



Haverhill

License Commission, Room 118
Phone: 978-420-3630 Fax: 978-373-8490
nflynn@haverhillma.gov

LICENSE COMMISSION MINUTES

Thursday, December 4, 2025, at 6 PM-Room 202
Virtual and In-Person Meeting

Attending: Chairperson Laura Angus, Commissioner Linda Koutoulas (remotely), Commissioner Patrick Driscoll, Lt. Kevin Lynch – Haverhill Police Department (remotely), and License Commission Clerk Nicholas K. Flynn

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2.1 Approval of the minutes of the November 6, 2025 meeting

Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2025 meeting.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

2.2 Approval of the minutes of the November 19, 2025 meeting

Due to her absence from this meeting, Chairperson Angus abstained.

Motion: Commissioner Koutoulas motions to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2025 meeting.

Second: Commissioner Driscoll seconded.

Vote: 2 yeas, 0 nays, 1 abstention, motion passed.

3. CONTINUED BUSINESS

4. MISCELLANEOUS APPLICATIONS/REQUESTS

4.1 Jason T Tremblay, Manager

Rare Hospitality International, Inc.

d/b/a Longhorn Steakhouse

59 Plaistow Road

**-Request to use internal Safe Service of Alcohol training in lieu of TIPS or
ServSafe Alcohol**

Jason Tremblay, manager, was present for this request. Chairperson Angus asked for an overview of the training program – the manager replied he had supplied documentation summarizing the program. The Chairperson said she had seen it but was concerned that the course did not appear to be in-person. Mr. Tremblay stated the course was taken inside the restaurant on a store tablet and must be fully completed and passed to be



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valid. The Chairperson asked if he verified the staff that took the program – the manager replied he did so for every staff member that recently retook the training, listed on a recently supplied roster. Chairperson Angus noted that one employee's was listed as “expired” but Mr. Tremblay clarified that they are no longer employed. He then added that since the trainings did not feature expiration terms, he had corporate reinstate the module for all staff to retake the course and be in good standing for three years. The staff, management included, will then retake the course after those three years, to comply with regulations. Commissioner Koutoulas asked if everyone would be retested – the manager confirmed so. Chairperson Angus asked if they would redo the entire module – the manager confirmed this as well. The Chairperson then asked who would supervise this process, and Mr. Tremblay said he or one of the three other managers would. Commissioner Driscoll said he reviewed the program and that it was everything the Commission was looking for. Chairperson Angus asked if Commissioner Koutoulas had any further questions, but the Commissioner did not.

Motion: Commissioner Koutoulas motions to approve Longhorn Steakhouse's internal training program for the Safe Service of Alcohol.

Second: Commissioner Driscoll seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

4.2 Amanda Smith, Manager

99 Restaurants of Boston, LLC

The 99 Restaurant

786 River Street

-Request to use internal Safe Service of Alcohol training in lieu of TIPS or ServSafe Alcohol

Amanda Smith, manager, was present for this request. Chairperson Angus noted that the Commission had had the chance to review the training program and asked the manager if it was done in-person. Ms. Smith explained it was done in-house on a Chromebook and supervised by the management team, similarly to Longhorn Steakhouse. Chairperson Angus inquired how long obtained certificates were good for – the manager stated two years and added that all staff must recomplete the training and test every two years. The Chairperson verified if all staff were up-to-date and the manager confirmed so. Commissioner Driscoll commented that the training appeared to be very thorough. No further comments or questions.



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Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to approve The 99 Restaurant's internal training program for the Safe Service of Alcohol.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

5. ONE DAY APPLICATIONS

6. ENTERTAINMENT APPLICATIONS

6.1 Approval of all 2026 Entertainment License Renewal applications upon Compliance

Motion: Commissioner Koutoulas motions to approve all 2026 Entertainment License Renewal applications upon compliance.

Second: Commissioner Driscoll seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

6.2 Gerard Carlo, Manager

Blue Ventures Inc

d/b/a Sparky's Wings and Things

251 River Street

-Application for Amendment of Entertainment license – Change of Address from 20 Emerson St to 251 River St

-Has Police Department approval

Items 6.2 & 7.2 were heard together.

Gerard Carlo, manager, was present for these applications. Chairperson Angus inquired if the new location was bigger – Mr. Carlo explained they had purchased the building approximately four years ago and went through a lot of renovation work. They have since obtained their Business Occupancy certificate. The Chairperson commented that the new location would have more parking and the manager replied this was one of the main reasons for making the move. The Chairperson then asked if the business did a lot of sit-down service. Mr. Carlo responded that they mostly do takeout or delivery and that sit-down service was roughly 15% of business. The Chairperson remarked that the new space might increase sit-down service and the manager expressed his wish for more lunch business. Commissioner Driscoll had no questions and complimented the business' product. No questions or comments from Commissioner Koutoulas.



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Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to approve the Change of Address amendments to the Entertainment and Common Victualler licenses, from 20 Emerson St to 251 River St.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

7. COMMON VICTUALLER APPLICATIONS

7.1 Approval of all 2026 Common Victualler License Renewal applications upon compliance

Chairperson Angus inquired how renewals were going. Clerk Flynn replied “not too bad,” that all licensees had been notified and that some had already completed all requirements.

Motion: Commissioner Koutoulas motions to approve all 2026 Common Victualler License Renewal applications upon compliance.

Second: Commissioner Driscoll seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

7.2 Gerard Carlo, Manager

Blue Ventures Inc

d/b/a Sparky's Wings and Things

251 River Street

-Application for Amendment of Common Victualler license – Change of Address from 20 Emerson St to 251 River St

Items 6.2 & 7.2 were heard together. See Item 6.2.

8. OUTDOOR DINING APPLICATIONS

8.1 Approval of all 2026 Outdoor Dining Permit Renewal applications upon Compliance

Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to approve all 2026 Outdoor Dining Permit Renewal applications upon compliance.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.



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9. ALCOHOL/ABCC APPLICATIONS

9.1 Approval of all 2026 Liquor License Renewal applications upon compliance

Commissioner Koutoulas asked Clerk Flynn if all liquor licensees had submitted their application. The Clerk stated all had submitted what was necessary for the time being, with the exception of Smith's Tavern on 124 Essex St which appears to have closed for business.

Motion: Commissioner Koutoulas motions to approve all 2026 Liquor License Renewal applications upon compliance.

Second: Commissioner Driscoll seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

10. MOTOR VEHICLE APPLICATIONS

10.1 Approval of all 2026 Motor Vehicle License Renewal applications upon compliance

Chairperson Angus inquired how these renewals were going. Clerk Flynn replied that he had received a “handful” of applications so far, and that he was ensuring Business Certificates were being renewed and taxes were paid.

Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to approve all 2026 Motor Vehicle Renewal applications upon compliance.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

11. CARRY IN LICENSE APPLICATIONS

11.1 Approval of all 2026 Carry In License Renewal applications upon compliance

Motion: Commissioner Koutoulas motions to approve all 2026 Carry In License Renewal applications upon compliance.

Second: Commissioner Driscoll seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

12. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION



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13. SHOW CAUSE HEARING

13.1 Leslie Dawson, Manager
Circle K Massachusetts LLC
d/b/a Circle K
32 Knipe Road

Show Cause Hearing:

- **Alleged violation of 204 CMR 2.05 (2) Permitting an illegality on the licensed premises to wit**
- **Alleged violation of M.G.L. Ch.138 §2 - "No person shall...sell or expose or keep for sale, store, transport, import or export alcoholic beverages or alcohol, except as authorized by this chapter"**

Storage of Alcohol outside of Licensed Premises

Incident that occurred on or about November 22, 2025, at 8:25PM

Leslie Dawson, manager, and Atty. Brian Kennedy, representing Circle K, were both present for this hearing. Leslie Dawson was sworn in before Lt. Lynch presented the facts. On November 22nd, Lt. Lynch followed up on an anonymous tip sent to the License Commission, which advised that Circle K had alcohol stored in bins outside of the rear of the building and that they had overheard teenagers discussing that said alcohol could be acquired without being noticed. The lieutenant indeed found four unlocked bins of alcohol outside. The clerk was advised and the Assistant Manager arrived on scene, who advised that there had been a recent management change. The bins were placed inside the store. Chairperson Angus inquired if the alcohol was loosely contained in these bins or if they were in their containers from the wholesale distributor. Lt. Lynch said the containers were like delivery bins used for transportation, not in the distributor's original packaging.

Atty. Kennedy spoke on behalf of Circle K, stating they had served Haverhill since 2018 and have raised money for several charities since. He further stated that the business strives to be a responsible retailer and that they are very concerned by the incident, having launched an internal investigation since. As part of their efforts to ensure such an incident never reoccurs, allegedly, the district manager has been reviewing surveillance footage from November 11th through the 22nd, the store manager has been interviewing employees, a camera was installed in the outside area, and store managers such as Ms. Dawson have been signing off on "merchandise validation trackers" after every shift. At the time, it was unclear if the incident was caused by a Circle K employee; no one had come forward to admit responsibility. Atty. Kennedy requested that the License Commission take into consideration the business'



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remediation efforts as they rendered their verdict. The attorney also submitted documents as evidence of said remediation efforts.

Chairperson Angus asked Ms. Dawson if she was aware of what had been approved as the business' licensed premises and where alcohol can be stored, and Ms. Dawson said she was. The Chairperson expressed her concern that the alcohol was in totes and not the distributor's packaging, which is required so that any investigator could identify where the alcohol had been acquired from and if it was purchased properly. She also expressed her concern that the alcohol was readily available and that it was unfortunate that teenagers had become aware of such, and added that this went back "well before" November 11th. Atty. Kennedy stated that November 11th was the day the last store audit took place due to a missing, non-alcoholic product. Commissioner Koutoulas remarked that the photos of the bins she saw suggest the alcohol had been there for quite some time, as there was dirt and they appeared to be water-logged, noting that the product may have expired. She then asked the manager how often she did a walk-in of the perimeter. The manager replied this was something they had just started doing due to the incident. Commissioner Driscoll commented this incident may have gone back to before the time Ms. Dawson was approved as license manager.

Chairperson Angus asked when Ms. Dawson had been approved – Clerk Flynn mentioned he believed it was in late October or early November. Commissioner Driscoll continued that this type of incident should never have taken place, especially with corporate safeguards in place. Chairperson Angus remarked that she had just noticed there was a crushed, empty can in one of the bins' photos.

Commissioner Driscoll said he assumed all employees were TIPS certified. Ms. Dawson replied the staff was in the midst of renewing certification via the MASSPACK course. Clerk Flynn confirmed he had received several certificates and affidavits from the course instructor. Chairperson Angus stated that any employee ringing up alcohol purchases needed to be certified, adding that this should already have happened for all staff members but that the Commission appreciated it being taken care of now. The Commission reemphasized that any staff members that are not TIPS or MASSPACK certified could not do anything related to alcohol. Chairperson Angus verified if the party believed it was not an employee that placed the totes outside. Atty. Kennedy replied they were simply unable to determine whether it was an employee or not, as there wasn't a camera outside. The Chairperson said this was serious too. Commissioner Driscoll agreed, noting that it seemed like efforts were being made in response to the maleficence that occurred, but still wanted to see a period of probation and a temporary ban of alcohol sales. He further expressed his concern for who might have taken product, that may even be expired or damaged from



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poor storage conditions, and how long this would have transpired for were it not for the anonymous tip. Atty. Kennedy restated that management at Circle K was taking this incident very seriously and ensuring it would not happen again. Commissioner Driscoll verified this included Ms. Dawson, and the manager confirmed so. The Commissioner restated his wish for a 6-month probation and a two-week ban of alcohol sales. Commissioner Koutoulas echoed Commissioner Driscoll's concerns, including the potability conditions of the product. She further stated she found it unlikely it was not an employee that had placed the bins outside and wondered if perhaps the product stored outdoors had already been expired. She then said she believed a two-week ban was a little harsh and believed one week was sufficient but would defer to the Commission. Commissioner Driscoll stated he was amenable to one week. Atty. Kennedy thanked the Commission. Lt. Lynch stated he believed this was a fair penalty. Chairperson Angus asked the manager if she is able to secure the cases of alcohol so that they could not be accessed during the suspension of sales and the manager confirmed so. The Chairperson instructed her to lock the cases starting that evening, until December 12th.

Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to:

- Find that there were violations of 204 CMR 2.05 (2) and M.G.L. Ch.138 §2
- Require Circle K to suspend all sales of alcohol for one week, from Friday, December 5, 2025, to Friday, December 12, 2025.
- Place Circle K on a 6-month probation until June 4, 2026.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, motion passed.

14. COMMUNICATIONS

15. OTHER BUSINESS

16. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Commissioner Driscoll motions to adjourn.

Second: Commissioner Koutoulas seconded.

Vote: 3-0-0 vote unanimous, meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.

No Public Comment.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas K. Flynn – Haverhill License Commission Clerk