

# Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission

Wes Moore, Governor



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## MARYLAND LOTTERY AND GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION JANUARY MINUTES

DATE: January 23, 2025

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Virtual

PRESENT: Chair Everett D. Browning, Sr.  
Vice Chair E. Randolph Marriner  
Commissioner Diane Croghan  
Commissioner James J. Stakem

John Martin, Director  
James Nielsen, Deputy Director, Chief Operating Officer  
James Butler, Assistant Deputy Director, Chief of Staff  
Michael Eaton, Managing Director, Gaming  
John Mooney, Managing Director, Regulatory Oversight  
Solomon Ramsey, Managing Director, Sales and Marketing  
Paula Yocum, Managing Director, Chief Financial Officer  
Seth Elkin, Managing Director, Communications  
Craig Lindsey, Managing Director, Administration  
Holly Citko, Principal Counsel, Attorney General's Office  
Jennifer Tosky, Deputy Principal Counsel, Attorney General's Office  
Kathy Lingo, Executive Assistant

OTHERS: Representative from Hollywood Casino  
Representative from Ocean Downs Casino  
Representative from Live! Casino  
Representative from Rocky Gap Casino Resort  
Representative from Horseshoe Casino Baltimore  
Representative from MGM National Harbor

Everett D. Browning, Sr., Chair

E. Randolph Marriner, Vice Chair; Commissioners: Ade Adebisi, Diane Croghan, George L. Doetsch, Jr., Harold E. Hodges, James J. Stakem

## **QUORUM ESTABLISHED**

Chair Browning announced that there was a quorum present for the meeting. Also present virtually were: Vice Chair Randy Marriner, and Commissioners Diane Croghan, and James Stakem. Commissioners Ade Adebisi, Harold Hodges and George Doetsch were absent.

## **CALL TO ORDER**

After establishing there was a quorum, Chair Browning called the meeting of the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Browning asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Vice Chair Marriner motioned to approve, Commissioner Stakem seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Chair Browning asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes of the December 19, 2024, Open Session. There being none, Chair Browning asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Vice Chair Marriner motioned to approve, Commissioner Stakem seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Browning said the Consent Agenda contains:

1. Five new Instant Ticket Games:
  - a. \$1 #744 *Lucky 7's*;
  - b. \$2 #745 *Lucky 7's Doubler*;
  - c. \$5 #746 *Lucky 7's Tripler*;
  - d. \$10 #747 *Lucky 7's Multiplier*; and
  - e. \$20 #748 *Lucky 777*;
2. EGD Games and Component Testing - Certified Lab Software, Hardware and Game Certifications: VLTs, Table Game Components, Instant Bingo Machines, Sports Wagering Systems and Kiosks (12/13/24 – 1/21/25);
3. Consent Agreements – Regulatory Violations:
  - a. Hollywood Casino – September 2024;
  - b. Live! Casino – September 2024; and
  - c. MGM National Harbor – August 2024;
4. Consent Agreements – Sports Wagering Violations:
  - a. Canton Gaming – April, July and August 2024;
5. Consent Agreements – Mobile Sports Wagering Violations:
  - a. BetMGM – August 2024;
  - b. Crab Sports – August and September 2024;
  - c. Live! FanDuel – February, June and August 2024; and
  - d. Maryland Stadium-Sub-FBG – July 2024;
6. Consent Agreements – Underage Violations:
  - a. Canton Gaming – Case Nos. 2024-07-001 to -003; and
  - b. Hollywood Casino – Case No. 2024-01-006;
7. Gaming License Application Denials/Revocations;

8. Request for Removal from Exclusion List;
9. Assignment and Novation Agreement of Contract #2021-06 Central Monitor and Control System for a Video Lottery Terminal Program - IGT Global Solutions Corporation to IGT;
10. Lottery Retailer License Revocations; and
11. Staff Reports: James Nielsen; James Butler; Michael Eaton; John Mooney; Solomon Ramsey; Paula Yocum; Seth Elkin; and Holly Citko.

Chair Browning asked if any Commissioners cared to remove and discuss any items on the Consent Agenda. There being no discussion or requests, Chair Browning asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice Chair Marriner motioned to approve, Commissioner Stakem seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

## **OPERATOR REPORTS**

### **Hollywood Casino**

Ms. Amy Brennan, General Manager, reported that gross gaming revenue was down 6.8% year-over-year, down in all segments year-to-date due to hold issues in all categories. Gross gaming revenue for CY2024 was up 2.7%. The Progressive Payday was hit in December with over 89,000 Facebook views for the event. The casino plans to carry over this promotion into 2025. New Year's Eve at the casino had almost 1,000 guests with staggered promotions through the day. It was the second highest coin-in for the year, and third highest overall in the last 5 years. In the community, the casino assisted the Salvation Army with gift and food distribution, and participated in the Perryville Christmas parade. For team members, the casino hosted a holiday meal and awarded bonuses using a rewards and recognition platform for purchases on Amazon. The first dealer school was completed in December and the casino is down to 16 open positions. In 2024, there were 41 internal promotions. The casino used 10 MBE/WMBE vendors in December, which is the highest number to date, and still have five in the application process. If they had been approved, the casino would have hit 10% of MBE spend in December. There are no new MBE applicants in December, and Hollywood is focusing on the current suppliers that are approved. There have been some challenges in seeking vendors for landscaping and snow removal, but the casino is continuing to seek out new vendors.

### **Ocean Downs Casino**

Bobbi Jones, General Manager, reported that coin in was down .4% year-over-year, but a higher hold led to a net slot revenue up 2.5%. Table drop was down 21.6%. Due to a 5.7% higher hold, revenue was up 3.9%. Sports wagering was down .2% year-over-year. In the community, the casino participated in Toys for Tots and raised over \$3,500, and also had the 12 Tournaments of Christmas that also raised money for Toys for Tots raising \$13,000 and 84 toys. Ocean Downs held a charity slot tournament for Women Supporting Women, raising almost \$2,000. Ocean Down had a Holiday Wishes campaign that granted wishes to people in need through Facebook and local TV stations. On New Year's Eve, with 500 unique entrants, and over 2,500 total entries, the casino gave away a Mercedes Benz C300. Team members that worked on Christmas were given a free meal. Ocean Downs celebrated team member birthdays in December. Team members were given gift cards at the holiday party and had a food truck with free meals for team members.

## **Live! Casino**

Mr. Ryan Eller, General Manager, reported that December finished with total gaming revenue down .7% year-over-year. Year-over-year, slot machine revenue was up 1.6%; table game revenue was down 3.1%; poker was down 8%. Retail sportsbook made no money, down 100% to prior year in part due to hold. The run of the Ravens punished the sportsbook at the casino, when Ravens do well the retail sportsbook at the casino does poorly. Prior year was a favorable calendar with a decline in table games, but performance in hold was good. The casino had best of year drawings, holiday drawings for free play in December. Live! Casino held both \$25,000 Blackjack and Baccarat Tournament. There was also a \$500,000 multi property Baccarat Tournament bringing VIP players in from another property in Pennsylvania to participate in this final round. Live! Casino had several giveaways in the month of December. The casino had several shows in December that brought in over 9,000 customers to the property, including Babyface, John Legend and The Isley Brothers. The casino has been monitoring the market with the opening of The Rose Gaming Resort in Dumfries, VA, whose slot machines the first month lagged those of Live! Casino being just shy of \$11 million in slot revenue. The Rose Gaming Resort's grand opening was November 7, 2024. It is still too early to tell what will happen to the Maryland market. For the holidays, the casino had weekly treats, free meals on the holidays and fun events throughout December for team members. The casino donated \$825,000 to nonprofits in 2024. A total of \$150,000 was raised and contributed to the National Medal of Honor Museum project. Team members volunteered for 3,700 hours in 2024. The casino worked with local units of the Marine Corps Reserve and Anne Arundel County collecting for Toys for Tots. Live! Casino hosted a Minority Outreach Fair with over 140 companies participating and with over 1,000 attendees. The casino had \$13.5 million in MBE spend in 2024, just over 22%, exceeding the casino's MBE participation goal spend. Live! Casino continues to find initiatives while actively seeking out new vendors that qualify and then help facilitate their licensing process. Live! Casino is working to refine the systematic approach and is revising communication with websites and access to tools. Live! Casinos hopes that by the second quarter there will be a better communications program in place.

Chair Browning thanked Mr. Eller for the information and said the Commission hopes to receive an update from Mr. Eller on The Rose Gaming Resort soon.

## **Rocky Gap Casino**

Mr. Brian Kurtz, General Manager, reported that gaming revenue was down 12% year-over-year, slot machine revenue was down 13% driven by decreased casino visitation due to the weather. Table game revenue was up 3% volume driven, with less hold down 1.4 points year-over-year. Occupancy at the resort was fairly flat year-over-year, up 1%. There was lower consumption of casino comp rooms for December but the casino did have a 12% increase in cash rooms. While there was less casino traffic, there was increased occupancy over the holiday season. Activity in food and beverage was lower due to the recent weather, and golf rounds were down 50% year-over-year in December. In the past, February had good weather for golf, and Rocky Gap is looking to rebound if the same happens this year. For New Year's Eve, the casino held a \$25,000 hot seat giveaway that lasted for 12 hours. It was the second highest coin-in and win in the property's history. Despite the weather, Rocky Gap has had an okay January to date. In December, there was a decrease in visitation from the local market, driven by economic factors. Normally the casino sees lower visitation from outer markets this time of year, but are hoping to see a reversal of the trend for locals in 2025. Rocky Gap held several promotions and continues to have local artists on the weekends and for New Year's Eve. In 2024, Rocky Gap had 279 licensed employees compared to 288 in 2023, with 80% being full time. The casino had fun holiday activities for team members and offered refreshments through the month. Rocky Gap was again granted the AAA 4 Diamond Award from the AAA inspection.

## **Horseshoe Casino**

Mr. Arturo Ruvalcaba, Vice President of Casino Operations, reported that gaming revenue was down 11% in December, with softness in volume caused by property closures due to two water main breaks that impacted the property. In the fourth quarter, there was improvement with coin in up 55%, table drop was up 36%, and poker was up 46%. In the fourth quarter, the casino grew in table drop reversing a trend that started over a year ago. For nongaming in December, entertainment NFL activations were strong up over 36% year-over-year, anchored by strong lifts in total cash revenue. Horseshoe Casino had several entertainment shows in December. In the community, the casino continued supporting Baltimore City employees and their families, and purchased skateboards for the BMore Skate Project, committing to pay for all boards and practice events in 2025 as a community outreach event. Horseshoe Casino had a local University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) NICU nurse come to the casino and speak about the critical needs of babies in the NICU. The casino supports 100% of the needs of the NICU as the nurse identified, and it has a direct impact on families in Baltimore. The casino is still filling positions and currently the property is adequately staffed with 750 employees, and the casino is focusing on growing the employee footprint as business volumes return. Horseshoe Casino continues to focus on building the MBE spend and has found recent opportunities to work with local special event coordinators and promoters looking to find space to host events for growth. As mentioned last month, the casino has some events coming up with Gerald Stinnett in 2025 opening the casino up for more vendors for each area of the business to expand the use of the casino's MBE vendors not used previously.

## **MGM National Harbor**

Mr. Efrain Perez Agosto, Vice President, CFO, reported that 2024 had a strong December with gaming revenue up 4% year-over-year, 1% over 2023 as a whole. The lead being the growth in slot machine revenue, up 3% in December and 5% for the year. It is still too early to tell the impact from The Rose in Dumfries, VA, but there has been a decrease in slot handle in double digits in December. It is unclear if that can be attributed to The Rose Casino, as there could be a number of factors contributing to that decrease. There was a 7% increase in gaming revenue, but remain down 6% year-over-year due to a strong hold last year. There was some decrease in drop, particularly in the Baccarat segment, and poker revenue was down 5% year-over-year, but December was still the strongest month for the quarter and overall for the year and poker has also seen growth. The sportsbook wrote 36,000 tickets with over \$7 million in handle, with volume of tickets down year-over-year, with a higher handle. The Sports Bar was the watch location for the Washington Commanders games in December, hosting rallies for away games all season. Several radio hosts and sports junkies hosting their broadcasts from the Sport Bar. The theme for New Year's Eve was "Under the Sea" where guests dressed in their best, enjoyed food, music and drawings, which was a great success. MGM National Harbor had several giveaways in December. For entertainment, the theater was very busy and had several shows. In the community, the casino partnered with the Junior Achievement of Greater Washington's 3DE Program to provide business coaching to senior high school students. Team members shopped and wrapped hundreds of holiday gifts for the Adopt-a-Family Program. MGM National Harbor continues to lead the company on diversity spend at 23% with over 68 MBE companies participating. The casino continues to look for ways to increase that spend. The casino is sending the graduates from its Diversity Mentorship Program to the graduation ceremony in Las Vegas to celebrate for completing the program. MGM National Harbor hosted and attended several diversity events. MGM National Harbor is currently finalizing the 2024 numbers, and will share that information at a future Commission meeting.

Chair Browning thanked all of the casinos for sharing their reports noting that this is a partnership and offered to have the Commission help the casinos to continue to be successful.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### *Director's Report — John Martin, Director*

Director John Martin reported that Lottery results were favorable in December in both sales and profit, primarily due to good swings on both Mega Millions and Multi-Match jackpots. MLGCA was up against a very strong Powerball number from last year so the net is up 3.7% in December on sales, and up 10% on the profit side of the ledger, which has helped minimize the year-over-year decline during the midpoint of the year. After six months, Lottery is down 3.6% on sales, and down 8% year-over-year on the profit side. MLGCA has a number of programs for the second half of Fiscal Year 2025 and Director Martin will talk more about that in future meetings, including revisiting an upgrade of the Mega Millions product that is coming in April, with a potential for an increase in sales in the fourth quarter. MLGCA has a couple of favorites launching on the scratch offs with two themes that resonate with players coming in the second half of the fiscal year including a \$2 Back to the Future® scratch-off ticket for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movie, and will update as it comes along. It will include second chance contests.

The other upcoming scratch-off is Let's Make a Deal® in the coming months. MLGCA is up against strong headwinds on the national Multistate Jackpot games, both Powerball and Mega Millions compared to big jackpots last year. Put in perspective, since 2016, there have been 12 \$1 billion jackpots, 8 of those 12 were in Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024, which over indexes what is normal. In 2025, there has been one - a December \$1 billion Mega Million jackpot that was won in California. In January, both jackpots have been won and were reset, so it is going to be a long stretch and climb to do comparative for year-over-year numbers. In aggregate, the casino partners revenue is up 1.2% year-over-year, with contributions to the State up 2.5%. Director Martin thanked the casinos for all they do. Sports wagering in December had a tough month on hold for a number of sportsbooks with hold overall in December at 7.2%, which is a little lower than what they were for the first half of the fiscal year. Handle was strong with over \$600 million, with contributions to the State of \$6.5 million. At midpoint in fiscal year 2025, over \$3 billion in handle, a hold of 10.5%, overall contributions to the State of \$46.5 million. It could have been interesting if the Ravens had made the Superbowl.

Chair Browning thank Director Martin and his team on how they are able to keep the Commission focused as the central point taking many arrows. It is Chair Browning's first time with MLGCA during the legislative session, and he thanked the Lottery for being the ones to answer the call. He said to all the partners that everyone is on same page working together during this tough session to get the results that are best for everyone. He thanks everyone for attending virtually today.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

There was no need for the Commission to go into a closed session.

## **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Chair Browning announced the next Commission meeting will be held on Thursday, February 27, at 10:00 a.m. in person at Lottery Headquarters and via video conference.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Browning adjourned the meeting at 10:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John Martin  
Director