

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND  
BOARD OF LIQUOR LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of Public Meeting  
June 9, 2025

The meeting of the Talbot County Board of Liquor License Commissioners was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 9, 2025. Present were Chairman Jack M. Gottschalk, Commissioner Edward M. Bridges, Jr., Commissioner David Fike and Board Secretary Victoria E. Bradley.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Upon motion by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges, the minutes of the meeting of April 21, 2025, were unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ROT Ventures, LLC**– Application for a Class F-A alcohol license (hotels/restaurants – on-sale, beer, wine and liquor)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Applicants Matthew Mason, Daniel Pochron and Kelsey Wilson along with their attorney Zachary Smith).

Mr. Smith gave opening statements about the business and the applicants. The applicants have been making renovations of the building and Mr. Smith further testified that the applicants and Blue Point Hospitality team have a good record with the Liquor Board.

Chairman Gottschalk made a note that the Fire Marshalls certificate is not legible. Mr. Mason stated he would be able to provide a clearer copy later today. Chairman Gottschalk asked if the applicants had a copy of the alcohol ordinance. The applicants confirmed they had a copy of the ordinance and are familiar with it.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges that the Board approve the application of the Class FA license pending the Board receiving the Fire Marshall inspection. Motion passed unanimously.

**St. Michaels Liquors, LLC**– Application for transfer of a Class E, Beer, Wine & Liquor License (Off-sale Alcohol Dispensaries)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Applicants Alex Krynski and Ian Krynski along with their attorney Zachary Smith. Members of the public who wished to give statements opposing the application).

Mr. Smith gave opening statements about the business and the applicant. Mr. Smith gave statements regarding the business plan that Mr. Krynski will be taking over Graul's Market and plans to continue the operation that was already in place. Mr. Smith gave further testimony that the Applicant Ian Krynski has a license in Talbot County and has not had a violation.

Chairman Gottschalk asked when the closing date for the transfer of the business was. Mr. Smith testified that the closing date had taken place, and the applicant has an operating agreement with the current license holders.

Commissioner Bridges stated that the code says for a Class E license the alcohol sale area must occupy at least 75% of the space. Commissioner Bridges asked the applicants to explain why they stated they would not be using 75% of the space. Mr. Smith testified that the current license is a non-conforming use that was grandfathered in, the new applicants would maintain what the previous license holders have done in the past.

Willard Parker, attorney for Mike and Brooke Mesko asked to speak on this point. Mr. Parker states there is a question on grandfathered vs non-conforming licenses. Mr. Parker testified that this Class E license was grandfathered in and later became a non-conforming license and allowed to renew each year. The limit allows for a supermarket to allow for 20% of alcohol sale or about 3,000 sq ft of the sale floor. Mr. Parker asks the Board to make it a condition that no more than 20% of sales be devoted to alcohol. Mr. Parker further testified that the applicant's Attachment 1, the signature of the owner of the premises, was signed May 21<sup>st</sup> by Mr. Krynski, however the deed records do not show a transfer.

Mr. Smith testified that the applicant is not trying to change the current operation held by the current license holders. The applicant's business plan is to have a grocery store that sells alcohol just as the previous owners had done for years. Mr. Smith stated the applicant is asking the Board to allow them to maintain the status quo.

Mr. Alex Krynski testified that the closing date was May 9, 2025 and there is a delay in the deed being filed. Attachment 1 was signed on May 21, 2025 by Mr. Krynski the owner.

Mr. Bridges asked what the current percentage of alcohol sales is. The applicant was not sure of the exact number but believed it might be less than 20%. Chairman Gottschalk stated he understood the concern for the sale percentage growing.

Mr. Parker asked if another member of the public could come and speak at this time. Michel Mesko began to testify why he opposed the transfer application. Mr. Mesko testified that members of the public are concerned with losing the last grocery store in their neighborhood. Mr. Mesko is asking the Board to rescind the nonconforming Class E license and have the applicants apply for a Class A supermarket or at the very least require them to follow the guidelines of the Class A license and allow no more than 20% of the floor space to be dedicated to alcohol sales.

Chairman Gottschalk asked the applicants to give an estimated on what the percentage of the floor space is dedicated to alcohol sales. Mr. Krynski testified that he could not give a good estimate at this time, he had not measured it in any way. Mr. Krynski further testified to clarify the name of the business; St. Michaels Liquors LLC is just being recycled as the LLC and they are doing business as St. Michaels Market.

Chairman Gottschalk stated that the Board would like to know the percentage of the alcohol sales so that it does not grow beyond what has been grandfathered in. Commissioner Bridges stated the community does not want to lose the only supermarket in St. Michaels and wanted to limit their sales percentage so it will not be allowed to grow and no longer be a supermarket. Mr. Smith testified that the applicants have no issue with the alcohol sales being capped at 20%.

Ms. Rebecca Briggs testified that she has been working in the current business for 40 years and the percentage of alcohol sale space has not changed significantly in those years. Ma. Briggs testified that she believes the square footage is under 3,000.

The Board agreed that if they allow the transfer to take place, they will impose a stipulation that the alcohol sale space would not exceed 20% of the retail space.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges that the Borad approve the application for the transfer of the Class E license, pending the Board receiving the Bulk Transfer Permit, Deed verification for Attachment 1, and confirmation that the alcohol sales space is no more than 20% of the store space. Motion passed unanimously.

**Lowes Wharf Hospitality, LLC**– Application for a transfer of a Class F-A alcohol license (hotels/restaurants – on-sale, beer, wine and liquor) & Class B-R, Beer & Wine License (off-sale) hotels/restaurants & Caterers Endorsement

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Applicants Levin Harrison and Leslie Harrison along with their attorney Zachary Smith).

Chairman Gottschalk asked if the applicants were applying for or if this location had a yacht or bottle club. Mr. Smith testified that they where not applying for that type of license, and they did not have any type of club there.

Mr. Smith gave opening statements about the business and the applicant. Mr. Smith testified that a sale for the business took place last year and that the current license holders would stay on the license and continue operating. The current license holder later stated they would be moving and did not want to continue to operate the business. Mr. Smith stated the new business owners reached out to Mr. Harrison about operating the business because of his experience with running a business with an alcohol license. Mr. Smith further testified that the operation would stay the same as the previous owners with indoor seating having 36 seats with outside tables as well.

Mr. Harrison gave testimony to his and his wife's experience of the restaurant business and that they have not had any alcohol violations in all their years running different business within Talbot County.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Bridges, seconded by Commissioner Fike that the Board approve the application for the transfer of the Class F-A, B-R and Caterer's license, pending the Health Department Permit. Motion passed unanimously.

**Southern Jo's, LLC**– Application for a Class F-A alcohol license (hotels/restaurants – on-sale, beer, wine and liquor)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in (Applicant Johanna Duke along with their attorney Peter Cotter).

Mr. Cotter gave opening statements about the business and the applicant. Mr. Cotter stated the current license holders are in favor of this application and if the application is approved the current license at this location would be terminated.

Chairman Gottschalk asked if this was a transfer. Mr. Cotter testified that it was not because the new business was not going to buy the inventory of the current business and the change in class made it easier to apply for a new license.

Ms. Duke gave testimony to the restaurant's plan, giving a description of the renovations and the seating being at least 60. Ms. Duke testified that the menu will be southern food and is currently working on a breakfast menu.

Commissioner Fike asked what the applicant's background with restaurants and alcohol sales is. Ms. Duke stated that she had no alcohol sales background but has a background in catering. Ms. Duke testified that this would be her first business with alcohol sales.

Commissioner Fike asked if the applicant had a copy of the ordinance and if she has read it and understands the requirements of it. Ms. Duke testified that she has a copy and has been making herself familiar with it.

Chairman Gottschalk further testified to the importance of following the ordinance and taking the sale of alcohol seriously. Chairman Gottschalk further explained how the environment of the bowling alley could cause problems with serving underage and stressed the importance of having control of the area.

Chairman Gottschalk asked about the signatures in Attachment 2 and why the length of time knowing the applicant was not listed. Mr. Cotter testified that Ms. Duke is new to the area and believed there was some confusion with signatures on what to put for the length of time.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges that the Board approve the application for the Class F-A license. Motion passed unanimously.

**Laughing Gravy Enterprises, LLC**– Application for a Class F-A alcohol license (hotels/restaurants – on-sale, beer, wine and liquor)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in (Applicant Christopher Mack).

Chairman Gottschalk why the business was filed in Delaware instead of Maryland. Mr. Mack testified that he was advised it would be better for him and the business financially.

Mr. Mack gave opening statements about his business and his experience in the restaurant business. Mr. Mack further testified that this would be his first time with an alcohol license but is confident in his abilities. Mr. Mack further testified that his restaurant menu will have BBQ, Pizza, salad local seafood and more.

Chairman Gottschalk advised that the applicant makes sure he has a copy of the ordinance and is familiar with it along with keeping track of the inventory. Chairman Gottschalk further stated the importance of alcohol control because the restaurant is near boats and water.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Bridges, seconded by Commissioner Fike that the Board approve the application for the Class F-A license pending the Board receiving the Health Department Permit and Fire Marshal Inspection. Motion passed unanimously.

**Osteria Alfredo, LLC**– Application for the individual licensees to be removed from the Class F-A alcohol license (hotels/restaurants – on-sale, beer, wine and liquor)

All those in attendance to testify in the matter were sworn in, (Applicant Claudia Mejia).

Ms. Mejia gave testimony to why she and the other license holder are requesting to be removed. Ms. Mejia testified that the business was sold and neither of the license holders work at the business currently.

Commissioner Bridges asked where the other license holder was currently. Ms. Mejia stated he was out of the Country at this time and stated again that neither of them are employed with the business.

Commissioner Fike asked the other Board members for confirmation that if they approve both license holders' request to be removed then the license would be terminated. The Board agreed that this would be the case.

Chairman Gottschalk stated that the Board has not heard from the new owners at all and confirmed that Secretary Bradley had reached out to the new owner and has received nothing back. Chairman Gottschalk asked if there were any other public comments regarding this matter, there were no other comments from the public.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

- Motion made by Commissioner Fike, seconded by Commissioner Bridges that the Board approve the application to remove the individual licensees from the license, and effectively terminating the license. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Liquor Inspector's Report**

Inspector Whitmer briefed the Board as to ongoing County liquor inspections. Inspector Whitmer briefed the Board on the recent problems with the 21 Matters program some business owners have had issues with. Inspector Whitmer stated this program is through the Health Department and they are dealing with the issue.

The Board agreed that they felt the program was not necessary and at the moment has caused more confusion than help. The Board stated the businesses have many checks they must go through including inspections and certifications along with appearing in front of the Board.

### **Old Business**

Secretary Bradley asked the Board to check their County Emails for one day applications that are pending administrative approval. The next Board meeting was set for July 14, 2025.

There being no further business to discuss, the Board moved to adjourn.

- Upon motion by Commissioner Bridges, seconded by Commissioner Fike, there being no further business to discuss, the Board voted unanimously to close the meeting at 11:52 a.m.