on Public Safety Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: February 6, 2019 - 11:00 a.m.

Location: Massachusetts Gaming Commission
101 Federal Street, Floor 12
Boston, MA 02110

Members

Present: Gayle Cameron, Chair
Patrick Hanley
Jennifer Queally
Sgt. Mark Lynch
Chief Steve Wojnar
Anthony Gulluni

Members

Absent: Lt. Col. Dermot Quinn

Attendees:	John Ziemba	Mary Thurlow	Sara Bedard
	Karen Wells	Tom Caldwell	Jacqui Krum
	Seth Stratton	Loretta Lillios	Jennifer Fitzgerald
	Joe Delaney	Amy Karangekis	John Tocco
	Lt. Larry Akers	Lt. Tim Babbin	Det. Lt. Brian Connors
	Eileen O'Brien	Heather Valentine	Richard Prior
	Cathy Judd-Stein	Nick Boyer	Catherine Rollins
	Lt. Paul Strong	Tom Coffey	Terrence Reidy

The Chair gave introductory remarks prior to the commencement of the meeting, introducing the new Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) Chair, Cathy Judd-Stein to the members and attendees. MGC Chair Cathy Judd-Stein gave welcoming remarks and then left the meeting.

Call to Order

11:00 a.m. The Chair introduced Commissioner Eileen O'Brien to the members and attendees and noted that Commissioner O'Brien was in attendance to observe the meeting. The Chair also introduced two new committee members, District Attorney of Hampden County Anthony Gulluni, and President of the State Police Association of Massachusetts Sgt. Mark Lynch.

Jennifer Queally added that with her today to observe the meeting was Terrence Reid, the state's new undersecretary for law enforcement.

Approval of Minutes

11:08 a.m. *Patrick Hanley moved to approve the minutes from the October 11, 2017, Public Safety Meeting. Chief Wojnar seconded the motion. Jennifer Queally requested a correction to the spelling of her last name in the minutes. The motion passed unanimously with the pending correction.*

Presentation

11:10 a.m. Next, the Chair welcomed Det. Lt. Brian Connors of the Massachusetts State Police / MGC Investigations and Enforcement Bureau (IEB). With him was with Lt. Tim Babbin of the Massachusetts State Police / Gaming Enforcement Unit (GEU) and Lt. Larry Akers of Springfield Police Department's Metro Unit.

Overview of the Gaming Enforcement Unit (GEU)

Det. Lt. Connors opened the discussion with an overview of the GEU, explaining that the GEU is currently comprised of members from the Massachusetts State Police (MSP) and Springfield Police Department. The original Officer in Charge was Lt. Tim Babbin and is now Lt. Ron Gibbons. Lt. Larry Akers is the Springfield Police Department Lt. assigned to the GEU.

The GEU is primarily responsible for law enforcement within the entire gaming establishment 24/7, working closely with local police departments. The GEU is the first response team for all crimes committed within the gaming establishment to include the casino floor, hotel, parking garage, restaurants, market area, movie theatre, and outside areas within the gaming establishment. The GEU also works closely with the IEB, Attorney General's office, casino security and surveillance departments, local fire departments, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and others.

During the opening preparations for MGM Springfield, training areas were reviewed that focused on the nature of casinos and incidents that potentially could occur. During the training period, the team conducted thousands of background investigations on applicants as well. The model of the Springfield Police Department with the Massachusetts State Police was agreed as the appropriate model among the MGM executives.

Springfield Police Department Metro Unit

Lt. Akers stated that the Metro Unit is an integral part of the GEU, as they are out in the field. The objective of establishing the Metro Unit was to ensure that downtown Springfield remains a safe place for visitors and residents.

The Springfield Police Department implemented the Metro Unit to develop a higher level of presence and visibility in the area. The Unit began as an evening shift for the officers, and once that gained traction, more officers were implemented and the Unit is now comprised of three shifts, operating 24/7. The Unit recently opened up a new substation that accommodates over 40 officers as well as stationed kiosks around the city of Springfield.

Det. Lt. Connors explained that the August 24, 2018 opening of MGM Springfield preparations went into effect in earnest in early 2018. Lt. Babbin explained that MGM Springfield's opening was a team effort from the very beginning, with the Springfield PD, Springfield FD, District Attorney's Office, Massachusetts State Police, and others. He reviewed traffic plans and secondary routes that were implemented throughout Springfield.

Areas of Concern/Awareness

Det. Lt. Connors addressed current areas of concern/awareness regarding MGM Springfield. The first issue is the gaming floor open concept and the access to it, particularly by minors. There are ongoing efforts by the GEU to address this, and it is continually monitored.

There was discussion around the new 4:00 a.m. alcohol service and related issues. MGM Springfield and the GEU are monitoring the circumstances surrounding alcohol being served until 4:00 a.m. on the casino floor.

Lt. Det. Connors then stated that another area of concern is local gang activity, which is also being closely monitored.

Finally, there have been incidents concerning Ticket In-Ticket Out (TITO) ticket theft that are also being monitored for analysis of law enforcement procedure.

Opening Day/Weekend

The systems that MGM put in place with the Springfield PD and MGM Springfield Security turned out very well. The facility and surrounding area were extremely heavy with crowds throughout the day, evening, and overnight. There were approximately a dozen arrests during the first week of operations at MGM Springfield. There were 12 arrests or criminal summonses for the first week of August. There were four Disorderly/Assault & Battery (A&B) related arrests; narcotics offenses, default warrants, one larceny, and one Possession of a Firearm While Intoxicated.

September 2018 through January 2019

GEU related activity remained very high throughout September, October, and November, with December and January showing lower numbers of arrests and criminal summonses. The GEU averaged well over 200 calls for assistance to Security per month. The majority of calls were for individuals

being trespassed/removed from the casino for undesirable behavior, minors on the gaming floor, and TITO theft. There have been approximately 350 ejections/trespasses since opening.

Det. Lt. Connors listed crimes by frequency:

1. Disorderly Conduct;
2. Larceny;
3. Assault and Battery;
4. Narcotics Offenses; and
5. Gaming Offenses

Jennifer Queally asked when most of these incidents occur. Det. Lt. Connors answered that about 70% of arrests and criminal complaints arise during the midnight shift for the GEU. He added that it is a hectic shift for them.

Crime Analysis from August 24, 2017 – January 24, 2019, in the Surrounding Area

Lt. Akers reported crime stats for the area since the casino's opening. Part 1 crimes (Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny, Auto Theft) did increase, yielding a figure of 364.29%. However, factors to consider are that the surrounding area one year before the casino's opening was an unoccupied construction area. Now, from August 2018 to the present, it is occupied by the MGM Springfield casino which draws in thousands of patrons every day.

Lt. Akers listed Part 1 crimes that occurred since MGM's Opening:

1. Robberies: One inside the casino, one outside the casino, and one at a business in the area;
2. Aggravated Assaults: One inside, two on-street (unrelated to the casino), four were Assault on a Police Officer inside the casino;
3. Larcenies: 21 were Theft from Motor Vehicle, one of which was at the casino, 13 were theft from buildings;
4. Auto Theft: One of the six occurred at the casino.

Calls for service did increase as well; however, 45% of the increase after MGM's opening is mainly due to officer activity (Directive Patrols, Motor Vehicle stops, and Suspicious Persons). Citizens' calls for service mainly consist of ambulance assists, disturbances, and property damage accidents.

Lt. Akers then summarized steps that have been taken to address the anticipation of all of this activity. He noted the creation of the GEU, the staffing of the Metro Unit, the deployment of police substations and kiosks, and the implementation of a Real-Time Analysis Center equipped with surveillance cameras throughout the Metro area.

Discussion

11:40 a.m. Det. Lt. Connors asked for questions/comments from members and attendees.

The Chair commented that in connection to incidents that occur vs. staffing levels, staffing numbers are based on data-driven analysis of these incidents. She asked for the number of incidents and trespasses that have occurred, and then asked when these incidents may lessen in frequency. Det. Lt. Connors answered that the evaluation continues now and there has been a decrease in arrests. However, he is unsure whether or not this due to the cold weather, and in the warmer months, this may change.

Ms. Queally asked what time MGM Springfield starts serving alcohol. It was confirmed that the casino begins alcohol service at 8:00 a.m. Lt. Det. Connors again noted that patrons consuming alcohol must be engaging in gaming.

The Chair asked how many of the crimes noted that resulted in arrest take place on the gaming floor as opposed to a restaurant, bar, etc. Lt. Babbin stated that they take place mostly in and around the gaming floor. Lt. Babbin also added that the agents are very thorough with any intoxication issues from the bar areas. Seth Stratton, Vice President and General Counsel for MGM Springfield, stated that MGM conducts their own review of these incidents as well as the performance of the staff in the bars/restaurants.

Mr. Stratton stated on behalf of MGM Springfield that the GEU does excellent work, and the level of collaboration has been phenomenal. Additionally, he reported that proactivity by the GEU had fostered a great relationship. Additionally, the cooperation with Patrick Hanley's office and the Hampden County District Attorney Gulluni's office has been fantastic.

The Chair addressed narcotics arrests by asking if the GEU is finding narcotics in searches, or just by observations. Lt. Babbin stated that it had been both scenarios; however, there have been more instances of charges of Possession rather than Possession with Intent.

Chief Wojnar asked if there have been issues with establishments around the area that wanted to stay open until 4:00 a.m. Lt. Ackers stated that there had been an interest expressed by outside establishments that wish to remain open. Lt. Ackers recapped again that drinkers need to be gaming and that is the stipulation that allows the casino to do this.

Mr. Gulluni stated that most arrests are handled by the Attorney General's office, and the agreement is that his office will handle any crimes that require specialized prosecutors. This scenario has not yet occurred, except for the one serious aggravated assault that occurred at MGM and is now being

prosecuted in superior court. Individuals in the Violent Crime Unit are handling the case. There have also been meetings held to share information across federal, state, and local lines that the GEU has been attending.

Mr. Gulluni noted the effectiveness of the metro unit surrounding the area, noting no substantial uptick in crime. The Chair added that there is a need to clarify when speaking about percentages in crime increase. For example, if a specific type of incident occurred once in 2017, and then there were four of that same type of incident in 2018, that would statistically yield a 300% increase. That assertion sounds alarming to anyone who does not have the actual figures on-hand.

The Chair then asked about the potential for using facial recognition devices in the future. Lt. Babbin replied that it would be difficult, as the area is crowded and porous, but Det. Lt. Connors stated that they are open to implementing the technology when it is more developed.

Next Steps

- 12:10 p.m. The Chair suggested that the committee meet again in September or October of next fall. The Committee agreed. As Encore is scheduled to open in June, there will be a robust agenda. Mr. Hanley suggested a presentation on court outcomes, after some of these cases (i.e., juveniles) make their way through the system. Also to be discussed would be any new laws regarding gaming.
- 12:20 p.m. *There being no further business, Jennifer Queally moved to adjourn. Patrick Hanley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

/s/ Shara N. Bedard
Secretary

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Notice of meeting and agenda, posted February 1, 2019
2. Membership List of the Public Safety Subcommittee Members
3. Meeting Minutes from the October 11, 2017 meeting
4. State Ethics Commission Documents
5. Membership of Gaming Policy Advisory Committees (Structure Chart)
6. M.G.L. c. 23K § 68