

Bud Sizemore:

Commission, I'm glad to see that we have so many folks participating and I think what will have been a full year of virtual meetings for our agency. To get started, Madame Director, if you could call the roll.

Tina Griffin:

Yes. Vice Chair Patterson.

Julia Patterson:

Here.

Tina Griffin:

Commissioner Levy

Alicia Levy:

Here.

Tina Griffin:

Commissioner King.

Bud Sizemore:

Commissioner King's excused.

Tina Griffin:

Senator Conway. Senator Holy. Representative Kloba. Representative Vick.

Bud Sizemore:

Chair is present so we do have a quorum, with three commissioners. Of course, during legislative session, we're fortunate when our ex-officios can join us but it's not unusual that they are tied up with work up on the hill. We will begin our meeting. As a reminder, as a virtual meeting there will be various times when there will be opportunity for public comment. I would ask that everyone stay muted until that period of time, except for commissioners, of course. When we do come to a moment of public comment, if you wish to speak, certainly use the functionality of the TEAMS application. Raise your hand. If that's just not working, we will certainly try to accommodate if you just need to go unmute and gain my attention. The meeting is recorded and we are on TVW today.

Bud Sizemore:

I would like to begin our meeting with just a short moment of silence. As a law enforcement agency, we acknowledge and recognize the risks that so many of our employees take on each day as they go to work. We just want to recognize those law enforcement officers that have been lost since the last time that we met, so if you could just take a quick moment of silence, please.

Bud Sizemore:

Thank you. We have a pretty short agenda today. We will start with tab one which is our Consent Agenda. On that Consent Agenda is our March 11th Commission meeting minutes, our March 22nd

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Special Commission meeting minutes and new licenses and class three employees' licenses. Is there a motion to accept?

Alicia Levy:

This is Commissioner Levy. I move to approve the Consent Agenda as presented by staff.

Bud Sizemore:

Okay. Is there a second?

Julia Patterson:

Second from Patterson.

Bud Sizemore:

Okay. It's been moved and seconded to accept the Consent Agenda as presented by staff. All those in favor, please say, "Aye".

Alicia Levy:

Aye.

Julia Patterson:

Aye.

Bud Sizemore:

Aye. Any opposed? Motion carries 3-0. Thank you. We have a Director's report today.

Tina Griffin:

Interim Director's report is in the packet, and I have nothing else to add. Thank you.

Bud Sizemore:

All right, thank you. Welcome as the Interim Director to your first meeting in that role, although you've sat in that seat before as the Acting Director before. Tab two, we are going to defaults and we will have a presentation by Adam Thiel, our staff attorney. Are you with us, Adam?

Adam Thiel:

I am.

Bud Sizemore:

All right. Carry on.

Adam Thiel:

Good afternoon, everybody. For the record, Adam Thiel, staff attorney for the Gambling Commission. As the Chair outlined, there are two cases that I'll be presenting. I will just go in order and we'll take any questions after my presentation.

Adam Thiel:

The first case that I have in front of you is the Garage Bar and Grill. That's Cause Number CR2020-01263. The organization holds a punchboard pull-tab license, license number 05-21346. At the time of filing this, that license had expired on March 31st, 2021. They have since filed for renewal. However, the charges that we had presented outlined that one of the special agents for the Gambling Commission that is assigned to the Garage Bar and Grill had reported that there had been an unreported change of ownership for the organization. When that information came to him, one of our special agents in our Licensing Unit began an investigation to look into the change of ownership. In her communication, she gave until April 9, 2020 for the requisite paperwork to be filed. Over the course of what has almost been exactly a year at this point, there's been numerous communications that were outlined in the paperwork that you have received. However, the actual paperwork that is needed for a change of ownership has still yet to be filed with the Commission in that year.

Adam Thiel:

We had filed charges. The organization filed a request for a hearing. In doing so, that initiated a hearing with the Office of Administrative Hearings. OAH, as I will refer to the Office of Administrative Hearings, issued documents that outlined that there's a pre-hearing conference. No one in or representing Garage Bar and Grill appeared to that hearing. As a result, our attorney general had requested that an order be entered dismissing that appeal. On that day, OAH issued an order dismissing the appeal. That was February 18, 2021. On the order that OAH had issued, it made clear that the organization had seven days to file a petition with OAH to address that order, dismissing the appeal, and 20 days to file a petition with the Gambling Commission. Neither of those occurred in a timely manner. Effectively, we're asking you to affirm and finalize the Office of Administrative Hearings' dismissal.

Adam Thiel:

Former Director Trujillo issued these charges on December 10, 2020. While they did file a timely request, OAH entered their order on February 18, 2021. To date, nothing has been filed with either the Gambling Commission or OAH to address this. As a result, the commission may take action. Garage Bar and Grill cannot prove clear and convincing evidence that they're qualified for licensure. As a result, staff recommends that you affirm OAH's order and enter the final order that we have presented to you, revoking Garage Bar and Grill's license.

Bud Sizemore:

All right. Thank you, Adam. If it's all right with you, I would like to provide an opportunity to go ahead and finish out this particular issue. Are there any questions for Adam on this?

Alicia Levy:

I just have one clarification question. At the beginning, Adam, you said it was license number 05-21346, and the documentation I have in front of me says it's 05-21347. I just want to make sure we are acting upon the right license, if you can clear that up?

Adam Thiel:

If I said 46, I made a mistake. The documents that I have in front of me say 05-21347, so that would be the correct license. If I said 46, I apologize. I misspoke.

Alicia Levy:

Right. That's everything I had.

Bud Sizemore:

Okay. Anything for you, Commissioner Patterson?

Julia Patterson:

NO.

Bud Sizemore:

NO. OK. Is there anyone on our call representing the Garage Bar and Grill, wishing to address the Commission? Not seeing anyone raise their hand, I'll check with you, Julie, if there's been any chat or-

Julie Anderson:

Nope, no chat.

Bud Sizemore:

No communication. OK. No communication from Garage Bar and Grill. Is there a motion?

Alicia Levy:

This is Commissioner Levy. I move to revoke the Garage Bar and Grill's punchboard pull-tab license 05-21347 for the reasons as presented by staff and identified in the record.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. Is there a second?

Julia Patterson:

Second from Patterson.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. It's been moved and seconded to revoke the Garage Bar and Grill's punchboard pull tab license number 05-21347 for the reasons as presented by staff and identified in the record. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, we will go ahead and try to do a verbal vote again. All those in favor of the motion, please say Aye.

Alicia Levy:

Aye.

Julia Patterson:

Aye.

Bud Sizemore:

Aye. Any opposed? Motion carries three to zero. Adam, if you want to do the next one?

Adam Thiel:

Absolutely. On case two of tab two on the agenda, again Adam Thiel, staff attorney for the Gambling Commission for the record.

Adam Thiel:

Second case is [Vitelli Potricollin 00:11:16]. That's Cause Number CR2020-01320. Mr. Potricollin holds a card room employee license, license number 68-07167. That license authorizes public card room activity. That's the Great American Casino in Everett, Washington. That license expired February 15, 2021. Mr. Potricollin, while dealing at Great American Casino, received a toke wager, which is a tip in the form of a bet, in the amount of five dollars. The wager that was placed lost and, as a result, Mr. Potricollin should have collected that five dollar wager. He did not. Instead, he moved that five dollar chip to a different wagering spot and kept it on the table for the next hand that was dealt. That hand resulted in a \$200 win, which he then collected for himself. Washington State Gambling Commission special agents reviewed the video surveillance for the time in question, and it confirmed the actions that had been alleged. Former Director Trujillo issued the charges on January 19, 2021. As a result, a response was required by February 11, 2021. To date, the Gambling Commission has received nothing from Mr. Potricollin or any representation.

Adam Thiel:

As a result, the commission may take action if Mr. Potricollin cannot prove with clear and convincing evidence that he is qualified for licensure. As a result, staff recommends that you take action by signing the final order that has been presented to you revoking Mr. Potricollin's license. Again, I am happy to answer any questions.

Bud Sizemore:

Are there any questions for Adam? OK. I am seeing no commissioner questions, Adam. Is there a motion?

Julie Anderson:

Shouldn't we see if the defendant is here?

Bud Sizemore:

Oh, excuse me. Yes. Thank you. I don't know if we call them defendants, but yes. I apologize and thanks for the correction there. Is Mr. Potricollin with us today? If you are, please unmute or raise your hand if you would like to address the commission.

Bud Sizemore:

Not seeing any reach out through the other methods, Julie? OK. It does not appear that Mr. Potricollin is with us today, so now I will accept a motion.

Alicia Levy:

OK. This is Commissioner Levy. I move to revoke Vitelli Potricollin's public card room employee license number 68-07167 for the reasons presented by staff and identified in the record.

Julia Patterson:

Second from Patterson

Bud Sizemore:

OK. It has been moved and seconded to revoke Vitelli Potricollin's public card room employee license number 68-07167 for the reasons as presented by staff and identified in the record. Is there any commissioner discussion?

Bud Sizemore:

All right. Hearing none, all those in favor, please say Aye.

Julia Patterson:

Aye

Alicia Levy:

Aye

Bud Sizemore:

Aye. Any opposed? Motion carries three to zero. Thank you.

Bud Sizemore:

Thank you, Adam. Do we see you again on this agenda today? It doesn't look like it.

Adam Thiel:

That is all from me. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, commissioners.

Bud Sizemore:

All right. Have a great afternoon.

Bud Sizemore:

That brings us to tab three in our agenda which is a rule petition for discussion and possible filing regarding wager limit increase. I believe that Ashlie Laydon, our rules coordinator, will be presenting. I believe that the petitioner, Ronald Johns, is on the meeting as well. Ashlie, are you with us?

Ashlie Laydon:

I am.

Bud Sizemore:

Welcome, welcome.

**Ashlie Laydon:**

Thank you, Chair Sizemore and commissioners. For the record, I am Ashlie Laydon, Rules Coordinator with the Gaming Commission. Ronald Johns of Puyallup, Washington is proposing to amend WAC 23015140, wagering limits for house-banked card games, to increase the single wager or bonus wager

for an odds-based payout from \$300 to \$2,000. The petitioner feels this change is needed because operating expenses have increased over the years since the \$300 betting limit was put into place. This limit, along with being limited to 15 table games, makes it impossible to increase revenue to a sustainable level. The petitioner feels the effect of this rule change would allow card games to remain competitive with tribal casinos and to continue to offer livable wages to the thousands of employees in the industry.

Ashlie Laydon:

house-banked card rooms opened in 1997 with wager limits set at \$25. Wager limits were last increased in 2009 to the current limit of \$300. The commission last received a petition to amend this rule in 2016 from the Recreational Gaming Association, who proposed to increase wager limits to \$500 to match tribal gaming operations at that time. That petition was accepted by the commission, but was later withdrawn by the petitioner after hearing commissioner concerns related to problem gambling and the total accumulated amount that can be wagered in a single hand. The petitioner today is proposing to increase wager limits from \$300 to \$2,000 which, if implemented, would mean a player could wager up to \$10,000 or more per hand because players have the ability to place a single wager and combine it with a number of bonus wagers per hand under the current rules.

Ashlie Laydon:

We have received three public comments in support of this petition; one from [Amanda Liu 00:17:52], one from Kin Nikazy and the third from [Jennifer Hoenshu 00:17:57] of Evergreen Gaming. All feel that this change would allow card rooms to increase wages for their employees. Under the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act, the commission must take action on this petition within 60 days of receiving it. Your options are to accept the petition and initiate rulemaking proceedings by filing the rules proposed for further discussion, or to deny the petition in writing stating the reasons for denial and specifically address the concerns stated in the petition or, where appropriate, indicate alternative means by which the agency will address the concerns raised in the petition. With that, I am going to turn it over to Ronald to present his portion now. Thank You.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. Thank you.

Ronald Johns:

Hi. I'm Ronald Johns. Good afternoon. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. I have worked in the card room industry for 23 years. I began my career as a security guard and, over the years, worked my way through several positions in gaming such as surveillance, table games dealer, floor supervisor, shift manager, casino manager and finally to my current position as the general manager of both Chips and Palace Casino located in Lakewood. I come before you today to discuss the petition I submitted requesting a rule change for wager limits. I submitted this rule change not on behalf of my employer nor on the behalf of any organization, but simply as an individual licensee who is deeply concerned about the future of the card room industry that has provided me and my family a stable and comfortable, livable wage over the years. Currently, card rooms in Washington state are limited to 15 table games, allowing for up to nine spots per table and a maximum wager of \$300. It is my belief that when these limitations were set in place, the clock began ticking towards the end of the card room industry.

Ronald Johns:

The reason for this is that these limitations put a defined maximum revenue structure in place that, with increased costs over the years, have put card rooms closer and closer to operating in the red. Over the past 10 years, the card room industry has lost roughly half of the card rooms that once existed. This is in large part due to many card room owners concluding that the rewards were no longer outweighing the risks, and with no light at the end of the tunnel. This has led to thousands of jobs lost over the years. The reason for this is that costs to operate have continued to rise year over year. For the company that I work for, labor costs alone have increased 68% since 2010 which is around the time that the last wager increase occurred, allowing the \$300 wager limit. Unlike most businesses, card rooms cannot simply offset cost increases by passing them on to the customer.

Ronald Johns:

What I am proposing is to increase the maximum wager allowed to \$2,000. This increase is intended to cater to customers that currently have no interest in coming into my casino but instead choose to book a flight out of the state to cities such as Las Vegas or Reno. These players have no interest in playing where they have such smaller limits on wagers. I have spoken to many such individuals over the years and this is the most common reason they give for not choosing to play in my card room. I am referring to individuals who make at or around seven figures and their \$2,000 bet is the equivalent of my \$20 bet.

Ronald Johns:

I would like to finish by saying that I was very unfamiliar with the process of getting a rule change implemented and, quite honestly, I didn't believe that the decision would be made today on the issue. Ashlie has been very helpful in educating me on the process and has informed me that a decision can and likely will be made today. I'd like to state that I believe this issue to be a serious one with a lasting and meaningful impact on the card room industry, and that this issue is multifaceted and doesn't necessarily have a simple or single fix. My intention, when submitting my rule change request, was to open a dialogue in the hopes of coming to an agreement on how to keep card rooms from ultimately going out of business.

Ronald Johns:

I am sure that you all have questions or concerns about making such a rule change, and that those questions may not be answered in one meeting. With that in mind, I would humbly request that if, after hearing me speak today, you do recognize that there are changes that need to be made but are not necessarily in agreeance that this is the change that you can approve, that you would allow me an opportunity to meet with you or your staff in order to determine what is the best solution and what can be agreed upon, in which case I would be willing to withdraw my petition in favor of further discussions. My goal here is to get the right changes made, not to simply make changes without regard to the long term consequences of such changes. I thank you once again for the opportunity to come before you and I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.

Bud Sizemore:

Thank you Mr. Johns. That was a very solid representation of your case and I appreciate that very much. I am going to open the floor to commissioners for questions of either Ashlie or the petitioner, and I see Commissioner Patterson has her hand up, and is muted.

Julia Patterson:

Thanks, Mr. Chair. I actually have three questions. The first one is for Ashley.

Julia Patterson:

Ashley, back in 2016, the RGA withdrew their request to increase the wager limits. They were going to increase those limits to \$500. Could you help us remember why did they withdraw?

Ashlie Laydon:

Sue, in listening to the-

Julia Patterson:

Ashley, let me restate that. We expressed concerns and you said that the concerns were associated with problem gambling and that there was one other concern expressed. Could you help me remember what those concerns were in more detail?

Ashlie Laydon:

I believe that the concerns were around problem gambling and also the fact that players can place multiple bets per hand. If I am incorrectly explaining that, Tina can help me out. Players can place multiple \$300 wagers at a time so it's not just \$300. It can be more than \$300. In terms of your second part of that, I can't speak to why the petitioner withdrew. I think that, in going back through the old meeting minutes, they expected the commission to deny so, instead of getting a denial, they withdrew. I don't want to speak for them.

Julia Patterson:

OK. Has the organization come back expressing an interest in moving forward with this concept and attempting to follow up with a petition that would make more sense?

Ashlie Laydon:

The meeting minutes indicated that they would be coming forward in the future. There was indication that they would be bringing this up again but I believe that since then the Recreational Gaming Association has perhaps dissolved.

Julia Patterson:

OK

Bud Sizemore:

Commissioner Patterson, I think Director Griffin has something to add as well.

Tina Griffin:

Everything Ashlie said is correct. I just want to clarify that the rules at this time do limit the number of wagers per hand to no more than three separate games at the maximum of \$300 and one game can be wagered on at a maximum of five dollars. There is a limit in terms of how much each player can wager on a particular hand.

Julia Patterson:

OK. If there's a limit, why does the staff report say that players could wager up to \$10,000 or more per hand because the current game rules allow a player to place a single wager and combine it with a number of bonus wagers per hand?

Tina Griffin:

If this rule change of changing it to \$2,000 was implemented, then that would change it to \$10,000.

Julia Patterson:

OK. Mr. John... if I may continue Mr. Chair?

Bud Sizemore:

You may.

Julia Patterson:

Mr. Johns, were you aware of that little technicality there?

Ronald Johns:

Yes, I was aware of that. The \$2,000 number was picked specifically with that in mind because I am trying to cater towards a certain clientele. My casino currently does not have players coming into it that would even entertain such a wager. If I am going to get the attention of someone who is willing to book a flight out of the state to have their entertainment needs met, then \$2,000 is the number I felt was the correct number to make it worth their while to come in and play here.

Julia Patterson:

So you knew that that meant that the players could wager up to \$10,000 or more?

Ronald Johns:

Correct. Yes

Julia Patterson:

OK. All right. I heard you say that, if we are not inclined to move forward with this, that you would be willing to withdraw this with hopes that the Gambling Commission would enter into a dialogue with you about how card rooms could be helped. Did I hear that correctly?

Ronald Johns:

Yes, ma'am. You did. Yes. I came into this very unfamiliar with the process. If I am being honest, the entire intent of this proposal was to be able to have that dialogue between myself and those that would make the decision in the hopes that, whether it was the 2,000 number or a different number, whether there would be stipulations behind a higher wager limit such as background checks or approvals for players that would do such a wager, any number of other possibilities that might make this a situation that would be agreed upon or workable, that would work both for the card room industry as well as for the community and everyone would be comfortable with that final conclusion, that's what I was trying to get to by submitting this.

Ronald Johns:

Certainly, once I talked to Ashlie and she told me that it was a very real possibility that a decision would just be flat out made today, if I'm being honest, that wasn't actually my intent. My intention was to bring up the issue, hopefully to begin the dialogue and have an opportunity, whether it's to meet with you or your staff, to discuss these things. I don't know what the history is with the commissioners in terms of whether or not they've had a dialogue with someone like myself who has been in this industry for as long as I have and worked my way through all of these positions. I've experienced it; I've lived it. There's a lot of things, such as the reason the RGA chose to withdraw the last time being problem gambling, that I personally am happy to address and give my opinions on as well as my concerns, and hopefully some answers and solutions as to how to address that issue.

Julia Patterson:

Thank you, Mr. Johns. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bud Sizemore:

All right. Any further questions for either Ashlie or the petitioner?

Alicia Levy:

I still have questions. I'm not willing to raise it to 2,000 right now, but I'd be happy just to continue the conversation and have him work with staff and see if there's something we could do to have a withdrawal kind of thing.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. I guess I have a question but before I go to my question, Commission King, have you joined us?

Lauren King:

Yes, I'm here.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. Welcome to the meeting and we'll proceed now with four commissioners.

Bud Sizemore:

My question, I guess Mr. Johns, is... Have you gone through the statute that guides us related to the gambling act? Hopefully that doesn't come off as... or incorrectly. I only say that because the Gambling Act is very specific related to the card room industry and punchboard pull-tabs, all those sort of things about the nature and scope of what the legislature intends for gaming to be in the state of Washington... that's for it to be more of a social pastime. It is a deterrent to professional gaming at the commercial side of things. Were you aware of that, sir?

Ronald Johns:

Certainly, yeah. I'm not deeply in tune to all of the specifics regarding the legislature's feelings or positions on all of the issues regarding card rooms or gambling in Washington state, but I am familiar with that fact and that there's certainly an expectation or a limited desire on the part of the legislature to go too far with gambling. My take on that specifically to my petition was that the kind of customer

that I am trying to accommodate is a customer who... A \$2,000 bet to them or \$10,000 in total is like me betting \$100. This is someone who does not find entertainment in walking into my casino and betting \$300 maximum. There's no joy in it for them; there's no entertainment for them. That is the purpose of that, which is why I say that I know that more discussions need to be had in order to not have it open to just any customer walking in the door and betting \$10,000 per hand. That's not really what I am looking for here, if that answers your question. I hope it does.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. Good. Thank you for that. Commissioner Patterson, did you have another question or did we just not get you cleared off there?

Julia Patterson:

No, I got my questions answered.

Bud Sizemore:

Great. I think that the next step for us would be... I think you can kind of see the lay of the land, Mr. Johns, and if you do get to the point that you would like to withdraw, I am certain that our staff is willing to engage and try to figure out if there are some things here. I understand the impacts to this industry over this past year have been incredible. I know a lot of folks out there have been incredibly resilient but it's certainly an issue. If you have not withdrawn yet, I think that it would be reasonable for us to open it up for public comment. There may be a few folks in the audience that would like to have their voice heard. Then I'll come back to you and see if you'd like to have us take a vote or whether you'd like to withdraw.

Bud Sizemore:

We will go to public comment. Is there anyone that would like to make public comment? Either raise your hand or, if that is not working, go ahead and just open your mike.

Bud Sizemore:

It doesn't appear like we have anyone. Mr. Johns, would you like to withdraw or would you like us to have a vote?

Ronald Johns:

Yes. If I understand correctly, I believe that was Ashlie that spoke up and said that she would entertain the opportunity for further discussion. Did I understand that correctly or was that someone else?

Bud Sizemore:

We will have our staff... It may be Ashlie; it may be someone else from the agency. We will reach out and begin a dialogue and lay out a process that provides that opportunity.

Ronald Johns:

OK. With that in mind, then yes, I would like to officially withdraw my petition.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. We will accept that and not take action then on this rule petition. We will-

Ashlie Laydon:

Chair Sizemore? There was-

Bud Sizemore:

Excuse me, yes?

Ashlie Laydon:

Sorry, yes. This is Ashlie. There was a hand up though, I believe.

Bud Sizemore:

Yes, I think it got pulled down on purpose.

Ashlie Laydon:

OK. Thank you.

Bud Sizemore:

Thank you, Ashlie.

Bud Sizemore:

Thank you, Mr. Johns. Our staff will be in touch.

Ronald Johns:

Thank you very much. I appreciate you taking the time to hear me.

Bud Sizemore:

Absolutely.

Bud Sizemore:

Thank you, Ashlie. I think you're done with us today as well.

Ashlie Laydon:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Bud Sizemore:

We will now move on to tab four of our agenda which is a presentation by John Jen, our project manager and a self-exclusion update. Mr. Jen.

John Jen:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, my name is John Jen. I am a project manager for the Gambling Commission. Today, I am going to take a quick look at an overview of our anticipated timeline for implementing the state-wide exclusion program.

John Jen:

First, I would like to do just a quick review of the current state. Each house-banked card room and tribal casino maintains and operates their own self-exclusion program. This means that if an individual wishes to self-exclude from multiple locations, they must physically go to each location and self-exclude. This process, besides being time consuming, is also open to triggering a gambling event which an individual is trying to avoid. The new system will be state-wide and will allow an individual to self-exclude from all house-banked card rooms and participating tribal casinos with one application. They'll have the option of doing this at any house-banked card room, participating tribal casinos, at the gambling commission or via mail with a notarized application. That's the change that we are talking about.

John Jen:

If we look at the schedule, currently we are in Rules Finalization and Stakeholder Reviews, and anticipate having that process completed sometime during the month of May. Going through that process then, we will go through the Rules Adoption process. If everything goes according to plan, in August we will begin Rules Implementation prep to go live with all the house-banked card rooms in early 2022. The plan then would be to keep the tribes informed of our progress throughout the project, and also enter into consultations with them about participating in a state-wide exclusion program.

John Jen:

At a very high level, that's what we're talking about and I would be open to any questions.

Bud Sizemore:

All right. Are there any questions from commissioners? I'm not seeing any hands raised.

Bud Sizemore:

I very much appreciate at this point getting this briefing and being able to see the work that's been done, as well as the work that is still to be done. I absolutely commend all those folks that have been working on this process til now. I think this is going to be a very valuable program for those that suffer from gambling disorders, that will help a lot of citizens in the state of Washington. I wish you good luck in getting to the last bubble and getting us all there. I want to thank you and I appreciate this presentation.

John Jen:

Thank you, Chair.

Bud Sizemore:

Anyone else? Anything? OK. Not seeing anyone... Thank you, sir.

Bud Sizemore:

We will now move on to our legislative update, tab 5, a presentation by Brian Considine, our legal and legislative manager. Brian, gotcha?

Brian Considine:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bud Sizemore:

Absolutely.

Brian Considine:

Yes. In this tab, you have a memo... just a couple brief highlights and some things that have been changing since I issued the memo.

Brian Considine:

The Enhanced Raffle Bill, House Bill 1469, passed out of the House recently. I can't remember if it was yesterday or the day before. That should be headed to the governor soon.

Brian Considine:

The Horse Racing Commission Bill, House Bill 1022, also passed out of the Senate recently so that should be headed to the governor.

Brian Considine:

Four big items on the operating budget, I will just brief you quickly on. The three items that we have been in support of in trying to receive: the extension on the Problem Gambling Task Force, the extension of the deadline for the Prevalence Study, and the extension for repayment of the Sports Wager and Loan are in both the House and the Senate budgets, so very good news. A big thank you to our ex-officios in helping us obtain that in both bills. Also, Senator Conway was great enough to draw up an amendment. We worked with staff to get \$3.6M additional appropriation which represents the monies that our CFO, Chris Stanley, can show that we've lost since March 2020, when the pandemic struck and the industry was either fully shuttered or partially shuttered. That is good news. It's not in the House budget but we will be working to hopefully get it concurred on and have that in the final budget.

Brian Considine:

With that happening, is there any questions?

Bud Sizemore:

Are there any questions for Brian?

Bud Sizemore:

OK. Not seeing any hands raised, thank you, Brian. I know that this is a super tough year to try to operate up there so, well done.

Bud Sizemore:

All right. We will now move to the last item on our agenda prior to having public comment, and that is the Agency Director hiring discussion. It will be presented by Lisa Benavidez, and I know that Vice Chair Patterson has also been deeply involved in this process. I will be recused from any votes or decisions on this particular item but I think I can still probably maintain the chair. Lisa, are you with us?

Lisa Benavidez:

Good afternoon, Chair. For the record, I am Lisa Benavidez, the Human Resources Director for the agency.

Lisa Benavidez:

There are a few items of interest, I believe, for the commissioners in moving forward with the process to hire our next Director, and there are some decisions that need to be made in order for us to do so.

Lisa Benavidez:

The first question I have for Commissioners Patterson, King and Levy is if you have had a chance to review the director position description, as that will be the catalyst for all of our recruitment materials.

Alicia Levy:

Yes

Julia Patterson:

Yes

Lauren King:

Yes, I did.

Lisa Benavidez:

OK. Does anyone have any changes that you would like to make or any questions about the position description itself?

Julia Patterson:

I was wondering, did we include the agency's mission on that job description so that, when people apply, that will be right up front for them to see?

Lisa Benavidez:

I did include it in the position objective and that will also show up in the top portion of any recruitment materials that we produce.

Julia Patterson:

OK. I also was interested in, under the header of Principal Responsibilities, part of the major tenet of the organization is to keep gambling safe so I was wondering if this person should be asked to recommend regulations that are necessary to address and control problem gambling, and if that should be in writing. Director Trujillo has done that for us. He has made recommendations on certain things throughout the years. I am wondering if my colleagues think that it might be a good idea to highlight that under that header of Principal Responsibilities. I think it's a good idea but if anyone has a problem with that, I'm very open to hearing why.

Alicia Levy:

I think it's a good idea as well.

Lauren King:

I'm fine with that as well.

Julia Patterson:

Was that Commissioner Levy? Thank you.

Julia Patterson:

Lisa, is there any problem with that from your point of view?

Lisa Benavidez:

My concern with that would be what our statutory obligations are as far as to keep gambling legal and honest, and if recommending problem gambling language would be problematic and not fit within the confounds of what's in RCW. That would be my concern. I can certainly work with one or more of you to come up with some language to include in the position description that would make sense and not be too much of a stretch for what's currently in RCW.

Lauren King:

This is Commissioner King. I would defer to legal on if there is any issue with that.

Julia Patterson:

Is there a legal [inaudible 00:48:45] Suzanne Becker.

Suzanne Becker:

Hi. This is-

Bud Sizemore:

Welcome, Suzanne.

Suzanne Becker:

Hi. Hopefully, you can hear me okay. I think the question is always precisely what language you want to add and then how that would mesh with your current statute and the limits of that. If you wanted to add something about problem gambling... with respect to the current gambling act and RCW 946, I think that would certainly be reasonable, but it would all depend on the precise language.

Julia Patterson:

Thanks, Mr. Chair. Maybe we could work on something on like that... I'd like to work on something like that with staff.

Bud Sizemore:

OK.

Lisa Benavidez:

Vice Chair Patterson. This is Lisa. I can work with you on that language and then we can just have Suzanne do a quick review before we include it in the position description and any recruitment materials.

Julia Patterson:

Just make sure that the other commissioners see the language also.

Lisa Benavidez:

Certainly.

Julia Patterson:

That's all [crosstalk 00:50:23] the only questions I had. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bud Sizemore:

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Lisa Benavidez:

Did any other commissioner have any comments or concerns or language that they wanted to add or change in the position description as written?

Lauren King:

This is Commissioner King. I have no changes.

Lisa Benavidez:

Thank you.

Alicia Levy:

This is Commissioner Levy. I don't have anything either.

Lisa Benavidez:

OK. I will work with Commissioner Patterson on adding language for problem gambling to the position description, provide that additional information to the other commissioners for buy-in so that we may move forward with our recruitment materials. That is going to be what our recruitment process and anything that goes out about the position will include.

Lisa Benavidez:

The other decision that will need to be made today at the commission meeting, if you all have enough information to do so, is whether we would go forward with the recruitment process using in house resources which would be the Human Resources staff and likely other resources internal to the agency, or whether we wanted to move forward with a third party consulting firm that has experience in recruiting for executive level positions. For your information, I provided the commissioners with information on what a third party recruitment firm would do in order to recruit for the position including developing all the recruitment materials, reaching out to their resources, doing some specific outreach activities for this particular position and including developing interview materials if we would

like them to conduct the interviews and reference checks of candidates and moving preferred candidates forward for further consideration to commissioners.

Lisa Benavidez:

If we were to use in house resources, we would go through the same process. However, recognizing that our expertise is not in recruiting at this level, the last time we did it was in 2013 when we hired Director Trujillo. At that time, it did take a significant amount of time in order to get that done. Best estimation at this point based on information I have received from a third party recruiter, their process would take between 90 and possibly 120 days. Our process would likely take a little bit longer, mostly because we don't have enough resources internally that we could just dedicate to this process like a third party firm could do. We have obviously not only other recruitments that are ongoing in trying to fill our agent positions, but also other general work that we do in the human resources' office that keeps us fairly busy most... all days actually. There would be likely some work that may be delayed if we were to dedicate more resources to working on the director recruitment.

Lisa Benavidez:

Also, even though the recruitment firms would require us to pay a fee... and those fees range anywhere from 18% to 23%... I believe if we were to use internal resources to dedicate to hiring the director, we would likely incur some costs as well, likely in hiring maybe a part time employee to help with some of our other work while we dedicated our staff to working on the director recruitment. While working internally would be a little bit easier in that we are a known quantity, we know the position fairly well and we could start fairly quickly, I don't know that we would necessarily be ahead of the game than if we were to use a third party recruiter simply because they have the resources and the process already outlined because this is what they do for a living. They have a couple of thousand resources to tap into while we have our four HR staff to do so.

Lisa Benavidez:

The decision at this point needs to be whether you would prefer to have the recruitment handled in house or whether you would prefer to have the recruitment handled by an outside firm. My recommendation would be to use an external firm with a caveat being the one firm I actually have been able to speak with cannot start this recruitment, because they are dedicated to other projects at the moment, until likely August of this year so that would be a delay in us being able to start. As I said, in house resources would be able to start more quickly than that. However, I don't know that we would finish any more quickly than if we were to hire this recruitment firm or any recruitment firm.

Julia Patterson:

Mr. Chair.

Bud Sizemore:

Yes. Go ahead Vice Chair.

Julia Patterson:

I think in my opinion, Mr. Chair, that you should turn the gavel over to me for this decision just for the purpose of optics.

Bud Sizemore:

Sure

Julia Patterson:

I guess it's my old legislative training but I just think-

Bud Sizemore:

Yeah.

Julia Patterson:

OK. SO, I... thank you.

Bud Sizemore:

OK, you have the gavel.

Julia Patterson:

What do commissioners think about those two choices. Any questions?

Alicia Levy:

I have one question. This is Commissioner Levy. Are there any other third party firms that you know of or could look into that could start sooner?

Lisa Benavidez:

Yeah. There are several firms on the state's master contract list. I have reached out to two other firms that have specific experience in recruiting for executive level positions for public employers. None have specific state agency experience, but their experience is definitely something that is transferable to public sector. While I have reached out to two other firms, I have not heard back on what time frames they are looking at as far as being able to embark on this process, I would anticipate that it would be probably someplace between June and August. I imagine they are just as busy as everyone else is right now with recruiting.

Julia Patterson:

Go ahead, Alicia. Anything else? Excuse me... Commissioner Levy?

Alicia Levy:

I don't know that I have any specific questions. I am interested to hear your and Commissioner King's thoughts on this. I obviously understand that our HR department may not be large enough and have enough time to take on something such as this but I don't like the fact of pushing it all the way out to August to start. There's always the fee involved, too. I don't know how that affects us as well as a commission.

Lauren King:

This is Commissioner King. I have similar sentiments to Commissioner Levy. I understand why the staff might favor using a third party but if there's going to be a delay in this, I would prefer to go in house.

Lisa Benavidez:

By delay, Commissioner King, do you mean any delay or is there a reasonable amount of time? If I make contact with another firm that is able to start in June, is that something that you would consider not too much of a delay? Or is any delay at this point just too much?

Lauren King:

I'd like to get the other commissioners' thoughts on that June hypothetical.

Julia Patterson:

MY problem is that, Lisa, you did not give us a rough timeline for how long you thought it would take in house. I think you're just being cautious but can you give a rough timeline? We won't hold you to it but a general idea... [crosstalk 00:59:02] because then we can compare it to what you are saying the outside firms are able to do.

Lisa Benavidez:

I would imagine that in house, once we got going on it... how the language for the position description is going to be regardless of whether it is done in house or not how we can start the process. For us to do this in house, I would imagine with all of the processes that have to take place that could take two or three weeks and some of them are simultaneous. We're looking at about probably five months to hire and that is if everything goes well. That would include our developing of the materials, having the announcement posted, doing the outreach efforts, pulling together our interview panel and our interview questions, conducting the interviews, doing reference checks and, most likely, doing the other background checking including psychological exams and polygraph examinations for the preferred candidate. That, I would imagine at this point, would take about five months. When I look at what we're doing for agent positions it is, on the low end, about six months to go through the process. We would have HR staff obviously dedicated to working on this and probably do this a little bit more quickly than we could when we are hiring our agent positions simply because this is what we do. When we are working on agent hires, it is staff members out of the field who are working on the processes so we don't dedicate as much time as we possibly could. We are probably looking at at least five months in order to-

Julia Patterson:

OK. Not holding you to it, of course, but you are saying we are looking at mid September. If we went with an outside firm, the one that you like, they were not able to get going for 90 to 120 days. Is that right?

Lisa Benavidez:

I'm going to have to count on my fingers. It's a good thing I am not on camera. Yes, probably about 120 days until they can start.

Julia Patterson:

Then, so then it takes them three or four months?

Lisa Benavidez:

Yes.

Julia Patterson:

So actually in house might be a little bit quicker way to go. The other question I have is the cost of hiring the outside firm which is 18 to 23% of the fee... what does that come out to be approximately?

Lisa Benavidez:

The low end would be just over \$28,000; the high end would be just over \$42,000. The preferred firm is a 23% fee and that is roughly \$36,000.

Julia Patterson:

OK. Then, generally speaking, if you have to hire additional help to move through this process and manage all of your other work as well, how much would the agency be spending on that temporary employee?

Lisa Benavidez:

I imagine with salary and benefits, it would be pretty comparable, probably between 30 and 45,000 dollars.

Julia Patterson:

OK. So the costs are about the same. The time line... it sounds like an outside firm, unless you can find somebody else like Commissioner Levy has asked... it sounds like the time line is kind of the same. However, in house would go a little bit more quickly-

Lisa Benavidez:

It would start more quickly, yes.

Julia Patterson:

Start more quickly.

Alicia Levy:

I have a question.

Julia Patterson:

Yes, go ahead.

Alicia Levy:

If you don't mind... sorry. Lisa, let's say if we went with an outside firm that started in August, is there anything that in house could do to help speed them along and move their time line to be quicker?

Lisa Benavidez:

Yes, we certainly could start the drafting of the recruitment materials and ensure that everything was lined up for what they need. They would do something that may take them a little bit longer to familiarize themselves with the agency because in house obviously we know who we are, we know what our work is and we know what the work of the Director is. They would need to be educated on that so that would be part of their delay. We could certainly get materials ready, we could likely assist them as

well. What I wouldn't want to do though, if we did that, is to be a hindrance to them. They have their processes down pat on what they do. I wouldn't want to get in the way of that. Certainly they would look to us for how we wanted to move forward. Getting some of the work done in the beginning with the position description and maybe drafting some of the information that we thought would be important to include in recruitment materials would be good. I don't know how much time that would actually save them.

Alicia Levy:

OK.

Julia Patterson:

Are there any other things that we need to consider as we attempt to make this decision? We talked about the time line, we talked about money that's involved, we talked about what an outside firm would be doing for us... sounds like we can pretty much do what they can do. [crosstalk 01:04:34] Is there anything else that we should be considering? What do my colleagues... What do you think, Commissioner King and Levy? What are your thoughts on this?

Lauren King:

I think we may need some more information. Given what I think is happening right now, it seems to make more sense to handle it in house.

Julia Patterson:

Thank you. Commissioner Levy?

Alicia Levy:

I think I agree with that, actually, with in house.

Julia Patterson:

I agree also. Commissioner King, we are in general agreement here but you said you felt that we needed a little more information. Does that pertain to our ability to find another firm that can do the work more quickly?

Lauren King:

I think the discussion about the relative timelines that you just engaged in was helpful to me. I am definitely favoring in house at this point.

Julia Patterson:

Should we ask staff to continue to look for an outside firm that can do the work more quickly, or are you comfortable now today with moving forward with the direction that we keep this process in house?

Lauren King:

I am comfortable with keeping it in house.

Julia Patterson:

Commissioner Levy, what are your thoughts?

Alicia Levy:

I'm comfortable keeping it in house, too. I think that the fees sound like quite a bit and... our staff knows what we are looking for, I think, and what is needed.

Julia Patterson:

OK. Are you both comfortable with us, the Commission, letting staff know that we think they should go ahead and bring on a temporary employee to help them through the process?

Alicia Levy:

Yes

Lauren King:

Yes

Julia Patterson:

OK. Is that pretty clear then, Lisa, that we want the process to take place in house and, so that your regular daily work does not fall behind, that you hire someone temporarily to assist you? You gave us a general sense of how much that would be. Is there anything else you need to know at this time?

Lisa Benavidez:

Regarding the hiring process, no. Yes, it is very clear on the expectations of the commissioners for staff to handle this in house, and to move forward on bringing someone on temporarily to assist with either this workload or the other workload that will be shifted. There are some other decisions from the commissioners that I would like today so that we can start moving on the recruitment with additional information. That is on salary.

Lisa Benavidez:

In 2013, the commissioners came up with a salary range for the director position. That salary range has been unchanged but for it has been adjusted to accommodate all of the legislative actions taken that would impact salary for our director. Anytime there was a general wage increase, then the top of our salary range for the director was raised as well. At the same time, our director salary was increased to reflect those changes. With the salary changes that are legislatively mandated, the top of the salary range for the director position is \$156,444. How we came about that the last time was really comparing ourselves to like situated agencies in the state and what their salary maximums were for their top level director positions. At this time, that's what I would recommend moving forward with is that salary that has been adjusted. Obviously the commissioners have salary setting authority as well as hiring authority for this position so, at any time you would like to revisit that salary range maximum, we can certainly do so.

Julia Patterson:

[crosstalk 01:09:14] I'm so sorry.

Julia Patterson:

Today, you are simply asking us if we agree that we should maintain that top of the salary level of 156,444.

Lisa Benavidez:

Yes. Then we would recruit within that salary maximum, allowing for some room for growth and recognizing that we will likely need to recruit between \$126,000 and maybe \$151,000. That would still allow for a little bit of growth moving forward.

Julia Patterson:

Then ultimately, this commission will set that salary based on what we think is appropriate for the individual that we are offering the job to.

Lisa Benavidez:

That is correct.

Julia Patterson:

Commissioners, any [crosstalk 01:10:07] Go ahead.

Alicia Levy:

Has anyone looked at... maybe, Lisa, but is that a standard salary with a director position like this, with the same sort of employees in the government realm?

Lisa Benavidez:

This position is a little bit different than most. Most, the salaries are set by a board or the governor himself. I did look at other like situated agency directors and we are above some and below others. I think it is a fair medium, middle of the road position for us to be in for recruitment. [crosstalk 01:10:54] As we're moving forward, if we just are not seeing the results that we think we would see if we raised the salary or increased the salary, then that is something I would bring forward to the commissioners for consideration to change if it made sense.

Alicia Levy:

OK. Great. I'm good with that recommendation.

Julia Patterson:

OK. Commissioner King, what do you think?

Lauren King:

I have to unmute. I'm comfortable moving forward with that recommendation.

Julia Patterson:

All right. Go ahead with that, Lisa. That recommendation is good.

Lisa Benavidez:

There are two other items that I would like for the commissioners to provide guidance on.

Lisa Benavidez:

The first is whether or not specific law enforcement experience is required for this position. The last time we recruited in 2013 we did not require specific law enforcement experience, even though this is obviously a law enforcement agency. We just happened to hire somebody that did have specific law enforcement experience but I don't believe that all the directors in our history have had that experience. It would change how we recruit and the minimum qualifications that we set forward to move forward. I don't believe in order to manage this agency that somebody has to specifically have law enforcement experience. We can recruit in such a way that we say that is not required, however it's preferred. Perhaps candidates who do have law enforcement experience might rise to the top of our candidate pool.

Alicia Levy:

This is Commissioner Levy. I like adding it as the preferred. I don't think it has to be a requirement.

Julia Patterson:

OK. Commissioner King?

Lauren King:

I agree.

Julia Patterson:

OK. I agree also, just to make that a preference.

Lisa Benavidez:

Thank you. I will do so.

Lisa Benavidez:

The last item that I would like for you to weigh in on is determining whether or not you would like a psychological exam and a polygraph exam to be conducted of our top candidate or candidates moving forward. All of our special agent positions, everyone that we hire in a special agent position, is required to undergo psychological examination and a polygraph examination. As this position would basically be serving as the chief of our law enforcement staff and the head of the agency, I would recommend that we move forward with those two examinations. We did this the last time we hired a director as well, even though we did not require the law enforcement experience.

Alicia Levy:

OK. Commissioner Levy again. I think if we require it of our staff, then it makes sense to require it for this position as well.

Lauren King:

I agree.

Julia Patterson:

I agree also.

Lisa Benavidez:

OK. I will move forward with those items. I would to take a little bit of time just to put some reminders out there on how the process will look and what will happen in public and what will happen at Executive Session and what can happen outside of those two. This is a very unique position. Some boards and commissions in the state have their chief or their director positions appointed by the governor's office even though they have a board.[inaudible 01:14:40] this commission has hiring authority for our top position for the director of the agency. That is something that you as commissioners have authority for. It puts us in an interesting spot where, because you are a decision making body, much of what we do has to happen in a public setting. What we have taken care of today is working with finalizing the language on the position description (and that needs to happen in public), confirming the salary range for the recruitment of the position (also needing to happen in public because it is a decision being made by the commissioners), deciding on who will conduct a recruitment (also needs to happen in public).

Lisa Benavidez:

Delegating decision making and how to move forward with the recruitment process itself is something that you can decide in public and, from what I understand, that is something that you are asking agency staff to take care of. We will move forward with that. Deciding whether, specifically, law enforcement experience is required and whether psychological or polygraph exams are required, that also needed to happen in public. Once applications are reviewed, if the commissioners want to make a decision on who will move forward to an interview, the decision on who will move forward, because it would be a decision made by commissioners, these happen in public. That is something that can also be delegated to internal staff. If that's the case, then we will move forward with making the recommendation on which candidates to interview. Those are the things that have to happen in public.

Lisa Benavidez:

Basically, the only thing that can really happen in Executive Session is when we are talking about specific candidate qualifications. If we are discussing candidate qualifications including the candidate quality, how significant or applicable is a candidate's or an applicant's experience and skill set, is it applicable to the position, do we want to move them forward or do we want to talk about them as a candidate. The discussion of the candidates themselves can happen in Executive Session, as can interviews if that's what you choose. Anytime you are discussing anything about making a decision on who to move forward and who to consider further, that discussion would have to happen in a public setting unless that is delegated to internal staff. It sounds like that is something you may want internal staff to take care of. After interviews are conducted, after background checks are conducted, the decision on who to appoint would be in a public setting, as would start date and setting of the salary.

Lisa Benavidez:

For human resources to be responsible for the hiring process, if directed by the commission, we would conduct everything outside of the public. It would not happen in public meetings and that will help to facilitate not having a lot of delays and waiting for either monthly commission meetings or calling special commission meetings. The recruitment process and activities of human resources, in order to get our candidate pulled together, those items are not subject to the OPMA and would not have to happen in public. That would include designing recruitment processes and materials, developing your interview questions, selecting candidates to refer to the commissioners to discuss qualifications if that's what you prefer. Basically, anything up until the candidates are discussed in terms of making a decision on whether to move them forward or not, all that can happen outside of the public meeting process. Any

decisions made by the commission would have to happen in public, obviously. If any of the commissioners would like some clarification on what that is, I can certainly pull this information together in a chart that may be helpful, and send it out to each of you, if that would be helpful.

Julia Patterson:

Thank you. Questions? Commissioner Levy, do you have any questions>

Alicia Levy:

I don't think I have any questions, no.

Lauren King:

None from me, either.

Julia Patterson:

All right. I think as the process evolves, we will be clear on what it is we want... one thing I am having a hard time visualizing is the interview process. I am hoping that we can interview people in person.

Lisa Benavidez:

Rather than via TEAAMS?

Julia Patterson:

Yeah, definitely. It would be so much better to be able to meet individuals, for us commissioners to be able to meet them in a giant room somewhere with masks on. We'll see how it goes.

Lisa Benavidez:

I will make a note of that. That's all I have for you today.

Julia Patterson:

Thank you very much, Lisa.[crosstalk 01:20:30]

Suzanne Becker:

I'm so sorry, Vice Chair Patterson. This is Suzanne. I was just going to give a short reminder that you may want to do a vote that you are going to delegate the beginning of the recruitment to your internal HR staff at this stage.

Julia Patterson:

You need something more than just a verbal agreement here in public?

Suzanne Becker:

This is always sort of a squishy area, according to Robert's Rules but, just for clarity, where the commission has the authority to hire, you can certainly also delegate it. To just make it clear that you are handing this portion off to your staff, it would be-

Julia Patterson:

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All right. Thank you. All those in favor of having the recruitment process for our executive director occur in house please signify by saying Aye.

Lauren King:

Aye

Alicia Levy:

Do we need to make a motion? Formally? Somebody needs to-[crosstalk 01:21:34]

Julia Patterson:

Go ahead, Commissioner King.

Lauren King:

This is Commissioner King. I move to delegate the first part of our recruiting process to in house staff.

Alicia Levy:

I second that.

Julia Patterson:

OK. It has been moved and seconded. Any more discussion? All those in favor, please say Aye.

Alicia Levy:

Aye

Lauren King:

Aye.

Julia Patterson:

I'm an Aye as well. Thank You

Bud Sizemore:

Abstain.

Julia Patterson:

Good. Thank you.

Lisa Benavidez:

Thank you commissioners.

Julia Patterson:

Thank you very much, Lisa.

Lisa Benavidez:

YOu're welcome.

Julia Patterson:

All right. I'm going to turn the gavel back over to Commissioner Sizemore. Thank you.

Bud Sizemore:

All right, thank you Vice Chair. We are quickly approaching the end of our agenda. I believe next up we have an opportunity for public comment. As earlier, if you wish to make public comment now would be the time. You can either raise your hand through the TEAMS application, hit the chat, or if none of that is working for you, just try to unmute yourself. Julie, any of the non-traditional ways of reaching out?

Julie Anderson:

No emails and no chats.

Bud Sizemore:

OK. Not seeing anyone unmute themselves or raising their hand, we are going to go into Executive Session for... and I'm looking at the Director... two hours? Anticipated to be two hours, after which time we will return to public session with no further business other than to adjourn. We will now go into Executive Session, expected to end at five p.m. with no further business. Thank you everyone for attending and have a great rest of your day. We are in Executive Session.