



VICCC Meeting and Hearing

Casino Control Commission (VICCC)

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- 0:00:00 we'll call good morning commissioner luther f renee president vice chair caroline p herman purcell president chairman marvin l pickering i have three presents sir thank you madam clerk the commission is comprised of three members all members are present thereby a quorum is established but i'm clear can you read the rest of the uh agenda directly sure today we will be approving of the commission minutes from june 7 2023 reports of officers secretary chairs report vice chair's report chairman's report report from division of gaming enforcement new business adoption of licensure resolution numbers 004-2023 and 005-2023 for the issuance of employees licenses and gaming related and non-gaming related entity licenses review of responsible gaming education month 2023 activities programs from casino licensees invited testifiers miss susan vorns president c o dv karina bay
- 0:01:49 casino mr anton capers general manager db carina bay casino mr ted schieffer coo caraville hotel and casino miss rashida russell general manager caraville hotel and casino thank you very much uh before i uh acknowledge the other attendees i'd like to remind all of attendance to please silence your cell phones and put them on the break or turn them off um i'd like to acknowledge the uh president of the commission's legal counsel attorney very encouraging uh some of you in the industry may know that we serve the information in another capacity um now he's uh joining us uh as our legal counsel let's recognize um often attendance we have our mr henry shang uh our special assistant for licensing and compliance um our executive assistant uh so it's in the capacity of uh the clerk mr mr smith uh other important attendance we have our uh on the um remotely we have our uh court reporter this is uh first for us uh having a court report revoking it's uh subject it's garbage with heart um so i'd like uh when we're speaking that we speak up we speak clearly so that uh she could um
- 0:03:51 yes i can thank you okay great okay uh did i miss anyone i'm fourth uh welcome industry, Ms. Lawrence, Ms. Cabo, Ms. Sufiba, Ms. Waco, Ms. Campo, Ocampo, Ocampo, Ocampo, welcome. Okay. All right, so we move on to item number three on the agenda, which is the approval of the Commissioners from our June 7, 2023 meeting. Do I hear a motion?

- 0:04:41 Motion, Mr. Chair. I move that we accept the minutes of June 7, 2023. A second motion. in the motion to accept the to approve the minutes of june 7 2023 has been moved and seconded hearing no objections the motion is hereby adopted moving on to the uh next order of business on the agenda which is item number four this is a new agenda item and it will be a part of the commission's meetings going forward the uh is you know from time to time going to the community and uh people uh are curious as to what the commission does uh some of these people include So in discussion with my colleagues, we decided that one way to educate the public as to the activities of the commission is by providing some reports between quarters as to the activities of the commission.
- 0:06:17 and um so we decided to put these reports in the agenda going forward so today we'd like to begin with the uh secretary trevor's report and we're going to the vice chair report and part of the chairman's report so commissioner um good morning good morning It is my task to give you a glimpse of some of the daily activities that a commission is engaged in. We do so many things that people on the outside don't really understand what goes on. So my task is to simply give you just a small measure of what you do on a daily basis or some of the things you do on a daily basis. I have chosen two topics chosen to highlight. Following the passage of our meeting in 2017, the Casino Controls Commission building suffered some damages to the structure, the improvement, and water damage to the parts of the interior.
- 0:07:39 to the Commission for repairs to the building and the contents and to restore the facility to pre-disaster design, capacity, and function within the existing footprint. The money had to be extended by September 2021. The time extension was granted by FEMA and a new deadline of September 2023 was established. Upon joining the Commission in June of 2023, the Chairman assigned me to continue to lie between FEMA and the Commission on those projects.
- 0:08:27 Several disruptions caused by the pandemic resulted in tremendous delays and necessitated a further extension. So my first order of business was to seek another extension from FEMA. However, the time extension was required due to multiple unexpected delays, including, but not limited to, contract requirements, limited contractor availability. For instance, a contractor is still needed to restore 267,000 pages of damaged documents caused by the hurricane. The Commission is still unable to identify the qualified contractor to perform such a restoration.
- 0:09:23 Such factors have hampered the Commission's ability to complete the approved work within the time frame given us by FEMA. The Commission also realized that we would not only need an extension of time, but we would need to seek an improvement in the project. project so we had not only to ask for an extension but to ask for an approved approval to have extension on more than done the commission was able to submit long before the 20th september 20th deadline a request for improved project and time extension to FEMA. FEMA has informed us that they have received the request and we now await their formal approval for the extension and improved project.
- 0:10:29 While we were involved in negotiation discussions with FEMA, we also sent out a request for quotes to perform the tasks that will identify for example the installation of air vents in the five-story room to improve airflow within the building and to conduct regular mode testing to date the commission has identified a contractor and now await a copy of contractual documents from the vendor so we can continue that's ongoing a second aspect of what we did in that period between the meetings it is the commission's undertaking that does the work to regulate the casino industry should have a full understanding and a working knowledge of the processes that are involved so that the reports we frequently received from proscenos are more meaningful to us. To this end, Commissioner Purcell and myself on August 23rd, 2023 spent hours at Caravan's casino to witness what is familiarly known in the industry as a drop. I was fully fascinated, first by the magnitude of the tasks involved and the professionalism and the efficiency with which the casino employees carry out their duties. The precision and the seriousness with which the duties were performed made me accept the notion that the industry is in good hands. Not only was I impressed with the
- 0:12:20 casino employees but i was also equally impressed with the commission's inspectors those who were present to oversee the entire operation the ease with which our inspectors were able to verify the accuracy of the process told that they were fully trained and i felt that they understood the word very completely and it left me with a deep faith in the reality of the reports the reliability of the reports that are regularly submitted to the commission i do thank mr shine who already did mr chairman for allowing us to do that and of course I thank the Commonwealth staff for the enlightening experience.
- 0:13:16 I am one step further in my understanding of the industry. Of course, we would like to do a similar activity when we visit the casino hotel at some point. Thank you. Thank you. we should have a name before i go to um to acknowledge the presence of the dje director uh david my apologies um moving on to the um vice chair's report thank you mr chairman um i'm going to begin my my report is isn't uh the packet i'm just going to summarize that report i do want to turn on to what commissioner when they said i do want to say how on august 23rd that experience where we witnessed the drop and cut at caravel how enlightening it was it will definitely aid me into some of the reports we get the types of reports uh we received to understand that i do want to also specifically thank mr shan um our special assistance for licensing and compliance and inspector in kind of show who was the inspector uh the permissions inspector on that drop and count that

day I also want to take the time to thank the staff and the Caravelle for the graciousness and patience in answering the many questions we have on seeing how this procedure um what all is involved in it and

0:15:12 I definitely look forward to our time, but we can also come out to the DV and witness your dropping count. During this quarter, this third quarter, I attended a conference, the National Council on Problem Gambling in Washington, D.C. This was the 37th annual conference and their largest with over 600 attendees, and it just demonstrate the growing concern in the industry of how to come back problem gambling. I also attended our ethics training here at the Commission where the commissioners and staff were reminded of our code of ethics and our role our very important role in ensuring the integrity of the Virgin Islands casino industry that that training was led with Mr. Abramson the chair We will give you more information on that, but it goes to the commitment of the this commission that we're all reminded.

0:16:18 We all have an important role to play in patrons and the public to know that the industry is operating in an honest, transparent manner. We have several projects. We met with the V.I. Division of Behavioral Health and implementing a joint program with that agency where the commission will be provided financial assistance to train counselors here in St. croix i'm the saint thomas commissioner to train counselors here in saint croix and in the district of saint thomas and saint john's on problem gambling addiction we know we can refer patrons to the 1-800 number and other happens but the commission believes it important to have counselors here in each district and we started that conversation with the division of of Department of Health, their commissioner, Commissioner Khanna Schoens, has supported this initiative. Our staff at Behavioral Health is 100% behind us all week.

0:17:37 Understanding all the other employees of that division want to take advantage of that certification program. It's just a matter for us to sit down and finalize everything, have the legal documents executed executed and we can go from there, but I think this is a project that we can see will be soon implemented on island in both districts. We've also met with our media consultants. The Commission is very interested in developing a long term problem gambling, responsible gaming media campaign.

0:18:17 media campaign that will use traditional media, newspapers, TV, ads in the theaters and social media, having it on Facebook, Instagram, because we know we have different audiences we're targeting. We're targeting a full of population, but also a younger, you know, once they get to that age i i don't believe we can wait until they're 21 and can legally enter into the casino but it's to train them now you know to get that thinking what all is involved in it and we know we have to do that well they tell me facebook is for the older courses but instagram snaps chats those are the things we're looking at to get the messages out and finally we worked on responsible gaming education month which is this ongoing this month our um work with miss smith our executive assistant important to gather different ways and how the commission can have a presence in um responsible gaming the observation of responsible gaming education month both casinos caravel and dv before you leave today we will have a box for you that will contain our our giveaways for you to distribute to your patrons and employees um the giveaways contain the message of the american gaming association set a budget keep it social know the odds play legally the poor tenants that they have identified as what can get people to understand the importance of responsible gaming and we're already beginning to think thoughts of how we're going to what more we can do in 2024 but mr chairman that completes my report thank you so much

0:20:20 now on to your payment report uh the commission is a member of the north american gaming the annual conference was held during the week of june 11 through june 16 2023 in boise idaho commissioner the third may and um special assistant mr shang and i attended that conference the uh 2024 conference is scheduled for june in charleston south of ryan on july 27 2023 the commission appeared before the quarterly commission and finance committee of the legislature to provide testimony regarding the commission's this year 2024 project request the gvi from the central government funds the salaries and fringe benefits for the commissioners and staff of the commission other operating expenses of the commission are funded for revenues received by the casino revenue fund and the casino revolving fund I was a company that went to hearing by Commissioner Rene and to hear assistant Ms. Smith.

0:21:49 And as Commissioner Herman Purcell indicated, she was unable to attend when she attended the NCPG conference during that time. The Commission requested a total amount of \$1,477,200 for 15 positions, consisting of \$1,021,200 in salaries and \$456,100 in the related finance benefits. The OMB, Office of Management and Budget, submitted a request of \$1,123,800, which is a difference of \$53,500.

0:22:31 Senator Donna Fredberger, who is the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, requested supplemental information from the Commission regarding regarding uh that increase and uh that um that supplementary information was submitted uh time to get to her uh commissioner um mentioned the uh annual ethics training uh i was able to unable to attend that because i was unfortunately i was um of healing. I understand that it went very well. As you indicated, the training was provided by Mr. John Adams, General of the JJA Enterprise Consulting and our certificates issued to all the participants. Just to address what the commissioner said, ethics training is a uh very important to this commission and it's a

commitment that we made to conduct this uh training annually um lots of staffing the commission onboarding um or it support specialist uh who i mentioned earlier mr bingo davila on july 17 2043 um he's a welcome addition to our staff and um hopefully with his uh manager experience you know we've moved um i need to move into the 21st century with all the technological advances on august 14 2023 we also welcome uh attorney 11 carrington

0:24:33 um the commission is strongly recruiting for the position of executive director uh moving on to financial matters and other related activities during In through August of 2023, the commission issued a total of 189 licenses in various categories as follows, casino employees, 93, casino key employees, 55, gaming-related, 16, non-gaming-related, 25.

0:25:20 The same period, the Commission issued 239 work permits, 113 exemptions for licensure, and 66 waivers for registration and licensure. um the financial important commission uh this report is through may of 2023 um not uh timely for sufficiently timely for the uh permissions to the commission of statements that will improve the um submission the provision the preparation and submission of the uh uh financial important on a more timely basis but through um for the first one is through may upward 22 through may 2023 total revenues including the gvi contribution of seven hundred three thousand eight hundred sixty dollars for payroll the total revenues amounted to one million three thousand nine dollars expenses total nine hundred ninety eight thousand one hundred twenty eight dollars resulting in an income of thirty one thousand eight hundred eighty one dollars the largest expenditure of boys is for payroll which consists of salaries in the amount of four hundred eighty nine thousand twenty three dollars and related fringe benefits uh in the amount of 2014,000 to the \$26 the second largest category of revenue as far as from the casino revenue fund, which totals \$238,870 the Commission's total budget for fiscal year 2023 is \$2,126,700 in revenues and expenses through May 2023 48.43% of the budgetary revenues have been realized and 43.93% of the project has been expended um the commission received um on

0:27:27 September 19th uh received investigative reports regarding the removal of a casino license application for VITL and disqualifiers those reports are currently under review by the commission for processing water um speak a little bit to that as far as much as we said in public uh involving the um renewal and the casino license for the um um i expressed on many occasions that um the commission would move as actually if it's been as humanly possible to uh project with uh to review these applications and move the projects forward but we will not we will not cut any corners and sacrifice um our responsibility to get to that point but we move as expeditiously as possible to get it accomplished um for the um period june through august 2023 casino license age um even karina bay and uh parable hotel casino had those casino revenues of four million For the 2023 fiscal year from October 2022 through August 2023, the total amount of gross casino revenue was \$17,171,734.

0:29:17 Do you know our gross casino revenue is the total amount received by a casino, less the amounts paid out for winnings. The gross casino revenue is taxed at a rate of 12%, which is paid into the casino revenue fund. The commission receives 25% of those taxes with the remaining 75% pages support certain other government agencies. With quarter ending this March 31st, 2023, both casinos reported a combined gross total payroll of \$2,459,000 with a total headcount of 287 employees. With quarter ending June 30th, 2023, there was a combined gross total payroll of \$2,513,000 with a headcount of 277 employees.

0:30:12 So for the first half of 20, 23 total period for the casino licensees amounted to \$4.97 million with an average headcount of 282 employees. Worthy of note is the other spending for goods and services for both casino licensees due to the second quarter of the year 2023. spending for other goods and services such as food liquor advertising insurance legal professional fees etc amounted to a combined amount of 7 million 45 000 this is uh part of the a major part of the responsibility of the facility control permission we are both our licensees uh provide a tiny report to us for the most part um to us and we monitor uh closely very closely those on those activities and we thank you thank you all very very much okay so that that ends the uh the uh the report of officers so then we move on to the next order of business item on the agenda which would be uh item number five the report from the uh division of gaming enforcement did you know the um the uh division of gaming enforcement uh is the enforcement and in the investigation on of the commission the dge is the division of the uh department of joint

0:32:12 not directly under the commission but uh responsibilities are exclusively for the benefit of the commission thank you sir uh good morning good morning our only the daily director of the Division of Human Enforcement. As Mr. Chairman Pickering indicated, DGE is on the Department of Justice. However, all of our freedom is for the benefit of the Consumer Doctoral Commission. Unfortunately, the staffing at the DGE has been a problem from inception. The DGE has been on the staff, and for some reason, regardless of the please that I have made, I would say, over the past 20 years, we have never gotten sufficient staff.

- 0:33:06 I have basically solicited the assistance of the chairman and former chair of the commission to assist DGE in making it known to the legislature the importance of proper staffing for the DGE, which would benefit the operation of the Commission. Both Chairman Peterson and former Chairman Richard, they made the request for the past three years since I'm back, unfortunately nothing has happened so the dge struggles to do what it has to do and that's uh we can only do what we can do with the limited staff now but i can say that i'll say that um currently the dge has two staff members and myself and everything that has to be done in the DGE is online. We have some assistance from the lady from the CSEF program, that's a program that helps senior citizens through the plan of human services. So she helps with some administrative duties at the DGE. Other than that, the DGE jumps here, there, and everywhere to get everything done.
- 0:34:31 DGE, from that, the past two years ended in March April, DGE had three investigators. For some reason, the Department of Personnel decided to list all the employees at DGE as quote-unquote investigators, but they do everything that has to be done. One of them resigned in April, and I have two staff members. the technicians who work at the casinos when we get requests from Levy or Caravelle. They are the ones that do the investigations and ask whether we do due diligence investigation or investigating complaints from wrongdoings at the casino. In addition to managing and supervising work, I do the investigation of the gaming related and non-gaming related CSE applicants.
- 0:35:29 Let me just give you a briefing of what DGE was able to accomplish within the past five months. The DGE received 36 requests for technical assistance combined from Caramel and and the DV currently in the casino and request for technical assistance the way the let me just see any machine that has to be on the floor at the casino has to be tested and approved by the DGE so with the information to the commission for the commission to make a determination So anytime the casino has to do anything with regard to the machine when they're talking about changing the, it would be something simple as changing the pictures on the casino.
- 0:36:26 If you want to change the computer chips on the machine, whatever, DG has to be present. And we get a call and we report to the casino and we call by the normal balance, we break the seal of the casino to allow the technicians at the casino to do what they have to do before they seal the important component in the machine so that it could be placed back on the floor. What happens is that when you get a call, it takes, we don't have a time limit. Because sometimes you go there and it's something simple. Whether it happens in one hour, then it's done. Other times you have to stick around because while the casino's technicians are working on it, there might then come to some difficulties. So instead of going back and forth, if you want to drive to DV, you don't want to go back, drive back to the office, they have to go back to DV. know we might we might stay we try to get them done so even though we have 36 requests we just average about um two people with it the amount of time that my technician stay there varies it could be a few hours it could be only it depends and um DG has always given priority I have always given priority to addressing the issues for technical assistance the reason being a lot of emotions we don't get revenue so when we get a request for technical assistance my position is drop whatever you're going to address that unfortunately we do not have a dedicated person to do that so the same person that's doing that same person that we do this application for you having said that we received 36 requests and sometimes both of my employees have to have to address a particular situation so there are two reasons why sometimes it requires two of them
- 0:38:31 the only reason why i have is to have both of them true so in case one is absent The DGE received 45 casino hotel employees, 34 casino employees application that is 7 CKE, 10 CHKE, 2 casino service entity and 1 casino service entity non-gaming related applications. Once that is received by us, first thing that we do, we have to scan everything that we receive. Make an electronic file and also have copy files.
- 0:39:12 And those of you who are familiar, you know, the mountain of pages that's involved in an application. So somebody that's scanning that, that takes a lot of time. That's what we have to do so that we have some kind of organization in our office. So that within the past five months, these are the number of applications that we receive, application permit. DGE closed 65 due diligence investigation and the reason why they closed, after we have scanned and we start we start the process of doing the investigation we received stimulation notices from the casino or the hotel on a regular basis and in the process of doing an investigation someone is stimulated we have to discontinue so all the work that we have done but we have we have to start it once we get the application and unfortunately sometimes you get a termination notice in about two months or less after someone has been hired so you go through all of that still preparing the investigation then the person is terminated so you discontinue what you have to do okay um however DGE was able to complete 14 due diligence investigation that we transmitted to the casino commission. We partially completed three investigations. Due to this investigation, we completed four complete investigations. And complete investigation is investigation that we have to conduct when there is a complaint by either the casino or a patron who forgot to solve violation of the or the regulations. So once we receive this, we conduct of an investigation and make a determination as to what would be the next course if we're going to

- 0:41:03 file a complaint the official complaint of the commission but it's not going to be dismissed or I should not be dismissed or we don't want to take any further action but before we get to that point we have to have an investigation of the complex based on the company that we investigated will appear we're able to file the five conflicts with the with the commission against particularly individuals who are violating the rules and regulations so the investigation was completed it's a copy of the investigation then if we should find a complaint against the violator so we were able to find five five five one of the things that we undertook and that's something that we waited for quite some time was to dispose of all applications, all files that we had. We had some files going back to over 20 years, and we were able to share about over a couple hundred boxes of files, and I was able to consolidate the contents of two storage units. We were able to consolidate what we have in one by shredding a lot of the old documents and by doing so we reduce the one for payment for rental books origin so it's helping for two units with an open with regard to training during that time during past six months one of my staff member and went to university of las vegas for a three-day uh three-day training in regard to surveillance um with regard to consumer surveillance and the reason why i thought it was important is that if we get the complaint that something was approved so that probably that does the complaints or redo the report to review it as part of the investigation is a review of the surveillance coverage so that is something that
- 0:43:10 is done and i think it's important that person knows exactly how it should you know what should and i extended uh information to both casinos but if they could have sent someone of their surveillance party to that so that's my understanding that it was very uh very important that's something that I find it goes worldwide uh I'm talking about training and I'm in November the seventh day both of my staff members will be going to GLI University and that would be for what we call a slot stream because with regard to the machines the missions are very complex and we have a role to play in terms of testing the mission to ensure that they are missions that are approved so the computer checks that are there and one of the checks that has to be made so that the mission will be back on the floor so i have two of my staff members will be going to las vegas uh the gli because gli is the company it's one of the two companies i should say because we have vm cli are two companies that test all the questions before it can be approved when you see the city of the Virgin Islands so they'll be the attended training for them um I um I attended along with the with the chairman and commissioner and Ms. Shan attended the the Niagara annual conference in Boise Idaho I was a member of the planning committee of that conference and I was one of the moderators of one of the sessions that I wrote. That conference also I made a proposal prior to the meeting for the Virgin Islands to be elected as a member of the southern region and that was voted on. So what that means we have three sections in the Virgin Islands. We have the lottery, the gaming enforcement, and the commission. They are all part of Niagara, but we have one vote, and that is from the Cassini-Battro Commission. So the commission vote with regard to issues that are important to gaming in the Virgin Islands, and I guess not nationally and the Commission so by being a part of that region the members of the
- 0:45:39 Virgin Islands can be elected to officer positions in that country so that that was done um the i'd like to say that we have a dg we have been trying to deal with the backlog of license investigation especially in fact to deal with the cse gaming related application uh it's getting it was we were moving slowly we were moving slowly but moving but we uh basically slowed down quite a bit however it is my goal to try to finish all of the gaming related applications even if the report is not complete for the investigation so in uh in In October, we begin to visit to three of the entities.
- 0:46:40 I'm going to go to Glassport Digital, Coding Army Game, and Compute Energy. So it's going to be an intense trip, but I'm going to cover all of that because I still have three other entities that we have to do background investigation on. it's my goal to try to finish this and in december i don't want to go there or there are links at time so i can get this finished that will be done but my hope is at the end of the year as i said all of the gaming related applications that we have in our position at this point in time the background investigation investigation could have been completed what that does by pushing it like that the investigation will be done by the reports but some entities you have seven with the qualifiers you have five six or more requests to write and um coming to the other thing that's dealing but i think it's important to deal with the investigation and if there are any issues then we'll address that if there are no issues then okay we have done that x y and z yeah that's That's why there's a lot of taking care of everything that has been doing. For the most part, that is what we're able to do within the past five months, still trying to get a replacement for the investigator that resigned in March of April.
- 0:48:10 At one point we have requested, I think, and we have been requesting two additional employees to bring the staff to life. and if that happens we'll be able to assist what this is the commission what we are and we need to do and with all that we're going to just do what we have and it's not going to be as creepy as neither of us would like it okay and i just like this uh just to tell you about the work training for um in the ethics training and since we're part of the entire regular regulatory process and we request that it's possible that the staff of pgb invited to the next uh ethics table so it is possible right right that's the end we will uh we really know that okay okay and um again you know we you know we hear your your plea and we feel you're paying the value of staffing shortages um we know that uh we have uh been advocating uh

uh on behalf of dge to to get uh to get some improvement there uh and we will continue to do so thank you very much thank you very much for that important yes we will make sure our next order of business uh which is our new business is uh items item number six uh A and B. 6A is the adoption of licensure resolutions numbers 005, 004, 0023 and 005, 0023 for issuance of employee licensure and gaming related entities and licensure.

0:50:18 um we these um these uh resolutions were adopted in our executive uh meetings four twenty twenty three was approved at a June 28th 23 meeting and uh so uh with that um i'm going to ask um but i'm vice-chair i wanted to make uh the motion will be doing our two certain motions okay yes please uh mr chair i move that we have that this commission adopt rec licensure resolution number zero zero four dash 2023 uh dated June 28th of 2023 that provided for the licensure of various uh casino employees and casino services entities i so move right second second promotion licensure resolution number zero zero four dash two thank you um the motion to approve licensure resolution number zero zero four dash twenty 23 had been moved and seconded hearing your objection the motion is hereby adopted mr care i move that we approve licensure resolution number zero zero five of 2023 it was adopted by at our executive meeting on it's off the 7th of 2023 wherein we provided

0:52:18 for the licensure of various consumer employees and consumer servicing entities isolate mr chair i second the motion to accept the licensure resolution number zero zero five that's two zero two thank you commissioner a motion to approve license resolution number zero five dash twenty twenty three as we move on seconded hearing no objections the motion is here by adopting because moving on to item number 6b of our agenda which is a review of the um responsible game and education month the 2023 activities and programs from our casino licensees invited to testify as uh mr Jordan's president and ceo or ceo of dv carina the casino i hope i have your title um correct okay and uh mr Anton Anton Capers the general manager of the casino mr chiefer coo and caravan hotel and casino along with mr chiefer general manager of caravan hotel um so i'm going i want to ask um dv several please uh before i and like you see to be on specify table um so i actually to present your testimony um

0:54:11 um legislation put a record that uh the American gaming association AGA is designated the month of September uh as responsible gaming education model and this year marks the 25th year in advocating and promoting responsible gaming as you all know the commission is mandated to provide for gambling addiction and education programs we came across an article uh from the uh Nevada Independent which article was written on September 18th 2023 by one uh poet starts this h-t-u-t-z um headline that once shunned by casino operators responsible gaming campaign turns 25 there is um a quote from a casino executive on name which says it's good not to have people getting themselves into trouble because when they're in trouble they're not good customers and um that's just a couple of paragraphs because it's a very lengthy uh lengthy uh article but um it said at the time when gambling matters were rarely mentioned in game and company boardrooms paris entertainment decided the issue needed to be raised on casino floors but it wasn't just rival corporate executives that was asked that the idea of employees learning how to spot signs that a person might have a gambling problem uh it quotes um person by the name of Jan Jones Blackhurst she said our own lawyers trying to block it and this Blackhurst was um then a Harris senior vice president but with the support of the company CEO Phil Satter she led Harris launch of the Casino Industries Earth responsible gaming initiative in the mid 1990s and she exposed these protocols and saying maybe because i came out of politics

0:56:56 but you have a responsibility to your communities your customers and your employees we believe that was the right thing to do now a member of cedar's entertainment board of directors Ms. Blackhurst continued, said the idea was to give casino employees the background to provide advice. For recording, the only thing you want to give employees is knowledge of what to do if a customer says something they don't, or if they see a customer in real distress. The company placed signage in its strip and green with casinos, providing toll-free 24-hour form numbers for services that aided program gamblers. A few years later, the American Game Association leaders decided the Washington, D.C. trade organization needed to take a proactive approach to the topic and dedicated a week in September to bring attention to the issue.

0:57:54 says uh one year all casinos nationwide were encouraged to wear orange wristbands to raise awareness of compulsive gambling in the past 25 years legal gambling has enormously expanded throughout the U.S. and the AGA that's the only responsible gaming campaign beyond its muted beginnings um as mentioned before the commission is very interested in how our licensees um respond you know to responsible gaming uh problem gambling and what steps you're going to take into to recognize it now we've had our discussions here um part of it that we've spoken about um um may seem a little counter-intuitive to the um casino operators because i'm sure that you know you want people to to gain what you you want them to do to do so in a responsible manner because as this executive said it's good not to have people getting themselves into trouble because when they trouble they're not because with that i'll let you fix it good good morning commissioners kuiper's general manager divvy karina bay casino thank you very much for that introduction and i'll say

wholeheartedly we agree with that um i'm happy to hear that uh may you just pronounce your name kuiper is it kuiper or kuiper

0:59:44 I appreciate the opportunity to share with the Commission we did in fact forward a full package of everything that has been going on but I'd like to point out that this is not just something that pay attention to in the month of september this is something that is ongoing as was part of that package and i'd just like to hit on the highlights of parts of the package that that we did submit we kind of took a three-fold approach this month one was sending out a letter to all of our patrons addressing those four tenants that the american gaming association had put out the setting a budget and sticking to it keeping it social learning the game and playing legally there was a specific letter that was posted all around the casino and made available to all of our guests specifically addressing that from me personally to to the guests That was one of the areas that we covered.

1:01:02 The next was talking points for our managers and supervisors, where when they were meeting with their respective staff in each of the departments, we laid out a plan for the month with different talking points that they could address with the staff, so that not only were we educating the staff but also giving them tools to help with the guests. Week one, the theme was empowering customers to play responsibly. Discussion of the definition of problem gaming, really getting into it, as was indicated in some of the reports, director david was actually mentioning it there is a fair amount of turnover in our staff we have a good core of staff who have been there a long time and have been through this quite regularly but we do also have a fair amount of turnover so for some staff this may be the first time that they've gone through this so that's why we wanted to make sure that everybody's fully understanding what was going on then the next week was legal regulated gaming sorry regulated gaming protects players and that's basically addressing how the importance of the casino control commission the division of gaming enforcement and going through and explaining how although at times it may seem onerous that the the regulation that is put on us it is there for protection of us and more importantly the guests and our players so that they know that they are getting a fair shake and and when they're putting their money out to gamble that they're not being swindled or cheated

1:02:56 or or taken advantage of um building a responsible gaming culture was was the theme for for the next week knowing where the information is for the players should they require help what those numbers are where to direct them um there is that 800 number i'm very hopeful that the commission can share some of the results of what's coming in under that 800 number we had discussed that last year about how if we have tangible results that we can all actually take a look at that could be very useful to all of us to to actually know and understand if the efforts that are being made are having an impact um i i don't know if that information is coming back to us as a territory my understanding is that that 800 number is actually a mississippi-based number but maybe we can have more discussion on that and get some of that information.

1:04:07 And then lastly, the document that we shared is something that we do on an ongoing basis, where as people, we broke it up into our employees, our crew members, our guests, and then the audit regular audits that are done um every new employee during orientation goes goes is provided with our compulsive gaming policy and advised where the information is that this is as soon as they're hyped in addition to what what we're doing on a regular basis in this month of september um what's in the handbook the company's position on compulsive gaming self-exclusion um is is a big part of what goes on where we work collaboratively with the commission where people step forward and say i want to take a break and we help them to take a break by ensuring that we're not letting them in sometimes that that can be a little challenging people can be persistent and and just need to be reminded that they've themselves asked to be self excluded um obviously that national problem helpline that's available in every bit of advertising that we put out we address and publish that number so that it is basically everywhere if anyone's looking for it looking at any of our advertising um there's actually a phrase uh gamble with your head not over it that that is part of our marketing that goes on on each of those things um and then we have an order to make sure that all of these things that we put in

1:06:08 place are in fact actually happening internal warnings we run to to make sure that we ourselves are doing what we've committed to do okay is that something i appreciate what you're doing then the the the responsible game sure yeah okay i think what you've got nice with that yeah that be helpful to us you know hopefully um down the line as you mentioned uh the uh information that's put out on your on your ads advertising etc we would have another line that says you could get help here right here in the virgin island and we would happy to and and yeah happy to amend that advertising that would be tremendous thank you for the opportunity to address this this is a very important initiative to me personally as well and it has been i've been gaining now over 30 years um it's been hard to move for me to believe that but i'm proud of the initiatives that the team took here um during responsible gaming month but i want you to also know that it's a these are corporate initiatives that we have throughout all of our properties um it sometimes it takes some very difficult conversations with guests and over the last 30 years i've had to personally have some of them um and from the standpoint of getting up in the middle of the night because we had an individual who was in 1 million dollars in cash um a very

successful

- 1:07:56 reporting artist internationally and everybody was getting a bit uncomfortable because he was acting very strange and not like himself and probably won those room for two days and stayed on the table i got up in the middle of night and came and pulled him in the office and i had a good rapport in relationship with them and i said you gotta go home now i'm really worried this is customary and he said well you stopped giving me like he kept wanting to raise his credit limit and like a quarter of a million dollar credit credit limit he wanted to go to 500 etc etc so he showed me the next time he just showed up with a satchel full of a million dollars um but it was very uncomfortable to me uh that it was going on so i came in out of the bed had a conversation and i said go home come back next week something's just not right um and then have these with you know much smaller level people you know an elderly couple where the wife is doing things that the husband didn't know and you know it's very important to me i think one of the comments that was made in the article you read i couldn't agree more that a problem gamer is not a good guest um i've seen a lot in my years in the industry i broke in as a dealer when i was a paralegal um i did it for fun on weekends and nights in a small community where gaming was just initiated and i saw people lose their construction businesses you know so from that very very start seeing some difficult things i knew when i did lead a company we were going to be very conscientious about this and it was long before some of these other initiatives globally came out so basically you know um not only do i support what they've done here we do things similarly to our community and we appreciate the opportunity to to argue about that that's uh
- 1:09:48 of course and personal stories uh that you mentioned what is you know it's real it's real it's not the theory and and regarding self-exclusions for instance in mississippi um if someone self excludes the first time they reach we get more warning the second time you know they're formally trespassed and we tell them we're going to file charges if they come the third time and if they come the third time unfortunately we will have them arrested because i don't know how else to stop them from coming um you know but but that's kind of just the position we had to take and it it hurts my heart to do it but it's for their own good and their family's good as well um plus we could be um fined or something if we let us a self-excluded person play let's keep on taking action um but we try to give them you know three strikes in or not before they arrest so it's very important the um commission uh recently um It's our voluntary self-exclusion program. We realized that people would come in, you know, one weekend and have to be placed on the list.
- 1:11:02 It's probably a lot of money that we go, and then they come back in the next week and say, uh okay i'm curious and um we realize that it's not supposed to work that way you know so we are we certainly advise all of our forms and conditions you know for one uh and we appreciate that james that it we we too believe that that that's the right way to do it my understanding is that there's a time certain no matter what happens they will be excluded in 90 days even if they change their mind six six six months minimum of six months and the patron patron must then petition to be removed from the list notwithstanding they may have come out and said just i just want to be excluded for one year they have to come back to commission and say my one year has expired if they don't come back to commission you remain on the list so the onus is on them so yes that's what we got yes that's important i think that's right that's how i like it patron must come back we will we will not the commission will not just automatically remove from the list you must petition which seems to me it should be the petition the patron saying i'm not ready to be removed because i i know what went on not just the commission takes you off because oh a year has passed and that's all i want that's great thank you before which is exclusion point Do you keep any records of people your staff may intervene, where a staff member may talk to someone? Do you know any...
- 1:13:06 There's not a formal... No, there's no full report where there's a list of anything like that. That could be also affecting the area, right? right we have it's very private too it's and it really is it takes a soft touch and that's why sharing with the employees basically where to push people to go to speak with a professional and I think having that help locally is going to make a huge difference you know and a call to an 800 number you don't know who you're talking to right um it's helpful it's it's something but I think having something locally will really help that much more right and that's what the counselors at behavioral health have indicated to us that persons want to engage with somebody maybe they recognize or who speaks their speak yeah or understand and and we're hoping that that that's where we can do it and then at that point we will have the numbers and the information that which we're currently not getting on the 800 number.
- 1:14:24 Okay, yes. Thank you very much. Thank you. Any other question? Thank you. Thank you so much. We appreciate it. Thank you. Bye-bye. Mr. Cheever, you're welcome. Thank you. i couldn't hear excuse me yeah did you speak into the mic yes sorry i'm going close yeah i am the ceo of the caramel group with me today is mr shida russell the general manager of the carabel casino uh she will be providing the testimony today thank you good morning commissioners once again christina russell general manager of the carabel hotel casino first and foremost it is always a pleasure to be given the opportunity to update you on our activities at the carabel casino as much as we are a business of entertainment we understand that a small percentage of people are susceptible to addiction with that in mind we feel it is a part of our

responsibility to identify and educate these individuals although our gaming efforts are still ongoing we would like to highlight some of our efforts during responsible gaming education month our marketing team has made a responsible gaming has made responsible gaming talking points a top priority

1:16:10 during our live drawings by highlighting the importance of betting responsibly and knowing your limits when gambling we are continuously posting responsible gaming materials on all of our social media platforms and on our digital display board in the mainstream casino we have included the problem gambling helpline contact information for individuals who believe they or someone they know has a gambling problem on all of our posters and print media during my live visit to a very popular radio station i was able to discuss responsible gaming education month and the importance of gambling responsibly with the host and the listening audience we continue to review responsible gaming facts with our staff with a strong emphasis on identifying potential problem gamers. We are about to close out the month and continue through the end of the year with responsible gaming trivia for both our staff and patrons for small prizes.

1:17:17 Also I have been approached by the owner of that very popular radio station to create a sort of a cash cab scenario utilizing our shuttle bus. We will be working on our online our line of questioning for this event which will include some responsible leaning topics lastly we continue to tag all of our ads whether print radio commercials or in-person speaking with our model bet with your head not over it again we would like to thank you for this opportunity we appreciate the focus and resources the commission has dedicated to this very important not good and if you don't want you almost uh which is here if you're anything that i don't well i would just like to include the fact that you know the important thing here is we we have to get this information in the hands of the employees and the managers you know for us to say responsible gaming you know that we have been on the floor every single day every single minute you know we have to give our employees the ability to identify and address and i'll convey or agree with the approach that you have to get the right person to talk to that person you know if you just have a stranger come and talk to somebody with a problem you know it doesn't necessarily work out the way you want it you find that person and i have this personal conversation with one of our employees to say do you have a problem because you know if i went to divvy i would see that person right so you really have to find that person who knows how to talk to that specific individual uh people aren't very forthcoming without their problems but there's an arc to entertainment right we're in the entertainment business if you're coming in and you're unhappy that's not what we're looking for you know we're looking to entertain people not take their money you know if you go to the movies that cost you money that's entertaining right and our businesses you might walk out with more money than you came in but however there are those people that just can't handle that and we need to be able to identify that and our employees are the first line of defense so that's that's our focus is to get

1:19:17 that information to us great um and and i i and i'm happy to to hear of our growth efforts um and um you know our um partners that you mentioned now that they could have audits do you do the same uh currently we don't have an audit a responsible name but that's something that we can improve them in the future okay um any questions i just want to make a comment um that both casinos seem to like that model from new jersey a bit with your head i think mr carey said you have received when you go about horses have commented to you about that yes yes but i'm saying book if you know yeah it apparently it comes from uh from the industry of uh you know i i um was reading and uh uh what's the gentleman name uh he wrote the book uh cabot is it he teaches that you and i'll read i think it's yeah you know and um in that book i found we are in new jersey that that tagline was yeah yes yes section 434-12.2 be uh require that exact language or some variation does it okay uh renovations four three four dash twelve point two b in my third years i always thought this kind of awkward phrase yeah okay there's one that could be a little more uh crazy

1:21:31 If you lose, you fire, you don't bet with your head, knock over it, or if you sweat it, don't bet at it. um thank you for both um for the um for the um for your efforts in um uh responsible game education month and not just a month right that you both indicated it's ongoing and uh which is not believed it should be very strong thank you um and i i have a couple of questions recently um There was a cybersecurity attack at Sainsbury's and then at MGM. It raised a question to us, you know, because we saw the effects of that. had just about any force which shut down they had um alternative programs uh or processes that that we adopted but we're curious um do you all have um you know such a such a a cyber security of protection at north or what does it well let me let me say this you know working for a uh centralized city-making company when i work at national is it was a password uh that you called a office and you said um you know joe blow changed my password right with no verifications right so you know it's not a we're a local company you know somebody needs a password change it's not a situation where you're not going to know who that person is right so we're a much smaller company i think that might be a little bit harder for the larger organizations and you know if you read into exactly what happened there it was just um you know they just did something that they really just shouldn't have done and you know they gave access to servers to a complete stranger by a

- 1:23:46 phone call right no we wouldn't allow that that's that's not something that we did and you know the password uh change policy is all automated you have to be at your desktop you have to make those changes in course so yeah the answer the simple answer is yes but we don't really have the problems that say an mgm might have as far as a centralized i.t in 500 locations that they're managing okay uh uh don do you take a right back to home that's the one that's my Thank you. The MGM and seizures attacks certainly brought all of us a little more importance to checking out our situations.
- 1:24:40 We do have several things in in place, and even after that attack, make sure that some things that were on the planning stages or the timeline like multi-factor passwords. For instance, as you walk into your computer now for the very first time at your desktop or your laptop, you will receive a call or a text, depending on what device you're using, to make sure you are the right person that's getting into that computer. There's a lot of things we have in place, firewalls and various protection, but something that someone like Caesars and MGM go through what they went through, you think, okay, gosh, we thought we were pretty good.
- 1:25:29 they must employ people that are such experts so um we are going through right now um we've written down everything we have in place uh we've sent off to an expert to review what might be um might complement what we have in place or maybe it's not the right thing so last week in fact we put down all the information we have and realized for instance at one of our properties in the Caribbean um not not this property um they were running off of some old software that we I said immediately get that updated it was software that didn't have the security protection that all of the other properties had and it just like flown below the radar because it's a tiny little property in Bonaire um so anyway we are taking a closer look at it even since those breaches because none of us want to see ourselves sitting in their mess um i communicate a lot with the people from seizures and mgm because they have properties in blessing mississippi as well and their attorney from mgm just emailed yesterday and said okay email back from mine i'm back from among them and i didn't realize until yesterday their email they weren't even emailing so um gosh it's been weeks so it was very scary yet but it certainly brought attention to all of us yeah and it did to us as well and as a matter of fact um i think it's today is it today mr david that is um our cyber security training uh that you set up that you registered for it's today you put it on it's today yeah so you know we you know we are very very concerned you know about that as well so we want to stay on top of those um those types of issues um as a permission as a regular
- 1:27:21 you and we want to make sure that our license is or in fact not that we didn't think that you did but you know i'll just uh we should answer questions thank you okay um and i have one more question into Canada. How was the bus? We're getting there. We're still in our infancy stage. I do. I remember we have to offer you guys a ride once we get everything up and running how we want it to be. What about you? But you had an ad on the radio phone. We sure did. So we're not going. It's running, but it's only running the latter portion of the week so like three to four days a week until we get full staffed okay i have secured my driver and i've secured your space for when we are running full for the week and when we get the bus in a position where we want to bring you guys on and of course give you that first class service right from project set to christian so uh the proposals to have go from frederickstead what's wrong we're going from the casino down to the fred in frederickstead area along the queen mary highway and back up um once again we have a shortened schedule because we're not go started and have a bit of a task to get the applicants uh what's the word they need to use license to get their work permit you know a lot of the young people today doesn't don't have everything that they need to complete that package and um they kind of scared it shies them away of completing it once they hear like we need to bring in your tax information well i didn't file it okay well tell them you didn't find it it's as simple as that no but once we get full staff again i have secured your driver we tested him out he's good very good it gives the courage and fully and um we will be running our shell bus seven days a week
- 1:29:31 are there any security concerns not at this moment no as long as i mean not as long as what the schedule we have is that the bus has to be able to safely pull off the road and either pick up or let off patrons and safely re-enter the road i do not want them stopping in the middle of the traffic impeding traffic at any time if there are any detours like the one over there on the queen mary highway by superior court we would like you to expeditiously follow that route safely and get back on the queen mary highway and continue your journey any question yeah well when you say that pull off the road and then i'm assuming you have designated spots you have designated bus stops so you have to clear that with public works yeah it's also something that has been clear yes they gave us their permission we would like to affix signage to those locations but we are still waiting on someone to contact us because apparently he has to pay to do that yeah yeah we stick a little eight and a half by eleven tonight okay that was the question that came off that what public works has said these areas are safe yes and when you say seven days a week what are the hours of population that you plan so for once we get working it will be near sunday to thursday 1 30 p.m to 11 p.m and friday and saturday which are longer days in operation for the casino we're going from 1 30 p.m to midnight the midnight will be the those will be the last drop off to their homes correct not their homes

- 1:31:26 well that would be the part that along the queen mary highway yes yes and you're going to have signage and your boss about responsible gaming right we do have a a display unit on the bus that we are working on powering you have our footage and everything but we're having an issue powering it up so we have to get it so you mean an electronic one This service is only for this cable and the page. This service is for all of our Valuigi Westup members.
- 1:32:20 Ah, yes. The bus is capable of, it has a, it's equipped with a wheelchair lift that we're also working on getting the power in situation straightened out. um we do have an aid on the bus to assist the elderly or whoever else may have issues stepping up on the bus to provide that service for them i mean we're trying to to help them every way that we good okay so um thank you once again for your presentations and um we certainly look forward to continuing our efforts to respond to the game and the problem you know along with our partners uh in this effort thank you thank you we're going to move on to item number eight any other business um under this category um the commissioners at least here um we're never administered with the bra office when we um were confirmed by the we received our certificate of appointment which is um signed by the governor and we came in and went to work um uh in discussion with uh with my colleagues that um
- 1:34:16 uh it was important that we formalize um our appointments by having um the oath of office administered to us so yesterday our former legal counsel and now the honor of the judge of the superior court uh was kind enough to necessarily go to the office for each of us um and to since we didn't do it at the time of appointment we did and if uh i'm a child like this is latin yeah non-potent yeah you did a good job yeah yesterday so we want to see some of the pictures um and my app yes and and that was something that came up during the ethics treatment that an old office is important for for when you assume these types of positions I'm trying to remember the we can we have that also we can uh you know what what we took the old yeah i don't they don't have it
- 1:36:07 they caught all them smiling when they shake hands Thank you. so there we are we are now officially original and i want to make sure that i give proper credit to our photographer um obviously the assistant miss miss smith thank you so much with that um any other vcc business uh commissioner not from myself great so there are no further items on the agenda for today's meeting i want to thank all of you for participating uh today i want to extend my tax and appreciation to our uh staff our commission staff um our uh fourth reporter is uh uh for all the contributions here today our calendar shows that uh our next meeting would be be during the week of November the 13th of 17th when we have decided on that day we certainly will let you know and make that a question so um if there are no further um uh announcements comments the meeting of the regional system control the third quarterly meeting of the
- 1:38:05 regional's the season control information meeting of september 27th 2023 is here by the future bb and carabelle don't forget to pick up the boxes Thanks.

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke · only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

2x **Commissioner Carolyn P. Herman Purcell**

the surname alone also matches: Herman Purcell
heard in this transcript as: Purcell

2x **Commissioner Herman Purcell**

2x **Commissioner Luther F. Rene**

heard in this transcript as: Rene