***New Jersey Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission***

 **Department of the Treasury**

50 W. State St, 8th floor

PO Box 211

Trenton, NJ 08625

***Misono I. Miller,*  *Chair*** 609-984-2407  ***James Thebery*, *Vice Chair*** 856-453-2221 ***Kay Nest*, *Secretary***

NJ Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission

Minutes, regular meeting

March 20, 2009

The regular meeting of the Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Miller at 10:10am. Those present:

Misono Miller, Chair

Assemblyman Vincent Polistina

Laura Ramos

Tracy Wozniak-Perriello

James Thebery

Kay Nest

Joseph Tyrrell

Candice M. Alphonso for David Rosen

Support staff:

Patricia Wilson, Dept of the Treasury

Brian Francz, OMB

Others:

Kevin Murphy, Dept of Health and Senior Services

Judith Delotto- Tragellis

Flag salute was led by Joseph Tyrrell.

All were welcomed. Minutes of the last meeting were previously distributed. Joe Tyrrell made a motion to approve and Laura Ramos seconded. Minutes were approved.

Assemblyman Polistina gave a presentation on Legislation he is sponsoring, A3861. He explained that the legislation changes the structure of the total taxes on the revenues of the CRF, raising the CRF portion of the 8% revenue to 8.25% and lowering the investment revenue of the tax from 1.25 to 1.00%. In addition new casinos would not be subject to the investment revenue tax for five years. He viewed the change as budget neutral, but in these difficult economic time it would provide needed support for senior and disabled programs and also benefit new casino establishments. He also responded to Ms. Ramos’ question that approximately $13 million in additional revenues to the CRF could be realized. The legislation would be in effect only as long as the slump in the housing values warranted. After discussion Kay Nest made a motion to endorse this legislation in view of its benefit to the CRF program support. Jim Thebery seconded. Joe Tyrrell raised some questions on the redistribution of the funds from the CRDA taxes and asked that the motion be tabled until more fiscal information was available to assess the bill. There was also a concern that delaying the issue until such report was made, would not give timely support to a positive effort for the CRF. After further discussion, Kay Nest amended her motion to have the Commission initially endorse this bill in view of its direction in benefiting the CRF, and to further review pending fiscal impact data from the OLS as completed. Mr. Thebery seconded. There were 4 Ayes and 2 Nays with one abstention. Motion passed.

Another concern was brought up by Assemblyman Polistina in regards to avoiding a shut down of the Casinos as occurred once before, causing a loss of millions of dollars in revenues. Other factors were mentioned , such as lower overall revenues, loss of consumers who had planned their vacations, and general acknowledgment that lost casino business was not of benefit to any parties concerned. It was agreed that the Commission should extend a communication to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Assembly Speaker speaking to this concern.. Jim Thebery made a motion that the Commission communicate to the Governor, Speaker and Senate President in regards to the importance of supporting efforts that would exempt the casinos from closing in the event of a governmental shutdown or impasse in the negotiations for a State budget approval as vital to impacting the economic climate favorably as well as maintaining the funding streams for seniors and disabled. Motion seconded and passed.

Kevin Murphy from the Dept of Health and Senior Services was introduced and was asked to present information on the GO program for which the Commission had expressed some concern in regards to service availability to Developmentally Disabled. He is the regional liaison for several counties in New Jersey for the Division on Aging home and community based care programs under the Medicaid waivers, which have recently been consolidated under the Global Options (GO) Program.

Mr. Murphy explained that GO is a consolidation of services for supported home and community based programs operated by the Dept of Health and Senior Services into a single program. The consolidation improves access to a wider range of in-home programs for a greater number of seniors and disabled.

Mr. Murphy said that the GO program was serving 11,000 persons. He explained the criteria for participation, being clinically and financially eligible . Persons with more than $2202 income per person per month are not eligible. ( Assets must be below $2000 for one person and $3000 for a couple) The client must also be in need of assistance with at least three Assistance with Daily Living activities including toileting, transferring, eating, locomotion, bathing and dressing. . Additionally, eligibility depends on whether there is an indication that the participant will need the level of care provided in a hospital, a nursing facility or an intermediate care facility in the near future (i.e., a month or less) unless he or she receives home and community-based services. A flyer with program benefits was distributed and explained.

Mr. Murphy clarified the differences in the State Medicaid Program benefits and the GO program benefits. Qualifying for GO also qualifies one for full Medicaid hospital, and outpatient services and prescriptions. Medicaid is the third payer of benefits after Medicare and Medigap plans pay their benefits.

The question of whether Developmentally Disabled were excluded from participation was addressed. While those who are Developmentally Disabled would be screened for other programs available to provide such assistance, Mr. Murphy said that if the financial and clinical criteria are met, persons who are developmentally disabled have the same access to programs as other seniors and disabled residents. The Office of Community Choice Options (OCCO) makes the determination of which programs are available for those with Developmental disabilities.

Mr. Murphy answered all concerns presented by Commissioners and was thanked for his clarification and presentation.

**Nominating committee:**

Chair Miller brought up for discussion a revision to the Annual Meeting schedule of the Commission. Because of the need to submit an Annual Report in March, the Commission might consider having its annual meeting in June each year, after the report is submitted by the current Chair. A June schedule for the Annual meeting would ensure that the Chair in charge of the report remains as Chair through the submission of the report. Motion that a June Annual meeting should be pursued by the Commission was made by Kay Nest and seconded by Mr. Tyrrell. Motion carried.

Chair Miller appointed Kay Nest, Enid Torok, and Joe Tyrell to the nominating committee, with Kay Nest chairing. A report from the committee will be presented at the June meeting.

**Old Business**

Progress of A2046 was discussed. Mr. Tyrrell advised that the NJ ARC was a primary supporter of this bill. The Bill easily passed from the Tourism and Gaming Committee and is now in Assembly Appropriations. It was remarked that the support from the public and agencies concerned with the Transportation situation have assisted in its progress through both houses. Chair Miller said that she would write a letter of support to the Speaker and the President of the Senate in regards to the Commission’s support for the two bills.

Laura Ramos reported that she and her assistant Kathryn Browarny completed an abstract of the Commission Hearings. It was agreed that the abstract will be made part of the Annual Report recommendations and Ms. Ramos was thanked for her excellent work in summarizing the hearings. In addition Ms. Ramos reported that she contacted the NJ State Library and that a Deborah Mercer advised that the Commission hearings could be maintained at the library in addition to the written testimony that was submitted. The document may also be made available on the State Library website. Chair Miller will contact Ms. Mercer and send her the transcripts and records that she has on hand for the hearings.

The Annual Report of the Commission to the legislature was the next point of business, with Chair Miller giving a summary of the revisions in the Plan from last year. The funding recommendations were reviewed. There were no changes in the total amount requested, but requesting less for transportation and more for Safe Housing, with a call to open that service to disabled as well as seniors. Commissioners were asked to review the plan for any additions or suggested revision, with some being noted at the meeting. Motion was made by Jim Thebery and seconded by Kay Nest to accept the plan and to contact Misono by April 3rd for incorporation of comments, revisions, additions. Motion was approved. Chair Miller indicated that April 10th would be a good deadline for completion of the plan for printing and submission to the Legislature.

Jim Thebery expressed appreciation to Chair Miller for her extensive work in compiling the report and to Laura Ramos for her research and excellent work in completing the extensive abstract of the hearings .

The Commission website was next discussed. Chair Miller said that she contacted the IT representative that was working with former Chair Don Boeri. Tracy Wozniak-Perriello reported that she discussed with a Judy, at OIT the Commission website project, and that the implementation of the website could proceed using the same format started by Don. Mrs. Miller asked that she be contacted regarding the progress of the website activities . Tracy will be e-mailing the address where Commissioners can view the work accomplished on the site so far. Chair Miller said that this report from Tracy was very good news in proceeding on the next step.

**New business**:

Assembly Budget Hearings

Information on the upcoming Assembly hearings was discussed. Chair Miller thanked the OLS for sending her information on the Assembly hearing schedule . The hearing schedule was distributed to Commissioners as well to persons indicating interest in attending the hearings. Chair Miller asked Laura Ramos to represent the Commission at the Assembly hearing and speak on behalf of the Commission recommendations. Ms. Ramos consented, indicating she will be registering to testify at the March 24th hearing and appreciation was expressed for her willingness to appear.

Senate budget hearings

Senate hearings were conducted on March 17 in South Jersey. Chair Miller relayed her experience at the Senate hearings in Camden and advised that several speakers commented on the need for passage of S1830, and that consumer Dotty Cullen was very well received in relaying her personal experience and need for the transportation services that would be impacted by S1830. Chair Miller’s testimony on behalf of the Commission was distributed to all Commission members.

2010 budget information- Brian Francz reported to the Commission that the budget has not been fully released to the public, and when it is, he will send to Chair Miller as soon as it is officially distributed. The Casino Revenue budget was over $40 million less than anticipated in the original budget projections. The budget allocations were reviewed and summarized and significantly less support of the PAAD program was from the CRF with less support from the State General Fund. Mr. Francz said that the budget presentation was not final as of yet, at which time it could be released to all Commission members.

Mr. Francz also followed through with information to the Chair on the organization of the Simulcast fund and the tax revenues that comprise the fund. Recommendations of the Commission were implemented this year on the format of the budget and Chair Miller remarked at the significant improvement in presenting the fund expenditures to the interested public. Mr. Francz was thanked for his excellent service to the Commission.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Nest, Secretary

KN/MIM s/c/Crfacminutes0309let

Distributed:

Letter to Commissioner Howard re global Options issues

Letter to members of the Assembly transmitted by e-mail with cover

Progress of A2046 and S1830- Summary from website

Assembly Bill 3861

Public Hearing comments of the Chair at Senate budget hearings

Schedule for Assembly Budget hearings

Transcripts transmission to NJ Transit; Dept of Dealth and Senior Services Commissioner Heather Howard and Patricia Polansky; NJ Dept of Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez

Resignation letter from Senator Weinberg

FY 2009 SCDRTAP allocations

Commission Hearing Administrative Expenses