



***MINUTES***  
***GAMING ADVISORY COUNCIL***

*June 25, 2021*  
*Billings, MT & Zoom*

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 2550 Prospect Avenue, Helena, Montana. Exhibits (if any) are on file in the office of the Gambling Control Division.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Scott Aspenlieder  
Merle Frank  
Rep. Gregory Frazer (Zoom)  
Mike Kenneally (Zoom)  
Carole Lankford

Sen. Ryan Lynch (Zoom)  
Garett McFarland (Zoom)  
Steve Morris (Zoom)  
Jesse Ramos (Zoom)

**DIVISION STAFF PRESENT**

Rusty Gackle   Jason Johnson   Andy Ritter   Matt Eckdahl (Zoom)   Mike Fanning (Zoom)

**SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTION**

- ◆     **The Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the October 2, 2020 meeting.**
- ♥     **The Council scheduled the next meeting for October 15, 2021, in Helena. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Administrator Gackle called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. All members were present.

The minutes from the October 2, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

Attorney General Austin Knudsen provided opening comments.

## **GAMBLING CONTROL DIVISION UPDATE**

### **Operations Bureau Update**

Mr. Ritter mentioned the Operations Bureau went through an organizational structure change and explained that the Audit Section was moved to the Operations Bureau from the formerly Investigations Bureau. Mr. Ritter also noted the division recruited for an Auditor position in Billings with an anticipated start date of mid-July.

Mr. Ritter cited that the Division was working through the annual license renewals, and that the Licensing Section has implemented a few efficiencies that had saved manual staff time for setting up follow-up cases.

### **Compliance Section Update**

Mr. Johnson explained to the Council that the Investigators were recently reclassified into Compliance Specialists, and provided a brief update on the changes being made in the Compliance Section.

### **Technical Services Section Update**

Mr. Eckdahl explained to the Council that the machine inspectors completed 2,300 VGM inspections since January 1, 2021, and the lab completed 50 VGM development cases. Mr. Eckdahl also mentioned the Lab had recently updated their Tier I requirements and submission documents.

### **Statistics**

Mr. Ritter provided an overview of statistics third quarter FY21. He explained that video gambling machine tax collections for the third quarter were approximately \$19.6 million, which was an 21% increase from the previous quarter. Mr. Ritter noted that the Division received 119 license applications in third quarter. Mr. Ritter also explained the Division permitted 2,704 gambling machines. The number of Live Keno and Bingo permits issued was 165. Live card tables permitted were down 12.9%, the number of card dealers were down 12.9%. Mr. Ritter also mentioned the division issued 17 large-stakes tournament permits, and 17 small-stakes tournament permits.

## **OTHER UPDATES**

### **Alcohol Beverage Control Division (ABCD) Update**

Ms. Becky Schlauch was unable to attend the meeting but had provided a handout that included high-level legislative updates and updates regarding ABCD activities.

### **Montana Board of Horse Racing**

The Montana Board of Horse Racing was invited but unable to attend.

### **Montana Council on Problem Gambling Update**

Mr. Brad Longcake provided updates regarding the Montana Council on Problem Gambling.

### **Montana Lottery Update**

Mr. Scott Sales was present and provided a brief introduction of himself and his recent appointment.

### **Montana Indian Gaming Association**

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

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Division Funding Report**

Mr. Ritter provided a brief overview to the Council on the Division's funding sources and concluded with a projection of the Division's financial position through fiscal year 2021.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Legislative Session Review**

Mr. Gackle provided a high-level update on the proposals that were passed during the Legislative Session, which included patrons dice games, sports pools, and player rewards.

Mr. Fanning provided an update on the drafted Administrative Rules Package.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Ronda Wiggers of the Montana Coin Machine Operators provided brief comments on the Division's funding.

Mr. John Iverson of the Montana Tavern Association provided comment on his interest in the rollout of the player rewards systems.

Ms. Shauna Helfert of the Gaming Industry Association provided a brief introduction of herself.

### **Final Business**

The Council scheduled the next meeting for October 15, 2021 in Helena. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.