



Massachusetts Gaming Commission Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: May 5, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Place: Massachusetts Gaming Commission
VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1-646-741-5292
PARTICIPANT CODE: 111 496 5419

The Commission conducted this public meeting remotely utilizing collaboration technology. Use of this technology was intended to ensure an adequate, alternative means of public access to the Commission's deliberations for any interested member of the public.

Commissioners Present:

Chair Jordan Maynard
Commissioner Eileen O'Brien
Commissioner Bradford Hill
Commissioner Nakisha Skinner
Commissioner Paul Brodeur

1. [Call to Order](#) (00:01)

Chair Maynard called to order the 553rd Public Meeting of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission ("Commission"). Roll call attendance was conducted, and all five commissioners were present for the meeting.

2. [Meeting Minutes](#) (00:55)

- a. January 13, 2023
- b. September 18, 2024
- c. April 3, 2025
- d. April 10, 2025

Commissioner Skinner moved to approve the minutes from the January 13, 2023 public meeting that are included in the Commissioners' packet, subject to any necessary corrections for typographical errors or other non-material matters. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.
Commissioner Hill: Aye.
Commissioner Skinner: Aye.
Commissioner Brodeur: Abstain.
Chair Maynard: Aye.
The motion passed, 4-0, with 1 abstention.

Commissioner Skinner moved to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2024 public meeting that are included in the Commissioners' packet, subject to any necessary corrections for typographical errors or other non-material matters. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:
Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.
Commissioner Hill: Aye.
Commissioner Skinner: Aye.
Commissioner Brodeur: Abstain.
Chair Maynard: Abstain.
The motion passed, 3-0, with 2 abstentions.

Commissioner Skinner moved to approve the minutes from the April 3, 2025 and April 10, 2025 public meetings that are included in the Commissioners' packet, subject to any necessary corrections for typographical errors or other non-material matters. Commissioner O'Brien seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:
Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.
Commissioner Hill: Aye.
Commissioner Skinner: Aye.
Commissioner Brodeur: Aye.
Chair Maynard: Aye.
The motion passed, 5-0.

3. [Legislative Update](#) (03:11)

Commissioner Hill stated there were no legislative updates for today's meeting.

4. [Administrative Update](#) (3:23)

a. GEU-MGM Springfield Superintendent's Unit Citation

Executive Director Dean Serpa introduced the update that the Gaming Enforcement Unit (GEU) received a citation for the unit's exceptional contribution to the Massachusetts State Police (MSP). The citation highlights that members of the MSP assigned to the GEU support the unique public safety needs in and around the MGM Springfield casino and work in conjunction with the Springfield Police Department and the Investigations and Enforcement Bureau (IEB) within the

Massachusetts Gaming Commission. Executive Director Serpa offered thanks on behalf of all Commission staff and congratulations to the entire GEU team for their commendation.

Chair Maynard stated this was a fantastic update and welcomed his fellow commissioners to weigh in. He expressed appreciation of the GEU and the work they do to keep everyone safe.

Commissioner Skinner congratulated the GEU, including not just the Springfield force but the entire unit. She stated that she is not surprised by the recognition and that she is appreciative of all the work they do, noting that they are putting themselves in harm's way right on the front lines every single day.

Commissioner O'Brien highlighted that the award is special because it represents peer recognition from the leadership of the state police, acknowledging the value of the GEU, particularly in Springfield. She mentioned the challenges involved, such as the urban environment, the casino, and the garage, as well as jurisdictional challenges regarding the criminal cases that arise. Having been a prosecutor, she believes the commendation likely resulted from consistent advocacy for the Springfield unit's work across the board. She offered her congratulations and thanks.

Commissioner Hill echoed the congratulations of the other commissioners and mentioned that every time he visits Springfield, the crew there is "topnotch" and that their recognition makes everyone very proud.

Lieutenant Mackey said that he appreciated the kind words from the Commission and the recognition. He stated that the troops work very hard in a challenging environment. He expressed appreciation for the "amazing support" received from the Commission and anticipates it continuing.

5. [Sports Wagering](#) (10:45)

- a. Updates to the Official Catalog of Events and Wagers to Clarify Russia/Belarusian Prohibition Language – Andrew Steffen, Compliance and Operations Manager; David Harrison, Compliance Officer

Carrie Torrisi, Chief of the Sports Wagering Division, introduced Andrew Steffen to present updates to the sports wagering event catalog related to Russia/Belarusian prohibition language. Andrew Steffen, Compliance & Operations Manager, began by stating that at the December 11, 2024 public meeting, the Sports Wagering Division was asked to look into strengthening the Russian and Belarusian prohibition language in section 11 of the event catalogue, specifically as it pertains to the mention, representation or promotion of those two prohibited countries. The original rule, in place since the launch of sports wagering in 2023, prohibits wagering on any event or league overseen by a Russian or Belarusian governing body or one headquartered in those countries. He said it also prohibits wagers on individuals or teams known to represent Russia or Belarus in authorized events. He explained the existing catalog had two examples of understanding. However, it was noted that these could be further clarified to provide more explanation and guidance for the operators.

Manager Steffan introduced Compliance Officer Dave Harrison to explain those two expanded examples of understanding and added that, unless otherwise specified, references to voiding wagers apply only to wagers that have not yet been settled (i.e., pre-event or pre-result). The expanded examples covered various scenarios, including individual fighters and club soccer teams, and detailed actions that would constitute promoting or representing the countries, such as actively displaying or wearing the Russian or Belarusian flag on gear while entering the ring or during post-fight interviews. He noted that the Sports Wagering Division continuously researches participants and communicates with operators on this topic.

Manager Steffen stated this is not a rule change but an effort to provide clarification and additional guidance to operators to ensure full compliance. He presented three options for the Commission to consider: maintain the current catalog, revise it with the proposed examples and clarifications, or draft additional examples based on feedback.

Chair Maynard thanked Manager Steffen and Compliance Officer Harrison for the presentation and welcomed commissioner feedback. He stated that he supported moving forward with clarifying the language, stating a preference for option number two.

Commissioner O'Brien questioned whether, due to the subjective nature of this type of review, there should be a default rule that individual Russian or Belarusian athletes are prohibited. She asked if there is a presumption that you cannot wager on these athletes unless it has been determined they do not represent or promote their respective countries. Manager Steffan stated that the current guidance is that wagers are allowed on athletes from either country prior to them representing or promoting those countries and that if it becomes known that they did represent or promote either country, wagers would be disallowed.

Chair Maynard noted that in a situation where an operator takes bets on someone and it is not known until they walk out in the event with one of the country's flags or makes a statement expressing support for one of the countries, it is difficult to have such a presumption.

Commissioner Skinner questioned the practicality of asking operators to prove a negative and inquired what information the Sports Wagering Division would want to see to prove that the athlete does not represent either Russia or Belarus. She stated all the examples presented, however, made sense in terms of providing additional clarification. Chief Torrisi responded that for teams, it is clear what country is represented and highlighted that the "sticky area" is typically with individual athletes in events like fighting where they may not be competing on behalf of the country and there is no evidence that they are known to represent that country, so wagering has been allowed unless there is evidence of promotion of a prohibited country.

Commissioner O'Brien asked why wagers aren't simply voided if promotion (like walking in with a flag) occurs *during* the event. Commissioner Skinner agreed with Commissioner O'Brien on the point about voiding wagers. Commissioner O'Brien questioned example number one in the Division's memo which seemed to state that wagers would remain valid if the promotion happened while walking into the ring. Commissioner Skinner expressed her agreement that if the promotion happens before settlement occurs, the wagers should be voided.

Commissioner Hill stated he was okay with the discussion and would go with option number two to revise the catalog with the clarification brought up by Commissioner O'Brien and Commissioner Skinner.

Commissioner Brodeur stated that it is “very challenging” to play in the “foreign policy space,” and that he appreciated the Division's work. He emphasized that it is about clarity and predictability, and he thinks the proposed changes help achieve that. He stated he was fine with option number two with the clarification.

Commissioner Skinner moved that the Commission amend the Official Catalog of Events and Wagers to include the proposed examples and clarifications on Russian and Belarusian prohibitions as included in the Commissioners’ Packet and specifically discussed here today relative to the amendments requested in the examples. Commissioner O’Brien seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner O’Brien: Aye.

Commissioner Hill: Aye.

Commissioner Skinner: Aye.

Commissioner Brodeur: Aye.

Chair Maynard: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

6. [Community Affairs](#) (29:48)

a. FY26 Community Mitigation Fund Discussion

Chief Joe Delaney of the Community Affairs Division acknowledged employee Lily Wallace who is leaving the Commission after three years of service on the Community Affairs team and thanked her for her work. Chair Maynard, Commissioner O’Brien, Commissioner Skinner, Commissioner Hill, and Commissioner Brodeur expressed their thanks, wished her the best and highlighted the things they enjoyed about working with her. Lily thanked the commissioners.

Chief Delaney then presented an update regarding the Community Mitigation Fund (CMF) budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) and FY27. The discussion was based on the assumption that no additional funds would be allocated to the CMF in the state budget. He stated that after accounting for administrative costs, there would be \$27,820,000 available for CMF grants. He explained that the total requests received for FY26 grants amount to \$24,772,000 and that staff had initially estimated awarding approximately \$19,200,000 for FY26, which means there are \$5,562,000 in waiver requests for this year.

He identified three basic options for the Commission to consider as follows:

Option 1 was to spend down as much of the budget as possible by awarding the full \$24,772,000 requested, including waivers. Option 2 was to keep to the recommended amount of funding by awarding approximately \$19,200,000, essentially without granting waivers or only if other projects were eliminated. Option 3 was to reduce funding for FY26 by awarding less than the anticipated \$19,200,000, such as \$14,000,000. This would leave a larger amount, approximately

\$13,820,000, for FY27. Chief Delaney also noted that granting waivers in Region B would likely require transferring significant funds from Region A, although \$4.3 million has already been moved for FY26.

Chair Maynard noted that the Governor and Legislature face difficult decisions regarding these funds and appreciated the weight of those decisions. He stated that his preference is to treat every application with the same consideration as they have previously been given and noted he has consistently advocated for getting as much money out the door as possible because he believes it does good. He stated in regard to the Region A/B distinction, he believes applications should be looked at on their merits, and transferring funds is permissible, and he would also include the waivers.

Commissioner Hill stated that if Chief Delaney was looking for guidance, he would look to option number one, to spend down as much as possible, and believes they should include the approximately \$5.5 million in waivers. He stated he does not think there would be a reason not to look at transferring monies from Region A to B again this year, as they had to do it last year. He believes the writing is on the wall regarding how the Legislature and administration view the program, and absent changes, its "day may have come."

Commissioner Brodeur complimented the staff on their "incredible diligence" in vetting each proposal, assuring the public and communities that every request is taken very seriously. He stated the fund is about "community quality of life" and supporting communities dealing with the introduction of casinos. He stated that he believes the projects he has seen are "tremendous" and have "a lot of merit," and he acknowledged there is more need than capacity. He stated he is very much in favor of option one.

Commissioner Skinner stated that just because there is a potential future lack of funding doesn't mean there isn't a current need. She stated that it should be "business as usual," and that she is in favor of moving forward with option number one so communities receive necessary financial assistance. She stated that she hopes for the best in future budget cycles as she feels the Commission is a good fiscal steward and wants the funding to get to the communities as designed. She also agreed with transferring funds from Region A to Region B if necessary, as it was done last year.

Commissioner O'Brien stated she believes the staff has always engaged in due diligence in reviewing applications and will continue to do so and expressed hope that the program continues beyond the next couple of years. She stated her position was essentially option one and that all funding should be granted on the merits of the applications.

Chief Delaney thanked the commissioners for guidance and noted the unanimity. He confirmed that staff would evaluate applications for eligibility and provide context to the Commission for waiver requests, leaving the decision on waivers to them. He confirmed transferring funds from Region A to Region B would be necessary if waivers are granted in the Western region. Chair Maynard noted that all Commissioners reached consensus for option one, to review applications on the merits and transfer funds from Region A to B if necessary.

7. [Commissioner Updates](#) (51:43)

After inquiry by Chair Maynard, no commissioner updates were noted.

9. [Other Business](#) (51:54)

Hearing no other business, Chair Maynard requested a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brodeur moved to adjourn. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.

Commissioner Hill: Aye.

Commissioner Skinner: Aye.

Commissioner Brodeur: Aye.

Chair Maynard: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. [Notice of Meeting and Agenda](#) dated May 1, 2025
2. [Commissioners' Packet](#) from the May 5, 2025 meeting (posted on massgaming.com)