

Worcester County Board of License Commissioners
Open Meetings Act Minutes
August 20, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Worcester County Governmental Center, Board Room, Room 1102

Attendance:

License Commissioners:

R. Charles Nichols

Marty Pusey

Reese Cropper, III

Staff:

Hank Fisher, III, Esquire

April R. Payne, Liquor License Administrator

Maria McVey, Alternate Liquor License Assistant

I. Call to Order

II. Administrative Matters

Review and Approval of Minutes, July 16, 2025, the Board of License Commissioners reviewed the minutes, and a motion was made by Commissioner Pusey, seconded by Commissioner Cropper and carried unanimously to approve the minutes as submitted.

III. Open Session

IV. Adjournment

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR FLAMINGO COAST – VAULT AND LAGUNA ROOFTOP LOUNGE – LICENSE # 113
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X				☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney RECUSED HIMSELF		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	113	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	9:00 a.m.		
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day		
For: OC Flamingo, LLC		T/A: Flamingo Coast – Vault and Laguna Rooftop Lounge		Address: 3 N. Division Street & Boardwalk, Ocean City				
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes	Meeting:	X Yes	Violation:	☐ Yes	
Items to be discussed: Request to increase number of live entertainment pieces on rooftop from two pieces to five pieces. Request to change live entertainment hours on rooftop from 5:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. Request to change live entertainment on rooftop from no amplification to allow amplification.								
Applicants:	X	Licensees:	☐	Representative:				
1. James R. Bergey, III				Mark Cropper, Esquire				
2. Matthew Ortt								
3. Chelsey Chmelik								
Witnesses:				Protestants:				
1.				1.				
Exhibits:				Exhibits:				
1. Applicants' Exhibit #1 – Photos of Laguna Rooftop Lounge, Vault Speakeasy, and Cafe				1.				
2. Applicants' Exhibit #2 – Floor Plan for Laguna Rooftop Lounge				2.				
3. Applicants' Exhibit #3 – Floor Plan for The Vault Speakeasy				3.				
Hearing Minutes: The applicants, accompanied by their attorney, Mark Cropper, Esquire, appeared before the Board with requests to increase the number of live entertainment pieces on the rooftop from two to five, to change the rooftop entertainment hours from 5:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., and to modify rooftop entertainment from no amplification to allow amplification. The applicants were sworn in. Board attorney Hank Fisher recused himself from this hearing, as he represents the applicants in other matters. Cropper began by reminding the Board that the premises previously operated as Tony's Pizza, and at the time the current license was obtained, the applicants requested to keep the same entertainment restrictions as the prior licensee. He explained that since opening, the restaurant and bar have experienced considerable success. Cropper introduced (Applicants' Exhibit #1), photos of Laguna Rooftop Lounge, Vault Speakeasy, and Café. Matthew Ortt testified that, despite a late start to the summer season, the business has been successful. Cropper stated that the applicants are requesting to increase the number of performers from two to five, to allow amplified music seven days per week, and to adjust the rooftop entertainment hours to 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., confirming that the band would be positioned in the same location as originally approved. Cropper then introduced (Applicants' Exhibit #2), floor plan for Laguna Rooftop Lounge, noting the proposed band location on floor plan. Ortt explained that the band would be situated approximately 86 feet from the five-foot soundproof glass wall surrounding the rooftop. He added that patrons have requested live entertainment and that the soundproofing ensures the performances will not disturb the community. Cropper detailed that amplified music is already permitted on the Boardwalk by performers such as saxophonists and violinists, who are active on weekdays and weekends without holding liquor licenses. Cropper introduced (Applicants' Exhibit #3), floor plan for the vault speakeasy. Cropper stated although not included in the original request letter, he explained that the applicants wished to raise for consideration the possibility of permitting live entertainment in the vault as an alternative location, particularly during								

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR FLAMINGO COAST – VAULT AND LAGUNA ROOFTOP LOUNGE – LICENSE # 113
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inclement weather. Ortt added that the speakeasy would be a suitable option when bands cannot perform on the rooftop. Commissioner Nichols asked whether entertainment would occur in both the rooftop and vault simultaneously. Cropper clarified that the request was for alternative use only, not for simultaneous performances. Commissioner Cropper asked whether this was part of the official request. Cropper responded that it was not included in the original filing but was brought to the Board's attention in case the Board wished to consider it. He further explained that the applicants did not want to jeopardize their rooftop entertainment request and were willing to return with a separate application if required. Liquor License Administrator April Payne asked whether the vault would only be used during inclement weather or on a more regular basis. Ortt testified that the applicants would like the ability to use the vault for entertainment generally, in addition to its use as an alternative space when weather conditions prevent rooftop performances. Commissioner Nichols requested that the location of the proposed band inside the vault be outlined on the vault floorplan. Ortt marked the exact location where the bands would be performing inside the area known as the vault. Commissioner Nichols confirmed that the rooftop entertainment hours being requested were from 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., to which Cropper responded "Correct." Commissioner Pusey asked why the applicants wanted to increase the number of performers to five. Ortt testified that most bands in the area consist of four to five members and explained that management would always maintain control of volume levels. Commissioner Pusey asked has there been any noise complaints from neighbors, Ortt responded that our establishment is located near a hotel, stating he was not aware of any noise complaints. Commissioner Pusey noted that she had personally visited the location, and when standing on the Boardwalk she could not hear any music coming from the establishment. Ortt emphasized to the Board that the five-foot soundproof glass wall was designed to minimize sound projection.

The Board approved the Class "B" B/W/L 7 Day License request to increase number of live entertainment pieces on rooftop from two pieces to five pieces, request to change live entertainment hours on rooftop from 5:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., and request to change live entertainment on rooftop from no amplification to allow amplification.

Motion:	1st	Ms. Pusey	2nd	Mr. Cropper	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No
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Restrictions: LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WITH AMPLIFICATION ALLOWED WITH MAXIMUM OF FIVE PIECES FROM 3:00 P.M. UNTIL 11:00 P.M. ON THE ROOFTOP OR INSIDE THE VAULT BUT NOT AT THE SAME TIME.

Time Hearing Ended: 9:15 a.m.

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR SPECTRUM CONCESSIONS – OCEAN’S CALLING PROMOTER’S LICENSE
JUNE 18, 2024

Members Present:		William E. Esham, Jr., Chairman		X	R. Charles Nichols	X	Marty W. Pusey	X
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		☐				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Harold (Skip) Cook, Investigator			X
		Thomas K. Coates, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Donna Hughes, Liquor License Specialist		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			X
					Valarie Dawson, Court Reporter			X
License #:	NEW	Hearing Date:	June 18, 2024		Time Hearing Started:	1:40 p.m.		
Class:	Promoter License		Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day	
For: Facility Concession Services, LLC			T/A: Spectrum Catering, Concessions, and Events		Address: Boardwalk to the Ocean & N. Division Street to Inlet, Ocean City, MD 21842 (Ocean’s Calling)			
New Application:	X Yes		Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation: ☐ Yes
Items to be discussed: Application for a Promoter’s License for Spectrum Concessions Oceans Calling Event September 27, 2024, through September 29, 2024, Hours for Alcoholic Beverage Sales – Begins 12 Noon and ends 10:30 p.m. each day Ocean City Inlet to N. Division Street, including the inlet parking lot, the beach, the boardwalk, Ocean City pier, and portions of businesses adjacent to the boardwalk/Ocean City								
Applicants:	X	Licensees:	☐		Representative:			
1. Mayor Richard W. Meehan					Mark S. Cropper, Esquire			
2. David H. Smalley (Spectrum Concessions)								
Witnesses:					Protestants:			
1. Tom Perlozzo					1.			
Exhibits:					Exhibits:			
1. Applicant’s Collective Exhibit #1 – Site Plan, Photos, Regulations, and Application					1.			
Hearing Minutes: Mark S. Cropper, Esquire, introduced himself to the Board and stated he is here today representing Ocean City Mayor Richard Meehan, and David Smalley, Spectrum Concessions. The applicants were sworn in. Mr. Coates submitted (Applicant’s Collective Exhibit #1) site plans, photos, regulations, and application. Cropper stated to the Board this event is essentially a repeat of the Oceans Calling event held last year, other than the dates being September 27·2024, through September 29, 2024. Cropper asked Tom Perlozzo, Director of Tourism & Business Development, is it correct you have been working closely with the business that were involved last year, and they have all stated they want to be involved again with this year’s event. Perlozzo stated “Correct.” Cropper asked Mayor Meehan is it correct that Spectrum Concessions that promoted and managed Oceans Calling last year meet Ocean City’s expectations. Mayor Meehan stated “Correct,” Spectrum Concessions had exceeded all expectations. Cropper asked Mayor Meehan not only did the town support the event returning this year it was highly encouraged. Mayor Meehan stated “Yes.” Cropper asked Mayor Meehan, the Oceans Calling event has the full support of the Ocean City Mayor & Council, and the Ocean City Police Department. Mayor Meehan replied “Correct.” Cropper asked Smalley if all the safeguards that were in place last year will be in place for the 2024 Oceans Calling. Smalley stated “Yes,” all the safeguards with regards to alcohol and security would remain for the coming year event. Commissioner Esham stated this hearing has been advertised, let the record show no one is present today in opposition of this application.								

The Board tentatively approved the application for a Promoter's License for Spectrum Concessions Oceans Calling Event September 27, 2024, through September 29, 2024, Hours for Alcoholic Beverage Sales – Begins 12 Noon and ends 10:30 p.m. each day Ocean City Inlet to N. Division Street, including the inlet parking lot, the beach, the boardwalk, Ocean City pier, and portions of businesses adjacent to the boardwalk/Ocean City										
Motion:	1st	Mr. Nichols	2nd	Ms. Pusey	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No	
Restrictions: SAME RESTRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS AS LAST YEAR										
Time Hearing Ended: 1:55 p.m.										

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR SPECTRUM CONCESSIONS – COUNTRY CALLING PROMOTER'S LICENSE
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	N/A	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	9:28 a.m.		
Class:	Promoter's		Type:	B/W/L		Day:	October 3 through October 5, 2025	
For: Spectrum Concessions			T/A: Country Calling		Address: Ocean City Inlet to N. Division Street, including the inlet parking lot, the beach, the boardwalk, Ocean City pier, and portions of businesses adjacent to the boardwalk, Ocean City			
New Application:	X Yes		Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation: ☐ Yes
Items to be discussed: Application for a Promoter's License for Spectrum Concessions Country Calling Event – October 3, 2025, through October 5, 2025, hours for Alcoholic Beverage Sales – Begins 12 p.m. and ends 10:30 p.m. each day Ocean City Inlet to N. Division Street, including the inlet parking lot, the beach, the boardwalk, Ocean City pier, and portions of businesses adjacent to the boardwalk/Ocean City								
Applicants:	X	Licensees:	☐		Representative:			
1. Mayor Richard W. Meehan					Mark Cropper, Esquire			
2. Terry McGean								
Witnesses:					Protestants:			
1.					1.			
Exhibits:					Exhibits:			
1.					1.			
Hearing Minutes: The applicants, accompanied by their attorney, Mark Cropper, Esquire, appeared before the Board. with an application for a Promoter's License, trading as Spectrum Concessions, for the Country Calling Event scheduled for October 3, 2025, through October 5, 2025. The requested hours for alcoholic beverage sales are from 12:00 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. each day. The applicants were sworn in. Cropper stated to the Board that this application involves the exact same footprint as the prior hearing today for the Oceans Calling event and that the Town's involvement will be identical. Cropper asked Mayor Meehan if his testimony given during the prior Oceans Calling prior hearing would remain the same for this matter, Mayor Meehan affirmed that it would. McGean likewise adopted his prior testimony for the record in this hearing. Cropper noted to the Board that the site plan submitted with application in the is the same footprint as the site plan submitted for the Oceans Calling with the same restrictions remain in place. The Board approved the application for a Promoter's License for Spectrum Concessions Country Calling event October 3, 2025, through October 5, 2025, hours for alcoholic beverage sales begin at 12 p.m. and end at 10:30 p.m. Ocean City Inlet to N. Division Street, including the inlet parking lot, the beach, the boardwalk, Ocean City pier, and portions of businesses adjacent to the boardwalk/Ocean City								
Motion:	1st	Comm. Cropper	2nd	Comm. Pusey	Approved:	X	Yes	☐ No
Restrictions: SAME RESRICTIONS AND CONDITIONS AS OCEANS CALLING								
Time Hearing Ended: 9:31 a.m.								

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR TEQUILA FROGS – LICENSE # 915
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	915	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	9:33 a.m.		
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day		
For: Tequila Frogs, LLC			T/A: Tequila Frogs		Address: 5401 Coastal Highway, Units C1, C2 & C3, Ocean City			
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation:	X Yes
Items to be discussed: Tequila Frogs Class "B" 7 Day license Violation of Alcoholic Beverages & Cannabis Article § 33-1703 Violation of the Board's Rules & Regulations – Rule 20 A								
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:			
1. John F. Natoli								
Witnesses:					Protestants:			
1.					1.			
Exhibits:					Exhibits:			
1.					1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report dated July 30, 2025, two letters from attorney Hugh Cropper, Esquire dated May 23 rd & July 17 th , 2025. Mr. Fisher noted that in the information sent to Natoli were letters detailing that ninety percent of the LLC interest had been transferred to Adam Horn. The correspondent advised Mr. Horn that he was required to apply for transfer with the Board as new owner also because of failing to apply for transfer Horn was advised to cease all business. This matter came to the Board's attention when the Maryland Alcohol Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission reported the information to the Liquor License Administrator April Payne. Natoli testified that he entered into an agreement with Horn and confirmed that his attorney Hugh Cropper, Esquire, had advised Horn of his responsibilities as majority owner of LLC. Natoli stated that Horn ignored that advice. Commissioner Nichols reminded Natoli that he is the licensee of record and therefore responsible for compliance, asking why he failed to act. Natoli responded that he had never been through this process before and relied on Horn to take the necessary steps. Commissioner Nichols pointed out that Natoli had filed the original license application and participated in the hearing process yet had taken no further action in this matter. Commissioner Cropper asked whether the establishment was currently operating. Natoli stated that the business was not open, explaining that the plan was to shut down and regroup, but that he had brought Horn on board due to Horn's industry background. Commissioner Nichols asked whether Horn was in attendance; Natoli confirmed he was not. Commissioner Cropper asked whether Natoli remained in contractual business with Horn. Natoli replied that an agreement exists, but that Horn is in default. Commissioner Nichols remarked that Horn failed to perform under their agreement, and that Natoli likewise failed to ensure the Board and license requirements were met. Payne testified that she first became aware of the matter during a site visit when she noticed a name change on the building. Upon investigating, she initially believed it was a simple trade name change. After contacting the premises, she eventually spoke with Horn, who stated			

Hearing Minutes: The licensee John Natoli appeared before the Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages & Cannabis Article 33-1703 Violation of the Board's Rules & Regulations Rule 20 A The licensee was sworn in. Board attorney Hank Fisher began outlining the violation under Alcoholic Beverages & Cannabis Article § 33-1703, Violation of the Board's Rules and Regulations Rule 20 A. He explained that the Rule prohibits the transfer of more than fifty percent of stock in a corporation or membership interest in a limited liability company without first filing an application for transfer with the Board and obtaining the Commissioners' approval. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board's investigation report dated July 30, 2025, two letters from attorney Hugh Cropper, Esquire dated May 23rd & July 17th, 2025. Mr. Fisher noted that in the information sent to Natoli were letters detailing that ninety percent of the LLC interest had been transferred to Adam Horn. The correspondent advised Mr. Horn that he was required to apply for transfer with the Board as new owner also because of failing to apply for transfer Horn was advised to cease all business. This matter came to the Board's attention when the Maryland Alcohol Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission reported the information to the Liquor License Administrator April Payne. Natoli testified that he entered into an agreement with Horn and confirmed that his attorney Hugh Cropper, Esquire, had advised Horn of his responsibilities as majority owner of LLC. Natoli stated that Horn ignored that advice. Commissioner Nichols reminded Natoli that he is the licensee of record and therefore responsible for compliance, asking why he failed to act. Natoli responded that he had never been through this process before and relied on Horn to take the necessary steps. Commissioner Nichols pointed out that Natoli had filed the original license application and participated in the hearing process yet had taken no further action in this matter. Commissioner Cropper asked whether the establishment was currently operating. Natoli stated that the business was not open, explaining that the plan was to shut down and regroup, but that he had brought Horn on board due to Horn's industry background. Commissioner Nichols asked whether Horn was in attendance; Natoli confirmed he was not. Commissioner Cropper asked whether Natoli remained in contractual business with Horn. Natoli replied that an agreement exists, but that Horn is in default. Commissioner Nichols remarked that Horn failed to perform under their agreement, and that Natoli likewise failed to ensure the Board and license requirements were met. Payne testified that she first became aware of the matter during a site visit when she noticed a name change on the building. Upon investigating, she initially believed it was a simple trade name change. After contacting the premises, she eventually spoke with Horn, who stated

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR TEQUILA FROGS – LICENSE # 915
AUGUST 20, 2025

that he was the owner and was operating the establishment. Payne then contacted attorney Hugh Cropper, who explained the situation and provided the letters included in the exhibit. Payne expressed concern over the lack of notice to the Board from your attorney or yourself that he had sold ownership within the property. Natoli stated that it had been difficult to coordinate with Horn and reiterated that Horn's background made him believe it was a good decision to involve him in the business. Commissioner Nichols clarified with Natoli ensuring that he understands that the violation before them today concerns his responsibilities as license holder. Natoli noted to the Board that his attorney Hugh Cropper had sent a letter indicating that the property would be seized if Horn failed to follow the proper procedures. Commissioner Nichols emphasized that the violation rests with Natoli as the licensee, not Horn. Natoli apologized and asked the Board to allow him to regroup and continue operations, admitting it was a mistake. Commissioner Cropper asked whether the establishment had been open during the summer. Natoli stated that Horn had in fact opened the business during the summer season. Commissioner Nichols noted that by this testimony, Horn was operating the establishment. Natoli added that he was also involved but Horn had been the acting manager. He further testified that he had attempted to pressure Horn to resolve the licensing issues. Commissioner Cropper asked Natoli whether he intended to form a new group to correct the matter; Natoli replied that he did.

Commissioner Nichols requested the Board to go into closed session. The Board is acting in its Quasi-Judicial capacity and is not subject to the Open Meeting Act pursuant to Section 3-103 of the General Provisions Articles of the annotated Code of Maryland. Mr. Fisher announced the Board meeting is now being reconvened into an open session.

The Board reconvened the hearing; The Board found that the license holder violated Section 33-1703 and Rule 20 A in that the license holder transferred a pecuniary interest in the licensed establishment without the approval of the Board. Based on evidence the Board revoked the license effective immediately Wednesday, August 20, 2025.

Motion:	1st	Comm. Nichols	2nd	Comm. Pusey	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No
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Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT THE LICENSE HOLDER VIOLATED SECTION 33-1703 AND RULE 20 A IN THAT THE LICENSE HOLDER TRANSFERRED A PECUNIARY INTEREST IN THE LICENSED ESTABLISHMENT WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD.

Time Hearing Ended: 9:54 a.m.

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR ASHORE RESORT – LICENSE #15
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney RECUSED HIMSELF		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	15	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	10:00 a.m.		
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day		
For: MPV OCMD Operator, LLC		T/A: Ashore Resort		Address: 10100 Coastal Highway, Ocean City				
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation:	X Yes
Items to be discussed: Ashore Resort Class "B" 7 Day Lic Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor)								
Applicants:		☐	Licensees:	X	Representative:			
1. Morgan A. Fisher (Excused)				Joseph E. Moore, Esquire				
2. Kevin M. Vaughan (Excused)								
Witnesses:				Protestants:				
1. James Pavlik (GM of Outlets)				1. Sgt. Nathan Kutz				
2. Kane Kennedy (GM of Ashore Resort)				2.				
3. Kayleigh Whitlock (Excused)				3.				
Exhibits:				Exhibits:				
1.				1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 17, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report 2025-002190				

Hearing Minutes: Board attorney Hank Fisher stated for the record he will recuse himself from this hearing, noting that his wife is the resident agent of the Ashore Hotel along with his firm representing the Ashore Resort. The licensees were sworn in and represented by Joseph E. Moore, Esquire. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 17, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report 2025-002190. Moore stated that the licensees are not contesting the violation they are here for mitigation. Moore stated for the record Morgan Fisher, and the server Kayleigh Whitlock involved in the incident were excused from testimony today. Moore asked James Pavlik and Kane Kennedy, to tell Board about his experience in the food and beverage business, Pavlik stated he is the General Manager (GM) of Outlets has worked in food and beverage management since 2007, including positions at Macky's and The Hobbit. Kennedy stated he is the General Manager (GM) of the Ashore Hotel, is appearing today in support of the Ashore Resort. Moore addressed previous noise complaints raised by neighboring condominiums. Although no hearing had resulted from those complaints, Pavlik and his team responded by implementing sound monitoring practices. Sound levels are now checked every fifteen minutes using sound meters, with readings recorded twenty feet from the property. The noise meters ensure compliance with the standards of 65 decibels before 9:00 p.m. and 55 decibels after 9:00 p.m. Live entertainment has also been scheduled earlier in the evening, so it concludes earlier. Moore stated that the complaints have since been resolved, and Liquor License Administrator, April Payne confirmed that assessment. Moore emphasized that compliance checks have shown no other sales to minors prior to this incident. Pavlik testified that the Public Safety Officer (POS) first attempted to purchase alcohol at the beach bar, where service was denied, before successfully being served in the Tap Room. At the time, sixteen staff members were TIPS/TAMS certified. Moore explained that those not certified were seasonal J-1 or temporary employees who could not be enrolled in a class before their departure, though Pavlik added that all such staff received in-house training over a four-to-five-day period covering ID checks, underage policies, and detection of expired identification. Pavlik testified that alcohol service at the Ashore Resort is provided in four locations: the Tide Room, Tap Room, Beach Bar, and through beach service and the gift shop. Moore stressed that despite having

multiple outlets, the licensee takes the Board's Rules and Regulations seriously. Kennedy added that the Ashore team works closely with the city, is active in supporting the community, and is committed to compliance. Moore then asked Sgt. Kutz to confirm the facts presented. Sgt. Kutz testified that they were accurate and added that the (PSO) had also attempted service at the outside pool bar. Sgt. Kutz stated to the Board that Sgt. Morgan, who accompanied him along the PSO, was initially uncertain whether the Tide Room was a separate licensed area and therefore checked both locations clarify that two compliance checks were made to the property one "No Sale" and one "Sale to a Minor", Sgt. Kutz noted that staff were cooperative. Commissioner Nichols whether the establishment was considered a "Hot Spot," Sgt. Kutz replied that it was not. Commissioner Cropper asked if management was familiar with electronic ID checkers. Pavlik and Kennedy testified that they were not but would be willing to explore their use. Commissioner Pusey asked whether the waitress who served the minor was TIPS/TAMS certified. Management confirmed that she was certified but failed to request identification. Pavlik added that the waitress had been employed as a server prior to recently beginning bartending, had only been in the role for one month, and made an unfortunate mistake. He described her as a good employee who was deeply remorseful.

Motion:	1st	Comm. Pusey	2nd	Comm. Cropper	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No
Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT A VIOLATION DID OCCUR FINE WAS TO BE PAID BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 22ND BY NOON AND IF NOT PAID THE LICENSE WOULD BE SUSPENDED UNTIL THE FINE WAS PAID.									
Time Hearing Ended: 10:17 a.m.									

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR MONTEGO BAY SUPER THRIFT – LICENSE #62
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	62	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	10:19 a.m.		
Class:	"A"	Type:	B/W		Day:	7 Day		
For: Montego Bay Super Thrift, Inc.		T/A: Montego Bay Super Thrift		Address: 300 South Baltimore Avenue, Ocean City				
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation:	X Yes
Items to be discussed: Class "A" 7 Day License for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor)								
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:			
1. Jill R. Paquette					Mark Cropper, Esquire			
Witnesses:					Protestants:			
1. Robert Paquette					1. Sgt. Douglas Smith			
2. Sahil Singh					2.			
Exhibits:					Exhibits:			
1. Licensee's Exhibit #1 – Letter from Sahil Singh					1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 21, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-001194			
Hearing Minutes: The licensee Jill R. Paquette, along with their attorney Mark Cropper, Esquire appeared before the Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor). The licensee and witnesses were sworn in. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board's Investigation Report Dated: July 21, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-00119, into evidence regarding a violation that occurred on June 1, 2025. Cropper stated that the licensee stipulate that the violation did occur and that they were present for purposes of mitigation. He noted that Jill and Robert Paquette have operated the establishment for over thirty years. The business is open year-round from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., employing approximately twenty staff, including three managers, with five employees currently TIPS/TAMS certified. Cropper explained that the employee involved, Sahil Singh, had only been working for the for approximately ten days at the time of the incident and had not yet had the opportunity to complete TIPS/TAMS certification. The licensees themselves have been certified for many years. The incident occurred on Singh's first day working without supervision. While he did request identification from the officer, the sale nonetheless proceeded. Singh's employment was terminated the following day. Cropper further noted that the establishment utilizes modern and up-to-date point-of-sale systems to prevent such violations. Cropper submitted (Licensee's Exhibit #1) letter from Sahil Singh, in which Singh apologized for the incident, provided details of the occurrence, and extended apologies to his former employers. In his letter, Singh accepted full responsibility, stated that he did not blame training or management, and acknowledged his mistake. Sgt. Smith testified that he did not consider this establishment to be a concern, emphasizing that it is not viewed as a "Hot Spot." The Board found that the violation did occur on June 1, 2025, and imposed a Letter of Reprimand, any future violations could result in a fine, suspension and or revocation of the alcoholic beverage license.								
Motion:	1st	Comm. Cropper	2nd	Comm. Pusey	Approved:	X	Yes	☐ No
Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT VIOLATION DID OCCUR								
Time Hearing Ended: 10:32 a.m.								

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR O.C. FOOD MARKET – LICENSE #178
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:	R. Charles Nichols, Chairman	X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
	Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III	X				
Staff Present:	April Payne, Administrator	X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
	Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney	X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
	Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant	X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
			Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	178	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	10: 33 a.m.
Class:	"A"	Type:	B/W		Day:	7 Day
For:	M.A.P. International, LLC		T/A: O.C. Food Market		Address: 12903 Coastal Highway, Ocean City	
New Application:	☒ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes
Violation:					☐ Yes	
Items to be discussed: Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor)						
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:	
1. Paul M. Kahn						
Witnesses:			Protestants:			
1. Murat Dymov (Owner)			1. Sgt. Douglas Smith			
Exhibits:			Exhibits:			
1.			Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 28, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-001428			
Hearing Minutes: The licensee Paul Kahn and witness Murat Dymov appeared before the Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor). The licensee and witness were sworn in. The licensee Paul M. Kahn, and witness Murat Dymov., Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor). The licensee and witness were sworn in. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board's Investigation Report Dated: July 28, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD), Incident Case Report #2025-001428, into evidence regarding a violation that occurred on June 8, 2025. The licensee and witnesses were sworn in. Dymov, stated to the Board he is the owner of the establishment, and apologized for the incident. He explained that the violation was the result of a mistake made by a recently hired J-1 employee who had not yet been enrolled in TIPS/TAMS certification. He noted that all his employees are certified and further stated that each year they have received numerous certification of appreciation, the most recent of which was awarded a few weeks ago. In addition, the business has invested in ID scanner software to assist with alcohol sales. Cropper asked whether the ID scanner software is integrated through the cash register system. Dymov responded affirmatively. Commissioner Nichols inquired whether the employee had used the software at the time of the violation. Dymov replied that the employee had not, explaining that while the software had been recently updated, the ID scanner's subscription had not yet been renewed. Commissioner Nichols noted that the technology was therefore not in place when the incident occurred. Commissioner Nichols then read from the compliance check history this establishment was cited in September 2008 for a sale to a minor, for which a letter of reprimand was issued. In August 2013, the establishment incurred two violations, and in June 2013 the Board imposed fines of \$500 and \$2,500. Since the license was issued in 2006, the establishment has undergone a total of ten compliance checks, of these, the establishment has passed ten compliance checks and incurred three violations. Sgt. Smith testified that the establishment has not been identified as a problem business and emphasized the importance of physically verifying patron's driver's licenses, as technological systems can fail or be circumvented by fake identification.						

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR O.C. FOOD MARKET – LICENSE #178
AUGUST 20, 2025

The Board found that the violation did occur on June 8, 2025, and imposed a Letter of Reprimand, any future violations could result in a fine, suspension and or revocation of the alcoholic beverage license.

Motion:	1st	Comm. Pusey	2nd	Comm. Cropper	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No
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Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT A VIOLATION DID OCCUR.

Time Hearing Ended: 10:43 a.m.

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR PONZETTI'S PIZZA – LICENSE #330
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:	R. Charles Nichols, Chairman	X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
	Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III	X				
Staff Present:	April Payne, Administrator	X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
	Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney	X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
	Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant	X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
			Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	330	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	10:45 a.m.
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day
For:	S.D.T. of Ocean City, Maryland, Inc.	T/A:	Ponzetti's Pizza		Address: 14314 Coastal Highway, Ocean City	
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes	Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation: X Yes
Items to be discussed: Ponzetti's Pizza Class "A" B/W 7 Day License Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor)						
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:	
1. Stephen P. Janson						
Witnesses:			Protestants:			
1. Michelle Herrera			1. Sgt. Douglas Smith			
Exhibits:			Exhibits:			
1.			1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 21, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-001657			

Hearing Minutes: The licensee Stephen P. Janson and witness Michelle Herrera appeared before the Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor). The licensee and witness were sworn in. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board's Investigation Report Dated: July 28, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-001657 into evidence regarding a violation that occurred on June 13, 2025. The licensee and witness were sworn in. Stephen Janson stated at the outset that they were not contesting the violation, emphasizing that the license has been continuously held for 39 years, that all employees currently working are TIPS/TAMS certified, and that management takes these matters very seriously. He explained that on the day of the incident the staff had just completed a meeting to review policies following Senior Week, a particularly challenging time for alcohol service, and with the height of the summer season underway the establishment was extremely busy. Commissioner Nichols reviewed the compliance history in detail, noting that violations for sales to a minor had occurred in April 2011, June 2014, July 2015, and most recently in September 2023, while five compliance checks had resulted in no violations, demonstrating a pattern of both compliance and occasional lapses. Commissioner Cropper asked Commissioner Nichols about the first offender clause applied in September 2023, Commissioner Nichols confirmed that while the establishment had four violations overall, the September matter had been considered under that provision. Commissioner Pusey questioned Herrera, the server involved, who testified that she did in fact make a request and review the customer's ID but admitted that due to the high volume of business that day she was overwhelmed and mistakenly proceeded with the sale despite her training, stressing that it was not her intention to break the law. When asked, Janson confirmed Herrera was TIPS/TAMS certified. Commissioner Cropper raised the issue of technological safeguards, referencing testimony in a previous case regarding the use of Point of Sale (POS) systems and handheld devices capable of verifying ages directly from IDs, while Janson explained that restaurants operate differently from convenience stores in this regard, though Commissioner Cropper reiterated that additional safeguards could help prevent future mistakes. Sgt. Smith testified that the establishment is not regarded as a "Hot Spot", for underage drinking and confirmed that Herrera was cooperative throughout the compliance check, but he expressed concern that a manager later followed officers into the parking lot to photograph

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR PONZETTI'S PIZZA – LICENSE #330
AUGUST 20, 2025

their vehicle on private property, underscoring that law enforcement officers rely on cooperation from establishments and are only performing their duty. Janson stated he had no knowledge of the manager's conduct outside.

The Board found that the violation did occur on June 13, 2025, and imposed \$500 fine is to be paid by Friday, August 22, 2025, by noon and if not paid the license would be suspended until the fine was paid in full.

Motion:	1st	Comm. Pusey	2nd	Comm. Cropper	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No
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Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT A VIOLATION DID OCCUR FINE WAS TO BE PAID BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 22ND BY NOON AND IF NOT PAID THE LICENSE WOULD BE SUSPENDED UNTIL THE FINE WAS PAID.

Time Hearing Ended: 10:53 a.m.

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR SUNSET ISLAND BAR & GRILLE– LICENSE #903
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	903	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	10:54 a.m.		
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day		
For: SIBAG, LLC		T/A: Sunset Island Bar & Grille		Address: 1 Beach Side Drive, Ocean City				
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation:	X Yes
Items to be discussed: Sunset Island Bar & Grille Class "B" B/W/L 7 Day License Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor)								
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:			
1. Matthew Pfau					Kristina Watkowski, Esquire			
Witnesses:					Protestants:			
1. Matthew Narewski (General Manager)					1. Sgt. Douglas Smith			
2. Robert Ciprietti					2.			
3. Lee Gerarchis					3.			
Exhibits:					Exhibits:			
1.					1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 21, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-002195			

Hearing Minutes: The licensee Matthew Pfau and witnesses Matthew Narewski, Robert Ciprietti, and Lee Gerarchis, along with their attorney Kristina Watkowski, Esquire appeared before the Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor). The licensee and witnesses were sworn in. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board's Investigation Report Dated: July 17, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-002195 into evidence regarding a violation that occurred on June 29, 2025. The licensee and witness were sworn in. Watkowski stated that they are present today for mitigation only. Watkowski stated to the Board that the server involved in the violation had been terminated and has since returned to Bulgaria, as he was a J-1 employee. Watkowski stated that the establishment invests heavily in training and pep talks to prevent such incidents, does not accept vertical IDs, and has recently implemented changes to strengthen compliance. Watkowski acknowledged that two years ago the establishment had a violation involving a J-1 student, which led them to prohibit J-1 employees from working in front-of-house positions. In this case, however, Nick had worked in the kitchen for two years with a strong record, and management decided to give him a chance in a service role due to ongoing labor shortages in Ocean City, where staffing had been reduced from fifteen to eight front-of-house employees. While Nick was considered a reliable worker, he made a critical mistake. Watkowski detailed new measures being implemented at the establishment, including ID books, two handheld scanners, a strict refusal of vertical IDs, mandatory TIPS/TAMS certification for all long and short-term employees, the addition of a designated ID station, wristbands with daily color changes, and beach sweeps for discarded IDs. Watkowski further emphasized that both waiters and bartenders will now be required to card patrons. Watkowski also noted that Narewski, who has never had a violation in Maryland or in Nantucket where he previously worked, dedicates time to explaining ID verification procedures to patrons, especially since in some states such as Pennsylvania vertical IDs are still issued. Matthew Narewski stated we have a strict policy that NO vertical IDs are accepted if accepted is grounds for termination. Commissioner Pusey remarked that the server responsible is no longer in the country, and Narewski acknowledged that the incident stemmed from a lapse in judgment

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR SUNSET ISLAND BAR & GRILLE– LICENSE #903
AUGUST 20, 2025

by the server. Sgt. Smith testified that the establishment takes compliance seriously, was highly cooperative during the investigation, and is not considered a “Hot Spot” for underage drinking. Commissioner Nichols added that the establishment successfully passed a compliance check in June 2024.

The Board found that the violation did occur on June 29, 2025, and imposed \$250 fine is to be paid by Friday, August 22, 2025, by noon and if not paid the license would be suspended until the fine was paid in full.

Motion:	1st	Comm. Cropper	2nd	Comm. Pusey	Approved:	X	Yes	☐	No
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Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT A VIOLATION DID OCCUR FINE WAS TO BE PAID BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 22nd BY NOON AND IF NOT PAID THE LICENSE WOULD BE SUSPENDED UNTIL THE FINE WAS PAID.

Time Hearing Ended: 11:03 a.m.

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR BIRD DOG TAVERN – LICENSE #957
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey		X	William E. Esham, III		☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X						
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector					☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:					☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager					☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter					X
License #:	957	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	11:07 a.m.				
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day				
For: Bird Dog Tavern, LLC			T/A: Bird Dog Tavern			Address: 3A 9th Street, Ocean City				
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation:	X Yes		
Items to be discussed: Bird Dog Tavern Class "B" B/W/L 7 Day License Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor)										
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:					
1. Donald M. Alimo					Kristina Watkowski, Esquire					
Witnesses:					Protestants:					
1. Jared Cooper					1. Sgt. Nathan Kutz					
Exhibits:					Exhibits:					
1. Licensee's Exhibit #1 – Photos demonstrating the establishment's policy of not accepting vertical IDs.					1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board's Investigation Report Dated July 21, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-001660					
Hearing Minutes: The licensee Donald M. Alimo and witness Jared Cooper along with their attorney Kristina Watkowski, Esquire appeared before the Board for a Violation of Alcoholic Beverages Article, Section 6-304 (Sale to a Minor). The licensee and witness were sworn in. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board's Investigation Report Dated: July 28, 2025, Compliance Check History, Alcohol Awareness Certified Employee List, and Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Case Report #2025-001660 into evidence regarding a violation that occurred on June 13, 2025. The licensee and witness were sworn in. Watkowski, representing the licensee, explained they were present for mitigation only and admitted the violation. Jared Cooper, who was the server involved in the incident who has previously worked at MR Ducks and Crawl Street Tavern, apologized to the Board, stating it was a mistake, and testified that he is currently TIPS/TAMS certified, as are all other employees. (Licensee's Exhibit #1), photos demonstrating the establishment's policy of not accepting vertical IDs, was entered into the record. Watkowski added that there had recently been an administrative restriction matter they were promoting a disc jockey (DJ) in which Liquor License Administrator April Payne informed the licensees they could not promote a (DJ) and further explained that there had been internal disagreements within the LLC. As a result, one member has since revoked their role in day-to-day management decisions, and while there may eventually be a separation and stock transfer, Watkowski assured the Board that proper procedures would be followed if that occurs. Watkowski emphasized that Alimo has extensive experience in the restaurant industry. Sgt. Kutz testified that the establishment is not considered a trouble location or "Hot Spot" describing the incident as a very standard compliance check and noting that the licensees were cooperative. Commissioner Pusey asked whether Cooper was certified, and Cooper confirmed he had recently renewed his certification. Commissioner Nichols observed that since the license was issued in 2024, there have been no other compliance checks or violations. The Board found that the violation did occur on June 13, 2025, and imposed a Letter of Reprimand, any future violations could result in a fine, suspension and or revocation of the alcoholic beverage license.										
Motion:	1st	Comm. Cropper		2nd	Comm. Pusey		Approved:	X	Yes	☐ No
Restrictions: BOARD FOUND THAT A VIOLATION DID OCCUR.										
Time Hearing Ended: 11:15 a.m.										

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR CARUSO PIZZA & WILD BILL'S – LICENSE #816
AUGUST 20, 2025

Members Present:		R. Charles Nichols, Chairman		X	Marty W. Pusey	X	William E. Esham, III	☐
		Alternate Board Member: Reese Cropper, III		X				
Staff Present:		April Payne, Administrator		X	Ian Cameron, Inspector			☐
		Hank Fisher, III, Esq., Board Attorney		X	Alternate Board Attorney: Name:			☐
		Maria McVey, Liquor License Assistant		X	Kelly Henry, Technical Services Manager			☐
					Kathy Zeve, Court Reporter			X
License #:	816	Hearing Date:	August 20, 2025		Time Hearing Started:	11: 46 a.m.		
Class:	"B"	Type:	B/W/L		Day:	7 Day		
For: OC Taco Truck, LLC			T/A: Caruso Pizza & Wild Bill's		Address: 420 Atlantic Avenue & Boardwalk, Ocean City			
New Application:	☐ Yes	Transfer:	☐ Yes		Meeting:	☐ Yes	Violation:	X Yes
Items to be discussed: Caruso Pizza & Wild Bill's Class "B" B/W/L 7 Day License Violation of Alcoholic Beverages & Cannabis Article 4-604(a)(1), Violation of the Board's Rules & Regulations – Rule 30, Rule 32.C.1, Rule 32.C.2, Rule 32.D.4, Rule 32.D.6, Rule 32.D.9, and Rule 32.D.12								
Applicants:	☐	Licensees:	X		Representative:			
1. William H. Purnell, III			Ashley Bosche, Esquire					
Witnesses:			Protestants:					
1. Scott Bruney			1. Sgt. Douglas Smith					
2. Nora Keller			2. Ofc. Paul Barrett					
3.			3. PFC Jessica Wieber					
4.			4. PFC Jacob McElfish					
5.			5. PFC Sierra Thompson-Stevens					
Exhibits:			Exhibits:					
1. Licensee's Exhibit #1 – Atlantic Hotel Parking Lot Lease			1. Board's Exhibit #1 – Board Report of Investigation dated: July 7, 2025, Alcohol Awareness Certified Representatives list, Email from Sgt. Smith, Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Report #2025-002001					
2. Licensee's Exhibit #2 – Photographs of Parking Signs Indicating Parking Spaces are Reserved for Atlantic Hotel Guests Only			2. Board's Exhibit #2 – Tax Map from the Maryland Department of Planning and SDAT Printout of the Premises					
3.			3. Board's Exhibit #3 – Bystander Cellphone Video Capturing the Assault					
4.			4. Board's Exhibit #4 – PFC McElfish Body Camera Footage					
5.			5. Board's Exhibit #5 – PFC Wieber Body Camera Footage					
6.			6. Board's Exhibit #6 – PFC McElfish 2 nd Body Camera Footage					
7.			7. Board's Exhibit #7 – PFC Stevens Body Camera Footage					
8.			8. Board's Exhibit #8 – Sgt. Smith's Body Camera Footage					
Hearing Minutes: Licensee William H. Purnell, III and Scott Bruney, and Nora Keller along with their attorney Ashley Bosche, Esquire appeared before the Board for Class "B" B/W/L 7 Day License Violation of Alcoholic Beverages & Cannabis Article 4-604(a)(1), Violation of the Board's Rules & Regulations Rule 30, Rule 32.C.1, Rule 32.C.2, Rule 32.D.4, Rule 32.D.6, Rule 32.D.9, and Rule 32.D.12. The licensee and witnesses were sworn in. Board attorney Hank Fisher								

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR CARUSO PIZZA & WILD BILL'S – LICENSE #816
AUGUST 20, 2025

submitted (Board's Exhibit #1) Board Report of Investigation dated: July 7, 2025, Alcohol Awareness Certified Representatives list, email from Sgt. Smith, Ocean City Police Department (OCPD) Incident Report #2025-002001 into evidence regarding violations that occurred on June 22, 2025. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #2) Tax Map from the Maryland Department of Planning and SDAT printout of the premises.

Mr. Fisher called OCPD Officer Barrett to testify, he asks if he was present at the location around 9 p.m., Ofc. Barrett stated "Yes," Barrett stated that OCPD received a call about an assault, himself and two other officers, went to investigate. Mr. Fisher asks when they arrived what did they discover, Ofc. Barrett said he observed William Purnell and his family, Eva Purnell, his daughter, was on her cellphone, waving to the officers to say she was the one who called. Mr. Fisher asks Ofc. Barrett if he spoke to Eva Purnell, Ofc. Barrett stated that he spoke to her briefly before she was dragged away by Duke Bowen, her boyfriend, which then led Ofc. Barrett and his partners to do a welfare check on Eva Purnell, to what officers observed as being dragged away against her will. Mr. Fisher asks Ofc. Barrett if the officers on scene, including him, were wearing body cameras, with audio and video, Ofc. Barrett stated everyone on scene was wearing body cameras. Mr. Fisher asks if in his experience they are accurate, and if when they submit it as evidence there's no editing or doctoring of those videos. Ofc. Barrett shares that it is standard police procedure not to edit these videos as they are evidence. Mr. Fisher asks Ofc. Barrett if there was any other video submitted evidence by bystanders, Ofc. Barrett said "Yes," there was, the video is of the assault taking place that generated the call of service. Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #3) bystander cellphone video capturing the assault, Mr. Fisher stated to Bosche she had not been provided this information because it was new evidence submitted today. Bosche asks to clarify who submitted the video. Mr. Fisher answers a bystander. Bosche asks who the bystander is. Mr. Fisher refers to Sgt. Smith and that he adds he would have to look at the evidence file to see who submitted it. He shares with the board that evidence, body worn cameras or citizens submitting something, it's on a website with a secure server that they don't have access to edit, its all-raw footage. Mr. Fisher requests Sgt. Smith play a portion of the cell phone recorded video. Mr. Fisher asks Ofc. Barrett to identify the people in the video. Ofc. Barrett identifies them as Eva Purnell, Mae Purnell, Jody Purnell and Joshua Phelps.

Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #4) PFC McElfish body camera footage. Mr. Fisher addresses PFC McElfish to explain who's in the video and the context, PFC McElfish shared video footage that depicts the moment they arrived at the parking lot and Eva Purnell was being dragged behind a fence, where they heard her scream, the officers didn't know if it was against her will or not, so they went to check, Ofc. Barrett and another officer went to check behind the fence, while that was happening Phelps was screaming at PFC McElfish to get off the property, once they verified Eva Purnell was okay, they left the property and turned the camera off, where the video ended.

Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #5) PFC Wieber body camera footage, PFC Wieber played video footage. Mr. Fisher asks PFC Wieber if she was the one to make the arrest and to identify the person on the video. PFC Wieber said that she did make the arrest and that it was Eva Purnell, Mr. Fisher asks PFC Wieber if the video accurately depicts the incident that took place, PFC Wieber state "Yes". Mr. Fisher asks PFC Wieber to identify the rest of the people in the video. PFC Wieber responded it was Eva Purnell, Joshua Phelps, Jody Purnell, Robert Duke and Mae Purnell. Mr. Fisher asks why Wieber arrested Eva Purnell. PFC Wieber answers that prior to her arrival they noted that officers needed help on scene, as Wieber went over to the scene, Eva Purnell came out and got way too close to PFC Wieber, so she thought Eva was going to hit her by the way she was aggressively walking towards PFC Wieber, that's why she got charged with second degree assault. Mr. Fisher asks when PFC Wieber was arresting Eva, where people interfered. PFC Wieber said Robert Duke, Joshua Phelps, Jody Purnell and Mae Purnell were interfering by stepping in between her and Eva, Joshua Phelps took Eva away, they went to talk to her because Joshua and Eva fell on the ground, slamming her head, so PFC Wieber wanted to make sure she was okay.

Mr. Fisher submitted (Boards Exhibit #6) PFC McElfish 2nd Body Camera Footage and (Board's Exhibit #7) PSO Stevens body camera footage. PFC McElfish introduced video footage along with PSO Stevens body camera video footage. Mr. Fisher asks PFC Stevens she on police horseback patrol that night, PSO Stevens replies "Yes," I was called in for crowd control. Mr. Fisher asks what her role as crowd control is. PSO Stevens answers attempt to keep civilians and other involved parties away from arrest scenes and officers performing their duties.

WORCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES FOR CARUSO PIZZA & WILD BILL'S – LICENSE #816
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Mr. Fisher submitted (Board's Exhibit #8) Sgt. Smith's body camera footage. Mr. Fisher played Sgt. Smith's body video. Mr. Fisher asks Sgt. Smith for his testimony. Sgt. Smith stated that the events that happened are accurately depicted in the video, it doesn't show his arrival, which he mentions his arrival was still chaotic in scene and he made the decision to not have William Purnell arrested now, Ofc. Barrett asked him to arrest him, but Sgt. Smith decided to arrest him later. Mr. Fisher asks when Sgt. Smith what he discovered that lead him to have the conversation with William Purnell, Sgt. Smith stated when he got there, he tried to descale the situation first with Robert Duke, as he tried to deescalate the situation, there was other six arrest to be processed. Sgt. Smith approached W. Purnell to get a better understanding of what had happened. Sgt. Smith stated he wanted to remind W. Purnell that the actions that had taken place were very inappropriate from an establishment with an active liquor license. Mr. Fisher asks Sgt. Smith how long he's been with the OCPD, Sgt. Smith replied over 25 years. Mr. Fisher asks how long he's had experience with the liquor board, Sgt. Smith replied around 18-20 years. Mr. Fisher asks Sgt. Smith if incidents like this normally occur with property owners, he replied in his 25 years working compliance checks and alcohol inspections he's never had an experience anything like this in person or video, he says that normally establishments welcome them with open arms.

Mr. Fisher asks the Board if there's any questions. Commissioner Cropper asks what preceded the whole thing. Ofc. Barrett answered that the initial call originated from Eva Purnell called in the assault, Robert duke dragged her away and she screamed "Help Me" which led to the officers to go check on her welfare, as they were leaving PFC Wieber arrived and Eva Purnell got in her face, unsure that those were her intentions, she was definitely acting disorderly which put her under arrest. Mr. Fisher shared that according to the police report, Eva Purnell is the licensee's daughter and employee of the company, Mae Purnell, Jody Purnell are all family members of William Purnell, Joshua Phelps is a staff employee. Mr. Fisher states the Board has presented all their evidence, it is now time for the licensee to present their case.

Ashley Bosche, Esquire licensee's attorney stated she has no questions for the witnesses. She mentions there's some criminal cases pending, she will make legal arguments, and witnesses will discuss for mitigation evidence. Bosche states to the Board that the facts of this case are not in dispute because of the body cam footage, she mentions it's the Boards job to apply the law to the facts, according to the Report of Investigation, the violations are broken down into four categories, disorderly and fight at the establishment, Bosche argues that the body cam footage doesn't establish any of these happening at the licensed premises, the incident happened at the parking lot adjacent to Wild Bill's, the parking lot is not owned by Caruso's Pizza, and Wild Bills or leased by either of those establishments, the parking lot is owned by the Atlantic Hotel, which is a completely different legal entity, that doesn't hold any liquor licenses. The lease agreement between the Atlantic Hotel and Wild Bills proves the parking lots are not part of the licensed premises. Bosche submitted (Licensee's Exhibit #1) Atlantic Hotel Parking Lot Lease along with (Licensee's Exhibit #2) photos of parking signs Indicating parking spaces are reserved for Atlantic Hotel Guests Only, patrons from Caruso's or Wild Bills cannot park there, there's 74 spaces for the 74 rooms the hotel owns. Bosche remarks that the Board should be aware the parking lot is separate because W. Purnell for over 20 years has submitted a special request to use that parking lot during bike week, so consequently there was not any disorderly conduct happening in the establishment. She remarks the establishment was also closed at the time of the incident happening. All individuals involved are W. Purnell's family, and close acquaintances, no evidence of being served or worked at Wild Bills or Caruso Pizza. Bosche stated to the Board there is "No," connection between the incident and the establishment and "No," connection between incident and the establishment serving of alcohol or consuming alcohol. The second category talks about the license holder being uncooperative with law enforcement, according to Bosche based on the body cams he complied with all lawful orders, even though he used some explicit language, he complied and didn't interfere in the arrest of his family members, as a matter of law the Board cannot find W. Purnell didn't comply with law enforcement. Bosche also remarked that Eva Purnell suffers with mental health issues, and that W. Purnell had said some offensive things to the officers, which he deeply regrets saying those things but given his entire history with the Board, this is not indicative of his person, it was a one-time occurrence. Bosche stressed to the Board again this incident had nothing to do with the licensed premises. Bosche stated that the third category, license holder being violative and threatening law enforcement, Bosche remarks the supreme court has recognized first amendment protects insulting and offensive speech even directed at police officers, with few legal exemptions that cannot be applied at this Board meeting today. W. Purnell strong language that night was not likely to insight any immediate violence or physical confrontation, nor threatening as defined by law. Bosche stated this Board is a government agency so if this Board takes adverse actions against W. Purnell's liquor license, such as

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suspending, revoking for exercising his 1st amendment right would violate his constitutional rights. Bosche stated the fourth category, a license holder interfering with a lawful arrest, all the arrests are set to go to trial in September, they're all going to vigorously defended. So, there's no lawful arrest, irrelevant because W. Purnell didn't interfere with any arrest. Bosche reiterates to the Board this incident is not related to the sale of alcohol or consumption of alcohol at either of the establishments which means there is "No." violations against Wild Bill's or Caruso Pizza.

W. Purnell apologized to the Board and OCPD. He stated he has been overseeing bike week event in the Hotel parking lot for 20 years without any incidents W. Purnell stated to the Board history has proven that he is able/willing to comply with law enforcement.

Scott Bruney stated they have had the license for 36 years, he had it for 34 years and Purnell only recently for two years, only one violation of sale to a minor in Caruso Pizza, none in Wild Bills. Purnell stated that he has submitted a special request to hold bike week in the Atlantic Hotel parking lot and it's my understanding that it is pending, I asked that this request be granted based on the success of pass events.

Nora Keller testified that she has worked for the Purnell family for many years and spoke to their character, describing them as good and generous family. She acknowledged that W. Purnell made a mistake one night but emphasized that when families are navigating mental health challenges, emotions can run high, and people may act irrationally. "We all put our families first," she said, underscoring the complexity of such situations. Keller also highlighted W. Purnell's longstanding commitment to the community, noting that he has provided employment opportunities to firefighters, EMTs, teachers—including herself—and local students. She expressed deep gratitude for the kindness and generosity shown by M. Purnell and the entire family, stating that their support has extended to her and many others over the years

Commissioner Nichols stated that the parking lot is part of the licensed premises, Liquor License Administrator April Payne shared she had researched the property's master file and it indicates that the parking lot is part of the licensed premises, but alcoholic beverages were not permitted in the licensed area, that's why each year the request for serving outside during bike week comes up. Bosche asks where it states in the master file that the parking lot is part of the licensed premises. Payne replies that the file goes back many years, and the file is unclear if the parking lot is part of the licensed premises, she adds there's nothing that doesn't spell it out. Bosche stated that the Board can't go by something is not clear. Mr. Fisher adds that the licensed premises are for 420 Atlantic Avenue & Boardwalk, Ocean City. Payne adds that every year they've submitted their renewal application for their license it is not spelled out what the premises are to be licensed. Mr. Fisher asks Payne if the licensed premises are for Caruso Pizza and Wild Bills, Payne says it's correct, a contiguous property licensed as one license. Mr. Fisher stated that this Board does not issue license for two separate parcels. Payne replies "Correct". Bosche asked if the licensed premise is the whole parcel, Payne stated "Correct." Mr. Fisher states that even though a license holder has licensed premises there may be areas where they cannot serve alcohol. Mr. Fisher asks if establishments can apply for a special exemption apply to an area that is not part of their licensed premises. Payne states they cannot, it needs to be owned in entirety. Bosche stated there seems to be some misunderstanding between M. Purnell and the Board regarding the license premises but regarding the violations it did not arise from an alcohol sale or alcohol consumption from the licensed premises.

Commissioner Nichols requested the Board go into closed session. The Board is acting in its Quasi-Judicial capacity and is not subject to the Open Meeting Act pursuant to Section 3-103 of the General Provisions Articles of the annotated Code of Maryland.

Mr. Fisher stated he wanted to address the postponement request, noting that M. Purnell stated that the reason for the request for postponement was that he was not available he did not reference the criminal cases in the court of law, stating that he just wanted it to be on record also the other two cases postponed today were for separate and unrelated reasons.

Commissioner Nichols addressed Purnell and Bruney, stated he had never seen anything of the sort in his 18 years on the Board, what happened was awful.

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The Board found that Caruso Pizza & Wild Bill's Class "B" B/W/L 7 Day License did occur and imposed a \$4,000 fine for violation of the Board's Rules and Regulation Rule 32 D as it relates to the Peace, Safety and Tranquility of the Community. The fine must be paid by Friday August 22, 2025, by noon and if not paid the license would be suspended until the fine was paid.

Motion:	1st	Comm. Cropper	2nd	Comm. Pusey	Approved:	☒	Yes	☐	No
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Restrictions: THE BOARD FOUND THE LICENSEE IN VIOLATION OF THE BOARD'S RULES AND REGULATIONS RULE 32D AS IT RELATES TO THE PEACE AND SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE PREMISES IS LOCATED FINE WAS TO BE PAID BY FRIDAY, AUGUST 22ND BY NOON AND IF NOT PAID THE LICENSE WOULD BE SUSPENDED UNTIL THE FINE WAS PAID.

Time Hearing Ended: 1:37 p.m.