



GAMING ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

May 18th, 2023

Billings, MT

This is a summary of the Council meeting. The meeting in its entirety is recorded in a digital audio file format and maintained at the Gambling Control Division office at 615 S. 27th St., Suite A, Billings, Montana. Exhibits (if any) are on file in the office of the Gambling Control Division.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Aspenlieder
Travis Woltermann
Merle Frank

Lee Randall (Teams Link)
Mike Kenneally (Teams Link)
Garret McFarland (Teams Link)

DIVISION STAFF PRESENT

Jason Johnson (Administrator)
Matt Eckdahl (Technical Services Supervisor)
Alwyn Lansing (Attorney)

Steffanie McGowan (Administrative Officer)
Melina Bucy (Compliance Supervisor)

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTION

- ♦ **The Council welcomed new Chairman Scott Aspenlieder**
- ♣ **The Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the February 9th, 2023 meeting.**
- ♥ **The Council scheduled the next meeting for a tentative date September 25th-27th during Montana Taverns Association Convention in Great Falls. The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Administrator Johnson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

The minutes from the February 9th, 2023 meeting were approved unanimously.

GAMBLING CONTROL DIVISION UPDATE

Operations Bureau Update

Administrator, Jason Johnson, mentioned GCD is starting to work on Legislative updates with rules and welcomes any feedback. He provided staffing updates mentioning that GCD has hired a Compliance Investigator in the Kalispell office, the Division currently has a Compliance Investigator position open in Missoula, reclassifying an Admin. Assist position to a License & Tax position, and a GCD Auditor retiring in July and will plan to replace that position.

Mr. Johnson mentioned providing a possible survey to primarily customers, business owners, and licensees to gain feedback for GCD, including overall professionalism, timely responses to requests, satisfaction, etc.

The office in Helena will be moving locations mid-end of June.

Technical Services Section Update

Mr. Eckdahl mentioned that since the last meeting, his team has completed 12 hardware and software submissions. The lab is currently field testing two locations for a new Tier 1 system for Platinum Gaming, once final approval is given for that system it will be the third approved Tier 1 system in the State and the first once since 2015. There are approximately 7,200 VGM's reporting meters with the Tier 1 system across 380 locations statewide which is 45% of all permitted machines, and 30% of licensed establishments. Since the last meeting in February the lab has inspected approximately 1,300 VGM's. GCD's software developer is ready to start testing changes for HB 297 as soon as it is signed by the Governor.

Statistics

Ms. McGowan provided an overview of statistics for Third quarter FY23. The Division collected approximately \$20.3 million in VGM tax, this number is a 4.6% increase from Second quarter FY23 and a 6% increase from Third quarter this time last year. During the Third quarter the Division received 107 gambling, liquor and combined liquor/gambling applications and reported there are approximately 1,347 active gambling operators in Montana. 793 VGM permits were issued as well as 198 Live Bingo & Keno permits, 16 Casino Night permits, 75 Calcutta permits, 158 Card Table permits, 282 Card Dealer Licenses, 30 Large-Stakes tournaments and 1 small-stakes tournament.

OTHER UPDATES

Alcohol Beverage Control Division (ABCD) Update

ABCD was invited but unable to attend.

Montana Board of Horse Racing

John Hayes provided updates regarding The Montana Board of Horse Racing.

Montana Council on Problem Gambling Update

Mr. Brad Longcake with Montana Council on Problem Gambling was invited but unable to attend.

Montana Lottery Update

Mr. Scott Sales with Montana Lottery was invited but unable to attend.

Montana Indian Gaming Association

The Montana Indian Gaming Association was invited but unable to attend.

Association Representatives

Ms. Shauna Helfert provided updates regarding The Montana Gaming Industry

John Iverson provided updates regarding the Montana Tavern Association.

Ronda Wiggers provided updates regarding the MT Coin Operators Association.

All 3 representatives would like the council to stay informed on the Federal changes and regulations of the Indian Gaming compact.

New Business

Discussion of frequency of the GAC meeting. The council decided to maintain the quarterly schedule.

Chairman Aspenlieder mentioned industry questions regarding Federal Indian Gaming changes. Mr. Johnson explained that while the Attorney General reviews and signs the compact it is negotiated by the Governors Office. Deputy Chief of Staff Gackle explained the DOJ is aware of it and will continue to research and gain a better understanding. The council will keep this topic as an ongoing discussion for the next scheduled meeting.

Chairman Aspenlieder acknowledged industry questions regarding licensing & compliance procedures between DOJ and DOR. Mainly a workflow of the process of a licensees application. Discussion of a possible subcommittee to do research within the industry to provide improvements to the industry. The council decided to have a flow chart provided for discussion at the next scheduled meeting.

Ms. Helfert with the Montana Gaming Industry would like to add discussion regarding the modernization of Fantasy Sports to the next scheduled meeting agenda.

Final Business

The Council elected to have the next meeting during the Montana Tavern Association Convention September 25th-27th, 2023 in Great Falls, MT, date TBD. The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.