

# NORTHAMPTON COUNTY GAMBLING IMPACT STUDY COMMITTEE

## Meeting Minutes Monday, August 13, 2007

The scheduled meeting of Northampton County Gambling Impact Study Committee was held at 6:35 p.m., August 13, 2007.

### **ROLL CALL**

The following committee members were present:

Robert P. Balum - Hellertown  
Robert A. Pfenning - Bethlehem  
Vic Mazziotti - Fiscal Affairs

John Stoffa - County Executive  
John Conklin - County Administrator  
John J. McGeehan  
Phoebe L. Teichert

The following media representative were present:

Sara Cassi - The Express - Times

### **GUEST SPEAKER**

Doug Harbach, Director of Communications, Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board

- Reviewed a prepared power point presentation.
- There are about 230 employees on the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board with multiple locations.
- The number one priority of this legislation is to protect the public through policing activities
- Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement is the largest area of the agency.
- 14 state police are assigned to each of the facilities.
- 5 agents from the Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement in each casino.
- Board consist of 7 individuals.3 are nominated by the Governor and 4 are appointed by the House and the Senate.
- Crime rates in existing casino areas have not increased the overall crime rate by a substantial amount. Theft, underage gaming and public drunkenness are the majority of the crimes.

- 11 venues were licensed last year - 1 harness race track and 2 resort licenses still to be awarded
- Public meetings in future must be held within the municipality where the facility will be located.
- 55 % of Gross Terminal Revenue goes to the State plus 1.5 for costs of operation to Gaming Control Board
- There now exist programs for problem gamblers within Pennsylvania - Department of Health is responsible for gambling addiction issue - self exclusion program has been utilized
- Next fiscal year, hopefully, property tax relief may be forthcoming to the County residents because of the taxes.
- Slot win per day are the average each machine per day is taking for Gross Terminal Revenue. (Cash In -Cash Out)
- Slot win has been tremendous for 3 reasons - (1) newness (2) seasoned operators (3) good facilities
- There is a website listing all 501 school districts in Pennsylvania which shows what to expect in property tax relief once certain levels are reached - current level is \$ 570 million
- Reviewed and answered questions previously submitted by the committee - key response was that a County Authority not a County Department must administer the municipal grants
- Department of Revenue bills the casinos every day. Every machine and its activity is tracked then billed accordingly.
- Reviewed locations of other casinos.
- All licenses must be renewed annually but there are no renewal fees
- All vendors must be licensed - diversity required
- In response to a comment that the board should have a more visible presence in the casinos in Pennsylvania, it was noted that customer complaints and claims can be submitted to the Board through the web.
- Minutes of the Gaming Board can be found online but they cannot be printed. They can be ordered (purchased) if a hardcopy is needed.
- Funding is available for combating illegal slot machines, but program has not been politically popular
- Table games probably won't be considered until slot operations mature

## MINUTES

- Correction and approval of the Minutes of the July 9, 2007 Committee Meeting.
- Three changes need to be made:
  - List Sara Cassi as “media representatives present” and not as a committee member.
  - In New Business - County Budget, the gaming task force used \$238 per machine...
  - Remove a. in Section E. It is a repeat of letter c.

- Minutes approved with above changes.

### **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR (for the Public on Agenda items)**

- No members of the public are present.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- Additions to Committee
  - a. United Way Representative - may not be attending every meeting, October would be a good meeting for the rep. to attend since municipal grants will be discussed.
  - b. Gambling Addict - not yet contacted
- Future Speakers
  - a. David Sanko, Bucks County
  - b. Police Commissioner Randall Miller, Bethlehem - possibly attend the November meeting to share the results of his gambling crime survey.
  - c. Gambling Addiction Expert - Ross will be asked to invite the individual to the December meeting.
  - d. Suggested having an administrative person from the City of Bethlehem join the committee.
- Sands BethWorks plans go to Bethlehem's Planning Commission on August 30, 2007, town hall at 4:30.
  - a. Two levels of plans get submitted.
  - b. Preliminary Plan has not been approved yet.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Committee Meeting Rescheduling - will be revisited in the new year.
- b. Monroe County Local Share Assessments Grants
  - i. [www.newpa.com](http://www.newpa.com) - scroll down and look for important resources - Monroe County
  - ii. Should municipalities be notified? - perhaps refer to Slate Belt and Nazareth COGs
  - iii. "The County's Legislative Delegation" - does this refer to County Council?
- c. Implications of Sands BethWorks Delay Announcement

- i. The first quarter revenues would be lost revised revenue estimates are \$ 450,000 for the County and \$ 750,000 for the municipalities if the January 2010 check is not considered to count as 2009 revenue, and \$ 750,000 and \$ 1,250,000 if it is 2009 revenue - Vic Mazziotti will consider this issue
  - ii. Timetable for the municipal grants program may need to be adjusted.
  - iii. The creation of a municipality grant application document should slow down
- d. Review and Revision of Local Share Assessment Municipal Grants Document.
  - i. Grant money needs to be spent within a 12- month period - multi-year grants could be an option
  - ii. Timetables will be revised.
  - iii. Primary selection criteria discussed.
- e. Personnel grants vs. capital grants discussed.
- f. Accountability and audit language is needed to insert into the grant documents.

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR (for public comment of the impact of gambling)**

- No members of the public are present.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn

ADOPTED THIS DATE:

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Chairperson