



Liquor Board Licensing Fees and Structure Task Force

Dec 6, 2024

8:30am - 10:00am

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members: Amy Gowan(Chair), Judy Hagner, Delegate Nic Kipke, Julie Hummer, Jayleen Fonseca, Anthony Clark, Alexis Jenkins, Kyle Madden, Edward Aronson

Also in attendance were Jennifer Garcia for Delegate Pruski, Spencer Dixon for Senator Gile and Kelecia Jackson

Call to Order

Minutes for the Liquor Board Licensing Fees and Structure Task Force meeting held on December 6, 2024 at 8:30am, virtually by Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 8:32am by Amy Gowan.

Approved Minutes

Amy Gowan moved to approve minutes. Jayleen Fonseca approved. Alexis Jenkins seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Budget Discussion

Kyle Madden shared FY24 Actual Budget with FY25, FY26 and FY27 Projections. The projections show the Liquor Board's budget is close to a break even point around FY27. While there is not a need to increase fees right now, expenses are projected to outpace revenue in FY28 or FY29. Fee discussions should occur prior to that point to ensure sufficient operating revenue..

Council member Julie Hummer suggested using the surplus funds to hire a consultant to review the structure and expenses of the liquor board, and to develop a long-term strategic plan.

Amy Gowan raised concerns about the budget approval process, specifically the lack of a revenue sufficiency check. She suggested that the process might need to be revised to ensure that budgets are not exceeding their break-even points. Kyle Madden confirmed that the Budget Office does analyze all revenue streams annually, but the State doesn't necessarily consider this when approving budgets. This could lead to an unfunded liability for the county.

The Task Force also discussed the possibility of increasing fees for casinos and entertainment facilities, with one member suggesting that Maryland's fees are modest compared to other states. Anthony Clark and Julie Hummer agreed that the county could potentially charge more for services, and Julie pointed out that the racetrack's closure would result in a loss of revenue.

The Task Force discussed the proposed recommendation regarding the requirement for registered surveys. Amy Gowan asked if this was something that could be accomplished in the 2025 General Assembly session, as it seemed like a simple code change.

Judy Hagner expressed concerns about the potential for increased complaints and legal challenges if the requirement for registered surveys was removed. Delegate Kipke suggested a middle ground, where GIS could be used for distances within a certain threshold, but a registered survey would still be required for closer distances. Liquor Board staff acknowledged that assistance would be needed from the Office of Planning and Zoning to verify distance this way and they agreed to further discuss this request with them. The Task Force agreed that this change should be pursued in the short term and updated the recommendation accordingly.

Review final report and recommendations

Jayleen Fonesca suggested and the Task Force agreed to include an umbrella recommendation to utilize the surplus money to bring in a consultant to assist with strategic planning as well as

exploring additional revenue streams. The other recommendations to follow could also be further studied by the consultant.

The Task Force finalized certain recommendations to include the need to convene workgroups to vet legislative initiatives, further study the Liquor Board budget approval process, and to pursue code changes for the 2025 General Assembly session that remove survey requirements. It was also requested that the report mention the impacts the survey requirement has on small businesses.

Amy Gowan committed to finalizing the report based on the conversation for submission to the County Executive.

Motion to Approve Report

Amy Gowan motioned to approve the report. Anthony Clark approved. Alexis Jenkins seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10.00am.