CASINO REVENUE FUND ADVISORY COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING ON JULY 17, 2015

MINUTES OF MEETING

The regular monthly meeting of the Casino Revenue Fund Advisory Commission was held on Friday,

July 17, 2015. Those in attendance were:

Commission:

James Thebery, Chair

Tina Zsenak, DHS. Div. Aging Service

Jim Carney, Seniors

Joanne Fetzko, NJ4A

Josepht Tyrrell CANJ

Ross Dammer, for Asm. Chris Brown

Gary Williams, for Asm Vince Mazzeo

Brian Ahrens, for Sen. Dawn Addiego

Support Staff:

Karen Storcella, Dept. of Treasury

Guests:

Ryan Reilly, Ocean Cty Trans.

Sharon Harrington, CCC

The meeting was called to order by James Thebery at 10:45am, followed by the Flag salute led by Joanna Fetzko. James Thebery welcomed commission members & guests and thanked them for attending. The minutes of the May 22, 2015 meetings were not approved.

**James Thebery** stated that Bergen County held a meeting and a new casino, in the Meadowlands, will be unveiled around November (2016). This will be owned by the Hard Rock. Also discussed, besides the Meadowlands, was Jersey City.

**Sharon Harrington** mentioned a ruling for sports betting is expected to go live in June 2015. Joe Tyrell stated, possibly in August 2015.

**Joe Tyrrell** – Expressed concern about opening (NJ) casinos in near urban/sports arenas. Examples: Baltimore and Phila. Opened casinos near sports arenas, and not doing as well as expected.

Revenues for the (8) Atlantic City casinos , as well as, online betting at Golden Nugget, Borgata and Resorts are doing very well. Joe also mentioned, the system for online gambling is safe. No laundering, no break into the system from other states.

Bass Pro Shop is complete and doing a great business.

Harrah’s meeting facility to be opened around mid-September. It is booked for the 1st (18) months from opening. Bally’s $5million upgrade includes renovations of lobby and rooms.

**Jim Carney** expressed some concerns of foreclosures on AC properties and distressed homes. Also, spoke about the layoffs of teachers.

**Ryan Reilly** – stated transportation cuts have been made since 2008. These funds are needed for disabled and seniors. Since the cut has been 8.42%, this may lead to layoffs and cut pay rates. In recent emails between Ryan and Desmond Webb, Ryan asked the following:

**Q:** Who makes the decision as to how much “general fund” dollars will be given to NJCRF programs on any given year and how is that decision made?

**A:** The New Jersey Legislature decides the final amount that is appropriated from the General Fund for any program, which is then subject to the Governors’ veto authority. The appropriated amount for any given program is based on competing policy priorities and the realities of limited available funding. The only other way to increase funding to the Senior Citizen & Disabled Resident Transportation Assistance Program, other than through the Appropriation Bill, should be to increase the transportation allocation in the CRF from its current 8.5% of total collections allotment in the standalone piece of legislation.

**Q**: Once the decision is made that “general fund” dollars will be given to the NJCRF who makes the decision as to where those funds will be used and how is that decision made?

**A:** The General Fund dollars are not given to the CRF, instead, dollars are appropriated directly to a program based on need just as they would be for a program that does not receive CRF funding.

**Tina Zsenak** – agrees with Ryan on the needs of the (3) key categories: Transportation, housing & meals. Tina’s suggestion is to reach out to County for budget needs. Then follow up by reaching out to the Commissioner of each department and request funds from the ‘general fund’.

**Joanne Fetzko** added that some state funds are required to match funds by the federal government.

**Tina Zsenak** – mentioned Jennifer Connelly was appointed as the Acting Commissioner, to replace Jennifer Velez.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15p. Next meeting will be held in on Friday, September 11, 2015 at the State House Annex Room 1, Trenton, NJ.