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## Massachusetts Gaming Commission Meeting Minutes

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**Date/Time:** May 23, 2019 –10:00 a.m.

**Place:** MassMutual Center  
1277 Main Street  
Springfield, MA

**Present:** Chair Cathy Judd-Stein  
Commissioner Gayle Cameron  
Commissioner Enrique Zuniga  
Commissioner Bruce Stebbins  
Commissioner Eileen O'Brien

**Time entries are linked to the  
corresponding section in the  
Commission meeting video.**



### **Call to Order**

See transcript page 1

[10:00 a.m.](#) Chair Cathy Judd-Stein called to order public meeting #269 of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.

### **Administrative Update**

See transcript pages 1 – 2

[10:00 a.m.](#) Executive Director Bedrosian stated that he watched the beginning of yesterday's Commission meeting. He believes that the Commission is in good shape regarding the opening of the Encore Boston Harbor project and that absent any unknowns we will be ready to open on June 23. In terms of process and meeting schedule, there will be a Commission meeting the second week of June where the Directors will make their presentations on conditions. At that meeting, staff will ask the Commission to designate a Commissioner to work with the staff to issue a conditional operations certificate. The Commission will vote to issue a permanent operations certificate at a Commission meeting a few days after opening.

Mr. Bedrosian advised the Commissioners that Gaming Agent training for new gaming agents has been completed.

The Commissioners asked about upcoming meetings. Mr. Bedrosian stated that the next Commission meeting would be next week and that we may need more but shorter Commission meetings to keep the opening process moving forward.

## **Ombudsman**

See transcript pages 2 – 31

[10:04 a.m.](#)

### **Community Mitigation Fund Scholarship**

Ombudsman Ziemba introduced Jill Griffin, Director of Workforce, Supplier and Diversity Development and Crystal Howard, Program Coordinator, to present on the use of Community Mitigation Fund Grant award monies for scholarships. Ms. Griffin introduced Michele Cabral, Director, Massachusetts Casino Career Training Institute, and Jeffrey Hayden from Holyoke Community College, who is here as well. Ms. Griffin explained that Holyoke Community College received a \$300,000 Community Mitigation Fund grant in 2018. Of that amount, \$240,000 focused on culinary and other career advancement programs. The \$60,000 balance was allocated for scholarships. Ms. Howard presented on the request from Holyoke Community College to use \$7500 of the scholarship money to cover the costs of a course on blackjack and carnival games. Using this money would allow the course to be offered for free to students who sign up. Ms. Howard stated after review; staff believes that this request meets the goals of the scholarship program and is aligned with the original purpose of the grant.

There are currently five students enrolled in the course. Commissioner Cameron asked whether that was due to the cost of the course or the generally low unemployment. Ms. Cabral stated that it is a combination of both. Commissioner Stebbins inquired as to the timing of the course, and it was explained that the Blackjack course begins on June 1 with another section starting on June 3. Commissioner Stebbins further inquired about case managers and recruiting. Ms. Cabral explained that case managers are doing outreach by attending job fairs and helping people file and fill out the necessary paperwork. Commissioner Stebbins asked that the case managers come back to the Commission at some point in the future to update the Commission on the program.

Commissioner Zuniga asked whether Holyoke Community College sees its need for scholarship money increasing in the future. Ms. Cabral stated that since they received the \$60,000 in scholarship money; that 370 people came through the school; of that amount 89% completed their training and of that 89%, 65% were hired by MGM. As of March 1, 84% of those hired were still with MGM.

[10:19 a.m.](#) *Commissioner Stebbins moved that \$7500 be moved from the scholarship program to promote the funding of the blackjack and carnival games course. Commissioner Zuniga seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **MGM Springfield Quarterly Report**

Mike Mathis, President MGM Springfield, began the presentation of the MGM Springfield Quarterly Report. He began by presenting the revenue numbers for the quarter and explained the impact of the January to March cycle on those numbers. Mr. Mathis discussed two new initiatives that came out of MGM Springfield's "You Said It We Did It" program. This program takes patron requests and implements them and then lets patrons know. Patrons requested that brunch be added, which MGM Springfield is now offering, and patrons requested an additional version of blackjack which is also now available.

Mr. Mathis discussed the increase in hotel and restaurant business in businesses around the casino. Commissioner Stebbins stated that we should track this data including meals tax as part of our research project. Mr. Mathis continued his presentation by discussing lottery sales at the casino.

[10:43 a.m.](#) Karen McRea, Director of Compliance, presented on the issue of underage persons on the gaming floor. Ms. McRea stated that the diagonal crosswalks on the gaming floor have been removed. There is a small increase in underage persons on the gaming floor, but very few are gaming or drinking. Seth Stratton, Vice President, and General Counsel explained that the intercept times for underage persons are getting shorter and MGM Springfield is getting better at this. There doesn't seem to be any one area of the floor that is a particular problem. Mr. Mathis stated that MGM Springfield has dedicated real resources to address this issue. There is real anxiety by MGM Springfield staff on this issue, which shows it is a priority for them. Mr. Mathis believes that most incidences are on the perimeter of the gaming floor. He stated MGM Springfield's goal is zero tolerance.

Commissioner Zuniga asked if Mr. Mathis sees this effort as an ongoing effort or will educating the community create a deterrent effect. Mr. Mathis stated that he believes that the numbers will go down, but he is concerned about parents bringing their children onto the gambling floor. There is a fine for this under chapter 23K, and perhaps that needs to be reinforced.

Commissioner Zuniga also asked if these matters are referred to the Gaming Enforcement Unit (GEU). Mr. Stratton advised that they were and that he met with the GEU to discuss the need to work with the GEU and perhaps the Attorney General's Office on this.

Commissioner Zuniga asked about the difference between underage persons at slot machines and underage persons at gaming tables. Mr. Mathis stated that a higher number of underage persons are found at slot machines. Underage persons at gaming tables is unacceptable. MGM Springfield is working on more staff training on this issue.

Commissioner Stebbins asked whether most instances of underage persons on the gaming floor happen on the weekends and Mr. Mathis responded that most instances are at night; there are more on the weekends just because there are more people in general at the casino on the weekend.

Ms. McRea reviewed the security plan updates, which included more signage, permanent rovers on the gaming floor, hand stamps, an education campaign, and a property curfew.

[10:59 a.m.](#) Ryan Geary, Director of Finance, presented on procurement spend for the quarter. Overall procurement spend was down due to the seasonality of the business. Of the \$10.3 million in procurement, spend of \$1.7 million went to diverse suppliers. Mr. Geary also presented on local procurement spend and stated that 58.8% went to Massachusetts suppliers, 29.9% went to Western Massachusetts suppliers. Mr. Geary stated that he is continuing to work with MGM's internal task force and Jill Griffin's team to improve these numbers.

[11:09 a.m.](#) Marikate Murren, Vice President Human Resources presented on the employment numbers. MGM Springfield has 2303 employees; this number includes the employees working at the MassMutual Center. This number is down from 2522 employees. The attrition rate for the first quarter of 2019 was 16%. There are about 110 people in the background review process.

The Chair asked Ms. Murren about MGM Springfield's background check process. Ms. Murren stated that MGM Springfield does a background check and drug testing for all employees using a third party vendor. She stated that MGM Springfield will allow people to start work before the results are back on a contingent basis if the position involved does not require a license from the Commission. Ms. Murren stated that there are 59 open job postings. She further explained that MGM Springfield is losing some people to Encore Boston Harbor.

Commissioner Stebbins asked Ms. Murren to quantify the number of promotions among MGM Springfield staff and to include that in the next quarterly report.

[11:27 a.m.](#) Sarah Moore, Director of Marketing, described the marketing and entertainment events in the first quarter, which included activating the Amory, the ice rink on the plaza, holiday-themed events, and Red Sox promotions.

[11:33 a.m.](#) Tallia Spera, Executive Director of Entertainment, presented on the first quarter entertainment schedule, which included events at the Roar Comedy Club and the AHL all-star game. She explained that there are over 50 events scheduled in the next 60 days, some of which are free to the public. She further stated that MGM Springfield has begun programming at Symphony Hall.

[11:38 a.m.](#) Seth Stratton, Vice President and General Counsel of MGM Springfield, presented on future development. He stated that there are one or 2 remaining issues on the housing component of the project at 31 Elm Street and anticipates a further announcement soon. Mr. Mathis stated that the lease for Wahlburgers should be signed soon.

[11:45 a.m.](#) Jason Rosewell, Director of Facilities presented on the solar panels that will be installed on the garage and stated that parking may be impacted during the week while construction is ongoing. Mr. Rosewell also stated that MGM Springfield was awarded the first LEED platinum certification for a gaming resort in the world.

[11:42 a.m.](#) Sarah Moore presented on the MGM Springfield new brand campaign launch.

### **Investigations and Enforcement Bureau**

See transcript pages 31 – 41

#### [12:09 p.m.](#) **MGM Springfield Compliance Update**

Karen Wells, Director Investigations and Enforcement Bureau (IEB) presented on the administrative penalty levied against MGM Springfield for the presence of underage persons on the gaming floor. The penalty was in the amount of \$100,000, and MGM Springfield has agreed not to appeal the penalty. Mr. Stratton explained the processes put into place to address the concerns raised by the IEB. Mr. Stratton was asked if the issue of underage persons on the gaming floor was due to confusion over the gaming age in Massachusetts, which is 21. Mr. Stratton stated that might be part of the issue, but that MGM Springfield is working hard to get the message out about the gaming age.

Commissioner Cameron asked about the possible use of physical barriers, and Mr. Stratton responded that physical barriers could create ingress and egress issues.

Commissioner Stebbins asked Director Wells what the IEB's expectations were going forward. She stated that the IEB expects underage persons to be kept off the gaming floor and away from alcohol. If that requires more security officers, then that should be the priority.

[12:29 p.m.](#)

**MGM Springfield Service Employee Exemption Request**

Bill Curtis, Licensing Manager, presented on the service employee exemption request included in the Commission packet. Mr. Curtis went through the list of requested exempted positions.

[12:33 p.m.](#)

*Commissioner Stebbins moved that the Commission approve the list of service employee exemptions listed in the memorandum from Mr. Curtis in the Commission packet. Commissioner Zuniga seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.*

[12:33 a.m.](#)

**MGM Springfield Alcohol Permit Amendments**

Mr. Curtis presented on the request of an amendment to MGM Springfield's gaming beverage license. He stated the MGM Springfield is requesting four new outlets – the spa and salon area, the plaza bar, MGM Springfield owned food trucks, and the island bar.

Anthony Cartazollo, Vice President of Hospitality, presented on the plaza bar, the food trucks, and the island bar. Seth Stratton presented on the application for the spa and salon area. Mr. Cartazollo stated that the plaza bar is a permanent installation built to replace a temporary bar. The food trucks will only serve beer; these are MGM owned food trucks. The Island Bar has tabletop devices such as KENO and is within the confines of the gaming floor, so it may be able to serve alcohol until 4 a.m.

Angela Smith, MGC Gaming Agent Supervisor at MGM Springfield, was asked if she sees the new policies on underage persons on the floor working. Ms. Smith stated that it is a progression and that added training will help.

[12:43 p.m.](#)

*Commissioner Stebbins moved to approve the requested amendments to the MGM Springfield gaming beverage license at the locations listed in the amended gaming beverage license application included in the commission packet. Commissioner Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Research and Responsible Gaming**

See transcript pages 41 – 53

[12:44 p.m.](#)

**Springfield and Surrounding Communities Public Safety Report**

Mark Vander Linden, Director, Research and Responsible Gaming, introduced Christopher Bruce, Commission Crime Analyst. Mr. Bruce presented the findings of his report on the first four months of operation at MGM Springfield. Mr. Bruce stated that it is too early to establish any trends and that the report is just a snapshot of issues. Further reports will need to be done before long term impact can be assessed. Mr. Bruce stated that the

casino location had more calls for service than any other location; this may be attributed to the larger volume of people who visit the casino. There was an increase in traffic issues south and west of the casino. Crime in the metro center did not increase with the additional volume of people. Areas around the casino remained steady. Mr. Bruce described the process for assessing the data he compiled and how this was different from the analysis used for Plainville. Mr. Bruce's detailed findings are included in his report, which is included in the Commission packet.

### **Commissioner Updates**

See transcript pages 53 – 54

[1:26 p.m.](#) Commissioner Zuniga shared with the Commissioners that he had attended the Public Trust Health Fund Executive Committee meeting yesterday and that he would come back to the Commission in the future with a report on that meeting.

[1:28 p.m.](#) *With no further business, Commissioner Zuniga moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **List of Documents and Other Items Used**

1. Notice of Meeting and Agenda, dated May 21, 2019
2. Memo to Commissioners RE: Holyoke Community College 2018 Workforce Development Grant Amendment Request for Massachusetts Casino Career Training Institute dated May 22, 2019
3. Presentation MGM Springfield Quarterly Report
4. Memo to Commissioners RE: Assessment of Civil Administrative Penalty upon MGM Springfield for \$100,000 for Non-compliance with Provisions Regarding Underage Persons dated May 17, 2019
5. Memo to Commissioners RE: Gaming Service Employee Exemptions MGM Springfield dated May 20, 2019
6. Memo to Commissioners RE: Amendment to Gaming Beverage License with attachments dated May 20, 2019
7. Presentation and Report – Assessing the Impact of Gambling on Public Safety in Massachusetts

/s/ Catherine Blue  
Assistant Secretary