



Massachusetts Gaming Commission Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: September 9, 2021, 10:00 a.m.
Place: Massachusetts Gaming Commission
VIA CONFERENCE CALL NUMBER: 1-646-741-5293
PARTICIPANT CODE: 112 593 9063

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 Cathy Judd-Stein
Commissioner Gayle Cameron
Commissioner Eileen O'Brien

1. [Call to Order](#) (0:29)

Chair Judd-Stein called to order the 354th public meeting of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission. Roll call attendance was conducted. Commissioners Cameron and O'Brien and Chair Judd-Stein were present.

2. [Administrative Update](#) (1:59)

a. On-site Casino Updates

IEB Director Loretta Lillios updated the Commission on the status of the casinos, including changes to the former buffet area at Encore Boston Harbor, reopening of certain amenities at MGM Springfield, and public vaccination clinics held at Plainridge Park Casino. She noted that all three licensees are continuing to monitor updates to Covid-19-related orders and guidelines. Assistant Director of Investigations & Enforcement Bureau/Gaming Agents Division Chief Bruce Band reported that operations have been going smoothly at all three properties. The Commission thanked Director Lillios and Assistant Director Band for a positive report.

b. [Internal Reopening Plan](#) (7:29)

Executive Director Karen Wells provided an updated on the reopening of the Boston offices, scheduled for November 1st. She noted that the policy has been finalized in accordance with the Commission's directives and has been provided to staff. She further noted that HR is working on a template for hybrid work requests and is in the process of verifying vaccination status of the MGC team. The Commissioners commended the HR team, the working group, and Executive Director Wells for their work in creating a process for vaccination verification.

c. [Investigations and Enforcement Bureau Recognition of New Chief Enforcement Counsel, Heather Hall](#) (11:37)

IEB Director Loretta Lillios introduced the IEB's new Chief Enforcement Counsel, Heather Hall. The Commission welcomed Ms. Hall and expressed their happiness at having her join the MGC team.

3. [Racing Division](#) (17:19)

a. Race Horse Development Benefits for Drivers and Jockeys

Director of Racing Dr. Alexandra Lightbown presented regarding the Race Horse Development Fund benefits for jockeys and drivers covered by G.L. c. 23K, § 60(c)(iii). Dr. Lightbown noted that the Race Horse Development Fund is split into 80% for purses, 16% for breeders, and 4% for health and pension benefits for horsemen. She further noted that the statute directs the Commission to determine how much shall be paid annually by the horsemen's groups to thoroughbred jockeys or standardbred riders organizations for health insurance and other benefits. Dr. Lightbown reported that the Commission sought public comment and received comment from the New England Harness Horsemen's Organization, the New England HBPA, the Jockey Guild, and individual jockeys.

Dr. Lightbown provided background on the above organizations and their needs, and recommended that the HBPA provide \$1,000 each to disabled jockeys in the Jockey Guild from the Race Horse Development Fund, for a total of \$4,000 from the HBPA to the Jockey Guild to disburse to the jockeys.

Commissioner Cameron noted the extent of work that went into this nuanced issue and the Commission expressed their support for Dr. Lightbown's recommendations. Chair Judd-Stein noted the difficulty of this decision given the limited resources.

Commissioner Cameron moved for the reasons discussed today and outlined in the documentation in the Commissioner's packet in accordance with Chapter 23K, § 60(c)(iii), that the Commission direct that the NEBHPA pay \$1,000 for each disabled jockey to the Jockeys Guild this year for a total of \$4,000, and further move that the HHANE be directed to pay \$0 this year for such purposes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Brien.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cameron: Aye.

Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.

Chair Judd-Stein: Aye.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. [Research and Responsible Gaming](#) (32.39)

a. Public Health Trust Fund Update

Director of Research and Responsible Gaming Mark Vander Linden presented an updated on the Public Health Trust Fund MOU. By way of background, Director Vander Liden explained that in 2014, the MGC and EOHHS entered into an MOU to memorialize their shared interests, goals, and responsibilities relative to addressing problem gambling and promoting responsible gaming. Director Vander Linden explained that the MGC, DPH, and EOHHS are now updating that 2014 MOU to advance all efforts around responsible gaming. The Commission thanked Director Vander Linden and all involved for their hard work in these efforts.

b. [Play My Way Update](#) (38:55)

Director Vander Linden provided an update on the implementation of Play My Way at MGM Springfield and Encore Boston Harbor. Director Vander Linden noted that Play My Way has been in place at Plainridge Park Casino since 2015 and that the development of Play My Way for MGM Springfield and Encore Boston Harbor required significant additional development because they use a different player management system.

Director Vander Linden explained that Play My Way was originally scheduled to launch in September 2020 but was delayed by Covid, and the Commission extended that date until September 2021. However, there as been a technical issue and the MGC has been working closely with IGT on a solution. In the interim, MGM Springfield has requested to extend the launch until April 1, 2022. Director Vander Linden recommended that the extension request be granted with the understanding that the process will be expedited to the extent possible.

Commissioner O'Brien requested that the Commission be provided with a three-month check in from both MGM Springfield and Encore Boston Harbor, whose launch is currently scheduled for September 2022, to make sure that they are still on their noted trajectories.

Commissioner O'Brien moved that for the reasons discussed today and outlined in the letter that is included in the Commissioners' Packet, the Commission allow MGM Springfield's request and extend the date for implementation of Play My Way as described in the MOU between the Commission and MGM and extend the date to April 1, 2022. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cameron.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Cameron: Aye.

Commissioner O'Brien: Aye.

Chair Judd-Stein: *Aye.*
The motion passed unanimously.

c. [Addictive Services Sub-Committee Update](#) (48:42)

Director Vander Linden explained that Chapter 23K, § 68 establishes a subcommittee of the Gaming Policy Advisory Committee to develop recommendations to address issues related to addiction services as a result of the development of gaming establishments in the Commonwealth. The subcommittee consists of five members representing the MGC, DPH, the Mass Council on Gaming and Health, and two Governor appointees. Director Vander Linden identified the appointed members of the subcommittee and noted that the subcommittee is now completely activated. The Commission thanked Director Vander Linden for this update.

5. [Commissioner Updates](#) (52:37)

a. IAGR Conference

Commissioner Cameron provided an updated on the IAGR Conference scheduled for next week. She thanked the MGC members for their participation as well as that of all presenters. Commissioner Cameron explained the rules for the event regarding social distancing and masking.

6. [Other business](#) (57:23)

Commissioner Cameron moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner O'Brien.

Roll call vote:
Commissioner Cameron: *Aye.*
Commissioner O'Brien: *Aye.*
Chair Judd-Stein: *Aye.*
The motion passed unanimously.

List of Documents and Other Items Used

1. Notice of Meeting and Agenda dated September 9, 2021
2. [Commissioners' Packet](#) from the September 9, 2021, meeting