

**ORANGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GAMING COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023
3:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Kathy Stegenga, Chairwoman
Kevin W. Hines, Robert C. Sassi

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman
L. Stephen Brescia, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Esq., Legislative Counsel
Richard B. Golden, County Attorney
Langdon Chapman, Commissioner, Human Resources

Chairwoman Stegenga opened the meeting at 3:35 p.m. and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Amo, **Luján**, Minuta, O'Donnell and Sierra who were absent.

Ms. Stegenga announced that there was not a quorum for the meeting, however, they can still discuss the item on the agenda and it can be moved to the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee. She mentioned that the only part of the budget they were going to address was Part Z of the proposed FY2024 New York State Executive Budget (On file in Clerk, Legislative Office). In previous discussions over the year they were hopeful to close the Catskill Off-Track Betting Corporation (OTB). OTB has been shut down prior to the pandemic and they are not making any revenue. They plan to close it. The commissioners need to get together. Ms. Abraham informed them that there was a meeting in the Monroe, Chester area.

Mr. Chapman mentioned that he and Ms. Abraham attended the meeting but were asked to leave when they entered executive session. He added that all the OTB facilities are closed.

Ms. Stegenga asked if they owned the buildings or rented.

Mr. Chapman suspected that they were rented.

Ms. Stegenga noted that there should be no expenses since they have been closed and not running.

Mr. Chapman confirmed that was correct and pointed out that they did not have any expenses except paying their executive staff. The revenue is horrible. If you went to the InterBets, gambling website, it is horrible and they are the worst performing OTB in New York State for many years for a reason.

Ms. Stegenga stated that they would like to pass a resolution supporting Part Z of the budget and they agree that the Catskill OTB should be closed and all their assets, liabilities, interests, etc., whatever they owe will come out of the capital fund.

Ms. Abraham shared that it was close to \$4 million which was the number mentioned at the last meeting. She added that they wiped out most of the money. She mentioned that was how they were surviving for the last few years, by dipping into that fund.

Ms. Stegenga stated that if they had any money after they closed everything, it would be distributed between the thirteen counties that are part of the Off-Track Betting Corporation. Once this is closed and they disband the operation, Orange County, if they choose to, could then go into the Capital OTB which is what they discussed for the last two years. She asked if they would be accepted if they applied and how would it work.

Mr. Hines commented that he recalled Mr. Amo saying they would need to ask them. They cannot do anything until they take care of this issue with Catskill OTB first.

Ms. Stegenga stated that the corporation will need to get everything together and she was not sure how long it will take. They need to come up with a plan and send it to the NYS Gaming Commission.

Mr. Hines questioned who would make the final decision, would it be the Board, the Senate or the State Legislature.

Mr. Chapman explained that it needed to pass through the budget first, then it would go to the Gaming Commission for the state of New York. The big challenge would be to get it through the budget. It is his understanding that Donald Groth is no longer there.

Mr. Hines asked if Mr. Dupee has any say in this.

Mr. Chapman replied that he does not think that they ever put him on the board. Last he heard they had not seated him yet. If it passes the budget, it would then go to the State Gaming Commission and then they will shut it down. He noted that he would not be surprised if this did not make it into the final budget.

Ms. Stegenga stated that there is no income so wouldn't that be a sign to shut them down.

Mr. Chapman stated that they could file bankruptcy. He felt that the State Racing Commission will step in and develop a plan for them. The best thing for them to do would be to get Senator Skoufis and Assembly Majority Members to support this and hopefully some of the neighboring counties do the same.

Ms. Stegenga confirmed that this would go before the Rules, Enactments and Intergovernmental Relations Committee for a vote.

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.