

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

GAMING CONTROL BOARD

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IN RE: CATEGORY 2 LICENSE RENEWAL HEARING FOR
SUGARHOUSE HSP GAMING D/B/A RIVERS PHILADELPHIA

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PUBLIC INPUT HEARING

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BEFORE: LINDA LLOYD, Director, Presiding Officer
Denise J. Smyler, Chair
Nedia Ralston, Member
Frances J. Regan, Member
Sara Manzano-Diaz, Member
Frank Dermody, Member

HEARING: Tuesday, April 26, 2022
3:01 p.m.

LOCATION: SEPTA Headquarters
1234 Market Street, Fifth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Reporter: Jennifer Corb

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SPEAKERS: Justin Moore, Chireen Chambers, Patricia Rocco, Jeff Lear, Emily Dones, James Prem, Bill Francisco, Anthony Alvarez, James Cartwright, Maria Castilla, Chantelle Parker, Sergeant Lacy Roane, David Quinn, Jessica Williams, Erica Zaveloff, Souleymane Fall, Marc Collazzo

A P P E A R A N C E S

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
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21
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I N D E X

1		
2	OPENING REMARKS	
3	By Presiding Officer	7 - 9
4	OPENING STATEMENT	
5	By Attorney Connelly	9 - 13
6	PRESENTATION	
7	By Justin Moore	13 - 20
8	By Chireen Chambers	20 - 24
9	By Patricia Rocco	24 - 32
10	By Jeff Lear	32 - 35
11	By Emily Dones	35 - 40
12	TESTIMONY	
13	By James Prem	41 - 44
14	By Bill Francisco	44 - 47
15	By Anthony Alvarez	47 - 53
16	By James Cartwright	53 - 56
17	By Maria Castilla	56 - 58
18	By Chantelle Parker	58 - 60
19	DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES	60 - 62
20	QUESTIONS	62 - 73
21	OPENING STATEMENT	
22	By Attorney Armstrong	74 - 77
23	DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES	77 - 80
24		
25		

I N D E X (cont.)

1		
2		
3	<u>WITNESS:</u> SERGEANT LACY ROANE	
4	DIRECT EXAMINATION	
5	By Attorney Armstrong	80 - 90
6	<u>WITNESS:</u> DAVID QUINN	
7	DIRECT EXAMINATION	
8	By Attorney Armstrong	91 - 96
9	<u>WITNESS:</u> JESSICA WILLIAMS	
10	DIRECT EXAMINATION	
11	By Attorney Armstrong	97 - 100
12	DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES	100 - 101
13	TESTIMONY	
14	By Erica Zaveloff	102 - 103
15	By Souleymane Fall	103 - 106
16	By Marc Collazzo	107 - 111
17	DISCUSSION AMONG PARTIES	111 - 113
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

E X H I B I T S

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

<u>Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Page Offered</u>	<u>Page Admitted</u>
<u>Rivers Philadelphia:</u>			
Exhibit 1	PowerPoint Presentation	61	61
<u>OEC:</u>			
Exhibit 1	Summary Reports	74	78**
Exhibit 2	Liquor Control Enforcement Letter	75	78**
Exhibit 3	Memorandum	75	78**
Exhibit 4	Bureau of Revenue Letter	76	78**
Exhibit 5	Consent Agreements	76	78*
Exhibit 6	Compliance Memorandums	76	78***
Exhibit 7	Warning Letters and Responses	76	79***
Exhibit 8	Stipulation	77	79**

* Provided through an access link.

** Not attached.

*** Confidential and provided through an access link.

P R O C E E D I N G S

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PRESIDING OFFICER: We'll begin and find a seat. A few housekeeping things for those of us meeting today. On your console there is a microphone button. And when you are going to speak, please press that button. The light turns red at the top, and on the button that means you're on, not off. You're on. And when there is no light, you are off. So, on both sides of the room and for the Commissioners. And if you're going to use the podium - are you going to use the podium? There is also a button, so if you just want to hit the button and it will turn red. And just leave that on if you're going to go back and forth.

Okay. Good afternoon. My name is Linda Lloyd, and I'm the Presiding Officer assigned by the Board to conduct this portion of the Category 2 License Renewal Hearing for SugarHouse HSP Gaming doing Rivers - doing business as Rivers Philadelphia. Before we begin, would you please all turn off or to vibrate our cell phones and all devices.

As the Presiding Officer, I call this hearing to order. The date is Tuesday, April 26th,

1 2022, and the time is now 3:02. And the location is
2 the SEPTA Board Meeting Room at 1234 Market Street,
3 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

4 The Pennsylvania Racehorse Development
5 and Gaming Act requires, at Section 1326, that an
6 Operator's License shall be subject to renewal by
7 the Board every five years. This license renewal
8 hearing is convened by the Board pursuant to the
9 mandate found in Section 1205(b) of the Gaming Act,
10 which requires the Board to conduct a public input
11 hearing of any License Renewal Application.

12 This hearing was advertised on the
13 Board's website, announced by the Board at previous
14 Board meetings and advertised in local newspapers.

15 The hearing will begin with a
16 presentation by Rivers Philadelphia with Cross
17 Examination of witnesses by the Board's Office of
18 Enforcement Counsel (OEC) and questions from Board,
19 members if they have questions for the witnesses.

20 After the presentation and questions,
21 the OEC will make a presentation, with the Cross
22 Examination of witnesses by Counsel for Rivers
23 Philadelphia. And again, any questions that the
24 Board may have for the witnesses.

25 After the close of the testimony and

1 evidence from the parties, those individuals who
2 have registered to speak today during the public
3 comment period will be heard as their name is
4 called. Each registered speaker will have five
5 minutes to provide their thoughts on the Renewal
6 Application.

7 All witnesses and speakers are
8 reminded to speak loudly and clearly and into your
9 microphone that you have turned on, so that the
10 court reporter, who is sitting down here to my
11 right, and others can hear what you have to say. I
12 would also ask that before you begin to speak, if
13 you would state and spell your name for the court
14 reporter, she would appreciate that.

15 So, let's begin by having all the
16 witnesses for Rivers Philadelphia and the OEC who
17 will testify during the hearing today, if you would
18 please stand and raise your right hand to be sworn
19 by the court reporter.

20 ----
21 (WHEREUPON, WITNESSES SWORN EN MASSE.)

22 ---
23 PRESIDING OFFICER: So Rivers
24 Philadelphia, if you're ready to begin.

25 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Yes. Thank you.

1 Good afternoon, members of the Board, Director
2 Lloyd, members of the OEC and, of course, members of
3 the public. Thanks for everybody coming out. And
4 we'll try to be brief on this matter, but we've got
5 a lot to present, because it's been a long time
6 since we've appeared in this kind of forum and I
7 know that the Board members are new.

8 So with that, I'd like to give a
9 little bit of background -.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER: John - John, can
11 you introduce yourself?

12 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Oh, yes. I'm
13 sorry. John Donnelly, D-O-N-N-E-L-L-Y. Thank you,
14 Linda. I'm Counsel for Rivers Philadelphia.

15 This all started in 2005, when the
16 Gaming Board had a competition among a number of
17 candidates who wanted to develop casinos in
18 Philadelphia. Rivers was one of those candidates.
19 And after a very lengthy process and a lot of
20 hearings, we were selected, along with another group
21 down by another area of town, as the two candidates
22 for the two licenses for Philadelphia. And we kind
23 of thought it was over.

24 Our site that we had picked was the
25 former Jack Frost Sugar Refinery on the edge of the

1 Delaware River. At the time we came down, the
2 property was blighted. It was essentially a desert.
3 There were - there was an open running sewer - city
4 sewer running through the property, and the property
5 had not been developed for many, many years. The
6 neighborhood was not in great shape on the other
7 side of the road and there was not much prospect of
8 development.

9 We picked this site after looking at a
10 lot of sites because we thought it was a great site
11 for the casino. And it turned out that we were
12 correct. The property is developed by Neil Bluhm
13 and his Rush Street Gaming Group out of Chicago.
14 And again, when we won the contest and the Board
15 voted for us, we were in Harrisburg for a drink, and
16 we thought everything was going to be hunky-dory.

17 Well, it didn't work out that way
18 because the disappointed candidates filed a lawsuit
19 under the statute, as the Board well knows, that
20 will go to the Supreme Court. Everybody ended up in
21 the Supreme Court. You and we won, and the Court
22 gave the imprimatur to the Decision that the Board
23 had made, and then we thought it was over again, but
24 it wasn't.

25 We had other litigation that we had to

1 engage in, in order to develop the property from a
2 number of regulatory bodies and others. Finally -
3 that was what put us in Commonwealth Court. And
4 finally, we prevailed on those. Again, we're ready
5 to go, 2008, financial crisis. We lost our
6 financing. Every casino that I'm aware of in the
7 country lost its financing.

8 The other casino developer that had
9 been chosen couldn't finance and had to drop out and
10 couldn't develop its project. And thanks to the
11 financial strength of Neil Bluhm, really, we were
12 able to build an interim casino. And we came back
13 to the Board and we, at that time, pledged that we
14 will, in part, finance it personally and we'll build
15 an interim casino. And when financing is available,
16 again, we will complete all the promises that we
17 made in the original presentation.

18 The Board, to your credit, agreed. We
19 were able to break ground and build the interim
20 casino, open it on time, on budget. And then, as
21 everybody knows, the financial crisis ended, and we
22 went into Phase 2 and completed all the projects and
23 all of our commitments that we had done the work and
24 now have what you see today.

25 I will then - that's the history and

1 background. And I want to thank the Board for its
2 hanging in there during this period of time as well,
3 because it was a very difficult time for everybody,
4 but we've now got that dream that's come true.

5 And with that, I'm going to turn it
6 over to Justin Moore, the General Manager, to begin
7 the presentation as to where we are today and where
8 we plan to go in the future.

9 Justin?

10 MR. MOORE: Thank you. All right.
11 Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Justin Moore,
12 J-U-S-T-I-N, M-O-O-R-E. I'm the General Manager at
13 Rivers Casino Philadelphia. I've been there for one
14 year. My journey in the industry started as a food
15 server, working in Las Vegas at a local casino. And
16 I just worked my way up with a company out there for
17 16 years and made it to the position of AGM.

18 I've been with Rush Street Gaming
19 almost for five years. I worked up in Schenectady,
20 which is Upstate New York, at our sister property,
21 Rivers Casino & Resort. And my last position there
22 was General Manager. And I'm very excited to be
23 here and very excited - I believe this team has put
24 together a fantastic presentation for you today.

25 So, after working at two of our

1 properties, I can tell you that our mission of being
2 a great place to work at Rush Street Gaming and
3 Rivers Casino is so important to us. We've created
4 a fun working environment and culture. We ask our
5 team members to just take care of our guests, each
6 other, and, most importantly, have fun at work.

7 We are definitely a proud community
8 partner. It's a big part of our mission. I've seen
9 it, witnessed it in Upstate New York and now here in
10 Philadelphia with this property. We've put in a lot
11 of effort to making sure that the community
12 understands how important that is to us with
13 sponsorships, financial donations, as well as just
14 hard work, donating our time to those organizations.

15 And also, being a strong economic
16 vision is just another mission for us. We've seen
17 transformations in the areas that all of our
18 properties are in, specifically here in
19 Philadelphia. We're very proud of that.

20 So, as John mentioned, here's a few
21 slides and pictures of our journey. You can see the
22 Jack refinery there, pictured. And what a
23 transformation the property is to me there. We have
24 had our challenges, of course, and some things
25 exciting, some not so much. The archaeological

1 discoveries that were found on that property are
2 pretty interesting and the transformation of the
3 sewer ways is really not.

4 We've been able to transform that
5 property into - next slide, what you see there
6 today. More slides of what that property actually
7 looked like on the Delaware River and what we've
8 transformed to be there today. Now people can have
9 a nice job right along the river and a beautiful
10 sidewalk, pristine area. We're very proud of the
11 fact that we've taken this space and transformed it
12 into what it is today.

13 Not only in 2010 were we open to open
14 SugarHouse Casino with live slots and table games,
15 but we also are - we've created an important
16 milestone by opening up a casino in the first major
17 U.S. city other than Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

18 A brief history of our property and
19 expansion. Back in 2016 we added an expansion that
20 included the Events Center, our Marketplace, which
21 is a food court, the parking garage, other
22 amenities, which was a \$165 million investment.
23 Along with that investment came additional jobs for
24 the property, which we're very proud of.

25 We also were able to launch the first

1 land-based sportsbook back in 2018 at the temporary
2 space. And now if you go down there today, we have
3 a beautiful full-time space that we were able to
4 open in 2019.

5 So, a few facts about the casino.
6 Obviously the Board has this information, but for
7 the public's benefit we have 460,000 square feet of
8 space, 1,500 slot machines, 81 stand-alone table
9 games, 54 high-driven table games, 28 poker tables,
10 5 restaurants and bars, nearly 23,000 square feet of
11 meeting space in our event space. Which is so
12 crucial to not only what we've done in the past, but
13 our operational plan going forward in the future
14 with the entertainment that we have, all the fun
15 events that we have planned. And also all of the
16 organizations locally that utilize that event center
17 for their banquets and meetings.

18 The most important and lucrative
19 amenity that we offer is nearly 2,500 free parking
20 spaces with a parking garage and service slots.

21 So, all in all we have invested into
22 the property, since opening, \$550 million. Here are
23 a couple of examples of that, with The Event Center
24 pictured, and as well as the North Door Entrance.

25 Some additional reinvestments that we

1 made to the property since 2015, again, the
2 expansion, \$165 million, which we've talked about,
3 but we also did a rebranding that included a brand
4 new casino floor layout and also brand new carpet.
5 That was \$4 million. We opened the Jack's Bar &
6 Grill. That was a 43 million investment. And we
7 also - most recently you might have seen in the
8 papers we were very proud to be the home of the
9 first Rita's Water Ice to be in a casino. And just
10 another great amenity that people recognize with the
11 City of Philadelphia, and it's great to have them
12 home with us. And I must add that this Rita's will
13 not close during the wintertime. It will stay open.

14 Other key gaming initiatives and
15 recent investments. So, we've refreshed our slot
16 floor with \$6 million. And \$6 million is slot
17 reinvestment, 2 million in table games reinvestment,
18 and then also some ancillary reinvestment. So,
19 really, all in all, it comes to over \$12 million in
20 gaming reinvestment to keep ourselves competitive in
21 a very competitive market and also fresh for our
22 guests.

23 During COVID we also had our
24 challenges, but we're very proud of what we were
25 able to do as a team, come together and really keep

1 our guests and team members safe during such a
2 stressful time. We gave several initiatives, like
3 they are listed there, through - in the casino to
4 make sure the guests felt comfortable, team members
5 felt comfortable at work during recent times. And
6 also we had additional challenges during the COVID
7 pandemic, such as multiple closures and additional
8 restrictions that were unique to the two casinos in
9 the City of Philadelphia.

10 So for us good community partners
11 means having those community marketing partnerships.
12 So we are the official sportsbook of the
13 Philadelphia Flyers at the Wells Fargo Center.
14 We've made incredible investments there to be
15 partners with them. We also find it important to be
16 strategic partners with NBC Sports, 97.5 The Fanatic
17 and the Philadelphia Business Review Journal.

18 And I mentioned earlier, entertainment
19 is such an important part of our game plan going
20 forward. We wanted to bring in a jazz series at the
21 casino, but recognized that the folks over at Biden
22 Hospitality and SOUTH Restaurant already did an
23 amazing job with their jazz series. So, we asked
24 them if they would partner with us. Rather than
25 competing with a local entity, let's partner

1 together to co-brand and present some amazing jazz
2 artists here in the City of Philadelphia. This new
3 jazz series launched last year. And these are just
4 a few of the phenomenal artists in that genre that
5 travel worldwide that are brought here to
6 Philadelphia, thanks to us and SOUTH Restaurant.

7 So, as I mentioned, entertainment is a
8 big piece, so here are a few of the entertainment
9 acts that you will find at Rivers Casino. These are
10 a few that have been here recently. And some of the
11 people that are pictured here are actually from
12 Philadelphia, so it's great to have these headliners
13 come home.

14 Something that I've very proud of and
15 impassioned about is our brand new Jack's stage,
16 which is featured right outside of Jack's Bar &
17 Grill Restaurant. This is something that opened for
18 us on New Year's Eve this past year. And it is
19 right on the Gaming Floor, right outside the
20 restaurant. So, we have the stage, the dance floor.
21 We actually have table games and slots in the area.

22 So, it's a great environment. You can
23 sit and play blackjack, have a drink, people watch,
24 go dance, listen - but most importantly, listen to
25 local entertainment, free. And on the weekends,

1 every Friday and Saturday and, of course, Monday
2 afternoons for our seniors. It's a great way for us
3 to keep the local entertainers on stage. It's
4 additional steady bookings for them. And we rotate
5 the local bands so that everyone gets a fair share
6 of the brand new venue.

7 And again, additional headliners that
8 we brought to this, it's calling out to the
9 diversity of the types of genre that we bring into
10 the property. We'll go everywhere - anywhere from
11 R&B to Vietnamese concerts to really country and to
12 older generations, like Engelbert Humperdinck.

13 The team at Rivers Philadelphia does
14 an incredible job. I'm very proud of what they do
15 there. And thanks to this organization here, Casino
16 Player Magazine, they recognize that as well as the
17 readers. And here are - here's a good example of
18 some of the awards that we received because of the
19 work that our team does.

20 All right. So, it's my pleasure to
21 introduce Chireen Chambers. She's our brand new
22 Manager of Compliance.

23 MS. CHAMBERS: Good afternoon,
24 everyone. My name is Chireen Chambers,
25 C-H-I-R-E-E-N, C-H-A-M-B-E-R-S. I have been with

1 the company since 2019. During this time I have
2 been given great opportunities to get to where I am
3 today through internal promotion. Like Justin, I
4 have come up through the ranks, starting as a
5 Compliance Legal Coordinator. And now, as a
6 Compliance Manager, I work with a team to ensure the
7 property is operating safely and in accordance with
8 gaming rules and regulations.

9 At Rivers Casino we pride ourselves in
10 a commitment to great service, maintaining a highest
11 level of integrity at all levels, and providing a
12 safe and fun environment for all of our guests and
13 team members. We have a longstanding open and
14 transparent relationship with the Pennsylvania
15 Gaming Control Board, the Bureau of Casino
16 Compliance and other related Bureaus.

17 In addition, our partnership with the
18 Pennsylvania State Police, including our onsite PSP
19 Unit, and the Philadelphia Police Department,
20 enhances our ability to maintain consistent
21 communication on a daily basis. Our Security and
22 Surveillance Departments are trained on policies and
23 procedures, actively engaging in enforcement
24 policies and periodically retrained to ensure we are
25 constantly up-to-date on all gaming operations and

1 controls.

2 Rivers Casino continues with its
3 commitment to responsible gaming. Team members are
4 trained upon new hire and annually after that.
5 Self-excluded patrons who violate their agreement by
6 entering our casino and gambling at our property are
7 banned. We have also taken the initiative to issue
8 property bans to anyone that self-excludes online.

9 Preventing underage gaming and
10 unattended minors are important components to our
11 Compliance Program as a whole at Rivers. Our team
12 members complete an annual ID training, and we use
13 advanced ID and passport scanners at our entrances.
14 And we request identification from any patron who
15 does not appear to look 40 years or older.

16 Underage suspects and those with false
17 identification, regardless of age, are reported to
18 the Pennsylvania State Police and the Gaming Board.
19 Unfortunately, unattended minors have been a
20 critical topic throughout Pennsylvania. We share
21 the Board's concern surrounding the issue. While we
22 are unable to prevent parents and guardians from
23 making bad decisions of bringing a child on
24 property, we actively discourage criminal behavior,
25 report any known criminal acts to law enforcement,

1 and abide by the strict standard operating
2 procedures to respond as quickly as possible if a
3 child is left unattended on our property.

4 In addition to clear signage all
5 throughout our surface lot parking garage, and at
6 every entrance, we have increased patrol presence,
7 added surveillance cameras and enhanced lighting in
8 our surface lot and parking garage. We are and
9 remain committed to doing all we can with this issue
10 and to maintain best practices.

11 As I have mentioned, Rivers Casino
12 wants our guests and team members to enjoy the
13 property, but with safety at the forefront. That's
14 why we've increased security in our parking garage,
15 including our team member level, installed metal
16 detectors, as you can see here in our presentation.
17 And at every entrance we have - at every entrance,
18 and we have the Philadelphia Police Department
19 patrol our property as part of their routine.

20 Responsible alcohol management is an
21 area we take seriously. We are a RAMP-certified
22 license holder. We currently train all of our
23 alcohol service staff, as well as team members who
24 are commonly in contact with our patrons. You'll
25 see the additional departments in the presentation.

1 Thank you for your time. And now I
2 would like to introduce Patricia Rocco, our Vice
3 President of Human Resources.

4 MS. ROCCO: Thank you, Chireen. Good
5 afternoon. My name is Patricia Rocco,
6 P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A, Rocco, R-O-C-C-O. I am the Vice
7 President of Human Resources for the Rivers. I've
8 been with the company for a little over two years.
9 However, I've been in the gaming industry, and I'm
10 trying to figure out which sounds better, over 25
11 years or a little less than 30 years. I don't know
12 which one sounds better, whether younger, but I'll
13 attest to that time frame.

14 I've worked in the Atlantic City
15 market. And I'm here today to discuss why Rivers is
16 a great place to work. And nothing underscores this
17 more than our team members voting us one of
18 Philadelphia's top work places 15 times.

19 From a workforce perspective, we're
20 one of Philadelphia's largest employers. We have
21 over 1,100 team members. Over 70 percent are from
22 Pennsylvania or reside in Pennsylvania.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER: Patricia, could
24 you pull your microphone just a little -?

25 MS. ROCCO: Sure. I've never been

1 told I'm not loud.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER: Thanks.

3 MS. ROCCO: I've never been told I'm
4 not loud.

5 Fifty-eight (58) percent are
6 Philadelphia residents. Forty-two (42) percent are
7 female, of which 65 percent of those females are
8 minorities. And 59 percent of our total workforce
9 are minorities.

10 To take a look at our executive
11 management and management and staff professional
12 categories, we're 35 percent female and 46 percent
13 minority. We have 128 day-one employees who've
14 stuck it out through thick and thin with us. We
15 have had more than 1,500 internal promotions since
16 the opening. And I think that's a testament to how
17 we run our employees and provide growth and
18 opportunity for them.

19 And the next bullet I think is one of
20 the things I'm most proud of since I've been here.
21 We've increased the minimum start rate for our team
22 members, our non-tip team members, to \$15. This
23 wasn't something we had to do. We felt it was the
24 right thing to do. We, I believe, changed lives in
25 the process when you're making \$8 an hour and go to

1 \$15 an hour. So, I'm very proud of that initiative.
2 And actually across the whole Rush Street Gaming
3 Enterprise did the same thing.

4 Let's go back for one second. In
5 addition to the pay, with our benefits, our team
6 members make on average \$25, including benefits.
7 And speaking of benefits, we have a host - an array
8 of great benefits. We offer medical, dental, vision
9 and prescription. We have a solid 401(k) plan to
10 help our team members prepare for their future. We
11 have paid time off. We have annual tuition
12 reimbursement. We pay holiday bonuses. We have a
13 lot of team member events and giveaways.

14 It's not only all work, work, work.
15 We believe it's important to have fun at work, and
16 that is one of our core values. And actually,
17 tomorrow we will be celebrating our best of our best
18 through our Rivers Finest Recognition Program.

19 So, when I talk about all the things
20 we do for our employees, COVID, I think, is where we
21 really stepped up to the plate as a company. And
22 you know, it's easy to be good and generous when
23 things are going well, but I think it speaks to who
24 you are as an employer when times are tough. And
25 for me, I had just started with Rivers two weeks

1 before the pandemic, and I was like, oh, my God,
2 what did I just do? I just changed jobs and it
3 probably was - it was unforeseeable, but you might
4 be the last person in at the time, but when I saw
5 what we did for our employees, I know I made the
6 right decision coming to Rivers.

7 Through the pandemic we paid 100
8 percent of our team members' health benefits through
9 both closures. And for those team members who had
10 to be furloughed because of the vaccine mandate, we
11 continued to pay their benefits 100 percent. We
12 paid full salaries for six weeks through both
13 closures. We gave people the opportunity to use
14 their PTO or cash out some of their PTO to kind of
15 bridge what, you know, was simply the financial
16 death of not being able to work. And then when it
17 was time to come back to work, we offered all of our
18 team members the opportunity to return.

19 One other thing that we did was we
20 hosted a property-wide vaccination clinic to have it
21 easily accessible for our team members to be
22 vaccinated if they choose to do so. So, again,
23 where a lot of companies just told people to go home
24 and close out the lights, I am very proud of what we
25 did for our employees during COVID. It was a very

1 uncertain time and a very uncertain financial time
2 for people. And I would stand us up to any company,
3 gaming or not gaming.

4 So, unfortunately, during COVID our
5 property was turning ten years old, but we felt it
6 was still important to recognize our team members
7 for that milestone, and we gave everybody this
8 beautiful glass plaque. We had a party in our - you
9 know, as a casino, you want to throw a big party.
10 This wasn't as upscale as we would have liked.

11 And see I our Team Director put his
12 picture in here because he always continues to - no,
13 I'm kidding. James is our longest tenured employee
14 at Rivers. James had been promoted last year to our
15 Director of IT, so I'm very proud to know James and
16 work with James.

17 So, from an ongoing initiative
18 perspective, what we have been focusing on is
19 recruiting and retention. And in my entire history
20 I have never seen or experienced such a difficult
21 time to recruit talent. This isn't anything that
22 Rivers is experiencing exclusively. I will say I
23 think from a gaming perspective it may be a little
24 more difficult to - there's a few more barriers to
25 entry, if you would, from a licensing and background

1 check, but it has been a rough go of filling talent.
2 I mean, we have so many jobs that pay a lot of
3 money, and we still have not been able to fill them
4 yet, although we are out there. We are pounding the
5 pavement. I will give my business card to anybody
6 here who knows somebody that needs a job.

7 But one of the things we're also doing
8 is relying on our talent to help us in the
9 recruiting process. I believe talent begets talent.
10 We have a very robust employee referral plan. We
11 will pay our employees \$1,000 if they're hired. And
12 we'll also pay them, per hire, \$500. So, that's
13 like a moment where we're giving away the money to
14 our team members.

15 Another piece where we use our team
16 members is in our campaign. It's called Come for a
17 Job, Stay for a Career. And I think, you know, all
18 the folks in this room, my colleagues are a
19 testament to the opportunities that you have in this
20 industry. We actually are highlighting some of our
21 team members and are giving their testimonials in
22 our campaign. And I don't think you can pay an ad
23 agency to give the heartfelt testimonials of what
24 these people feel that this property and company has
25 done for them.

1 From a growth perspective and a
2 development perspective, we have a Management
3 Development Program where we have four - we've
4 actually added four positions that will work in key
5 areas to develop future leaders of table games HR.
6 And another opening that we have that we're really
7 trying to fill is a Director of Diversity and
8 Inclusion, to help us continue to build our culture
9 and champion some of these recruiting efforts. And
10 then we have paid internships that we're looking for
11 local students, to give them a flavor of what it's
12 like to work for the industry.

13 So, we have an overwhelming need for
14 Table Games Dealers. And we have a paid Dealer
15 school. I think the thing that differentiates us
16 than any other gaming company is we make them an
17 employee on day one. Most places make - you have to
18 go through the process, through the school, take an
19 audition, and then you're hired. So, we think
20 that's a key distinguishing factor of our school.

21 And I don't know where you could go
22 for three to four weeks and come out and make
23 \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. That's the base -. So,
24 I have a son that's graduating college. So, if he
25 doesn't get a job soon, he may be the next Dealer

1 school participant.

2 ---

3 (WHEREUPON, VIDEO WAS PLAYED.)

4 ---

5 MS. ROCCO: So, I didn't get to do the
6 lead-in for that, and that's okay, but we've had to
7 be very creative in terms of what we've been able to
8 do with recruiting and have some tools in our
9 arsenals. And this is the first time that I've ever
10 been able to do something like this. Justin's like,
11 you know, do what you need to do. And that's all he
12 needed to tell me, because something of this I think
13 quality speaks to who we are.

14 We have this on our website. We've
15 put it on LinkedIn and Instagram, shared it with our
16 community partners. So, I'm real excited about the
17 things we are doing to try to attract talent,
18 particularly within the Dealer ranks.

19 And finally, we're working with our
20 community partners, such as Chamber of Commerce, the
21 African-American Chamber of Commerce, the
22 Asian-American Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic
23 Chamber of Commerce, Community College of
24 Philadelphia - Pennsylvania CareerLink, the Veterans
25 Chamber. And our partnerships have been so

1 important to us to assist in these extremely
2 challenging times, and we value them and appreciate
3 their efforts in terms of helping us find talent
4 throughout the area.

5 So, I'm going to turn it over to my
6 colleague, Jeff Lear, Vice President of Finance.

7 MR. LEAR: Thanks, Patty. Good
8 afternoon. Jeff Lear, J-E-F-F, L-E-A-R. I'm the
9 Vice President of Finance for the property, and I've
10 been with the company for almost 12 years. I'm one
11 of the 128 day-one team members that Patty just
12 mentioned. I've grown both personally and
13 professionally through those 12 years, with three
14 internal promotions, which has helped my family
15 tremendously.

16 We are a strong economic engine for
17 the Commonwealth and for the City of Philadelphia.
18 Since inception, Rivers Philadelphia has paid 1.4
19 billion, with a B, billion dollars in gaming and
20 other taxes to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and
21 to the City of Philadelphia combined. Of the 1.4
22 billion, 1.2 billion has been paid to the
23 Commonwealth, with the lion's share coming from
24 employment gaming taxes. 200 million has gone to
25 the City, with 58 million going to the school

1 district directly.

2 Another part of being a strong
3 economic engine is our commitment on the procurement
4 side to minority-owned, women-owned and local
5 business enterprises. On average over 25 percent of
6 \$36 million since 2013 has been spent on nine
7 construction payments to minority and women-owned
8 businesses. Over 50 percent, or 74 million, since
9 2015, has been spent with local businesses just
10 across the river from New Jersey. That's something
11 we're very proud of.

12 MWBE has suffered a little bit since
13 the COVID pandemic, especially with the additional
14 restrictions enforced by the City of Philadelphia.
15 We weren't allowed to open our restaurants, we were
16 capacity-restrained and we limited our marketing
17 promotions.

18 To help improve in this area, we are
19 hosting a How to Do Business with Rivers
20 Philadelphia, specifically for minority and
21 women-owned businesses. This will take place on
22 June 1st. And this will be our first since before
23 the pandemic. We will discuss dedicated goods and
24 services of businesses now and/or into the future,
25 as well as advise vendors on how to navigate the

1 PGCB licensing process.

2 In addition, we're engaging in
3 biodiversity counseling with the Office of Economic
4 Opportunity and various Chambers of Commerce and
5 applying for membership in the Women's Business
6 Enterprise National Council. Furthermore, we
7 continue to educate and assist businesses in
8 obtaining certification for EM or EMSBC. Today we
9 do not report a vendor as minority or women-owned if
10 they are not certified with these two organizations.

11 Finally, we have formed a new
12 Diversity Subcommittee, consisting of procurement,
13 community resources, and what's identified as the
14 Director of Diversity and Inclusion, as Patty
15 mentioned earlier. As we sit here today, we are
16 including known minority and women-owned businesses
17 to the Office of Economic Opportunity in our bids
18 for projects and facilities and marketing and we
19 plan to further include other areas of operations
20 for the property.

21 My colleagues affectionately call me
22 the human time capsule, since I've been here since
23 the beginning. I've seen this property transform
24 and the changes along the way, including the
25 construction of the original building, the temporary

1 poker room, expansion, management changes along the
2 way, and changes to the general neighborhood.

3 I'm proud to say that I'm so excited
4 to be here, and I'm very excited about the changes
5 we have, especially on the Gaming Floor, making
6 changes to things other than just gaming.

7 I'd like to introduce Emily Dones,
8 Manager of Community Relations.

9 MS. DONES: Thank you, Jeff. Good
10 afternoon. My name is Emily Dones, E-M-I-L-Y,
11 D-O-N-E-S, and I'm the Community Relations Manager
12 here at Rivers Casino Philadelphia. I've been a
13 team member here since 2016. I started out in the
14 Banquets Department. I actually came here because
15 of the expansion and the job opportunities that were
16 provided. I was promoted to Executive Assistant,
17 and I've been honored to serve in the role as
18 Community Relations Manager for the past four years.

19 And in this role I oversee our mission
20 of being a dedicated community partner, caring
21 neighbor and friend to the entire Greater
22 Philadelphia region.

23 Through our program, Rivers Gives,
24 we're able to engage with our community in
25 meaningful and impactful ways, such as park

1 cleanups, food and clothing collection, and my
2 personal favorite, our annual turkey drive, which
3 reaches over 650 families a year. And these are
4 just a few examples of how we give back.

5 Rivers is a proud supporter of our
6 veterans, our first responders and our hometown
7 heroes. Our volunteers assemble care packages for
8 our service men and women. We provide holiday meals
9 for the local school crossing guards, we attend
10 memorial services for our veterans, and we support
11 our local police at community events.

12 Our volunteers also support
13 organizations like Wigs & Wishes. And Wigs & Wishes
14 is a nonprofit group that provides wigs to women who
15 are battling cancer and grants once-in-a-lifetime
16 wishes to young children who are also going through
17 the fight against cancer. We also host their annual
18 fundraiser in our Event Center at no cost to the
19 organization. And that's so 100 percent of the
20 proceeds raised during that event directly benefit
21 the recipients of Wigs & Wishes.

22 And Rivers also creates opportunities
23 for our team members to participate in events that
24 are important to them and their families. And that
25 includes the Anti-Defamation League's Walk Against

1 Hate. And coming up on May 8th we'll be
2 participating in the Susan G. Komen More Than Pink
3 Walk. And it doesn't stop there. Rivers Gives
4 collaborates with nonprofit organizations that
5 provide essential services to our senior citizens,
6 to those who are experiencing food insecurity and
7 helping those who might not be in a position to help
8 themselves. Our Givers, as we fondly call our
9 volunteers, know that we all win when we are
10 uplifting and supporting everybody around us.

11 So we all know Philadelphia is a city
12 that has no shortage of fun. And last year, when
13 many of the COVID restrictions started to loosen, we
14 hosted two block parties in our parking lot. And
15 this brought thousands of people flocking to Rivers
16 on the 4th of July and on Labor Day. They enjoyed
17 food trucks, activities, cover bands and fireworks.
18 And these free, open-to-all-ages events were so
19 popular, I am excited to officially announce we are
20 bringing back our Party on the Pier block parties
21 for Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day. And
22 each of those are capping off with a grand fireworks
23 finale.

24 And speaking of fireworks, Rivers has
25 been the title sponsor for the annual Delaware River

1 Waterfront Corporation's New Year's Eve Fireworks
2 since 2009. And that is a mouthful to say and I
3 struggle through it every time, but I got it right
4 the first time. And 2009, that's one year before we
5 even opened the property. And it's because of our
6 longstanding partnerships, like the one we have with
7 DRWC, that Rivers is an anchor in our community.

8 And like everybody had mentioned, we
9 all know the COVID-19 pandemic was devastating, and
10 many businesses, including Rivers, shuttered their
11 doors during the mandated closures, but that didn't
12 shutter Rivers. That didn't shutter our Givers and
13 our volunteering. We continued to be a community
14 champion. We were out in Kensington three times a
15 week distributing food boxes. We provided PPE so
16 that the kids that our PAL centers, Police Athletic
17 League Center, helped to open and operate safely.
18 And in general, we were here. We were letting
19 people know we're in this together, and we were here
20 to help.

21 As I mentioned before, our commitment
22 to nonprofit organizations is an essential part of
23 our DNA. And that's why we have contributed over
24 \$15 million since we opened. This also includes a
25 yearly million-dollar donation to the Penn Treaty

1 Special Services District, where the funds are
2 allocated to organizations and projects in the
3 Fishtown, Northern Liberties, Old Richmond and New
4 Kensington neighborhoods. And that's separate from
5 the additional donations and sponsorships that we
6 give.

7 As Mr. Donnelly mentioned, Fishtown
8 started out as an industrial town, hence the name
9 Fishtown. And we transformed into a thriving,
10 vibrant, entertainment destination. We're rich with
11 restaurants, shops and concert venues. And we're
12 really proud that our neighborhood has been featured
13 in several publications for our positive
14 contributions to this region, including Forbes
15 Magazine in 2018.

16 And our strong partnerships enable
17 Rivers to live up to that promise and our mission of
18 being a dedicated community partner and neighbor.
19 And these are just some examples of our many partner
20 organizations. I used to be an elementary school
21 teacher. I could talk for eight hours about this.
22 It's something I'm so passionate about, but instead
23 of letting me do the talking, I'd like to share a
24 video of some of our friends.

25

1 (WHEREUPON, VIDEO WAS PLAYED.)

2 ---

3 MS. DONES: I cannot wait to share
4 this video on our social media platform, now that
5 the Board has officially seen it and just really get
6 the word out. We are committed. We truly
7 understand that our commitment goes beyond writing a
8 check, moving on to the next thing, and we'll see
9 you next year, right. We're humbled and we're
10 honored that we can be considered a friend to
11 everybody in the Greater Philadelphia region.

12 So I want to thank you again for your
13 time. And I would like to turn it back to our
14 general, Justin Moore.

15 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: I'm not Justin
16 Moore. So that's the story. It was a happy story.
17 I think everybody has seen it. Some of the people
18 in this room were around in 2005. And it's come
19 from literally a blighted, abandoned waterfront site
20 that was an eyesore, and there was open sewers
21 running through it, to a vibrant community,
22 entertainment events, gaming, fun center that's
23 embedded in the community. And I'm proud to say
24 that I have a small part of it happening. And I
25 think this Board should be, too, because in trying

1 to solicit the Board, there were some tough times.
2 We all went through it, a lot of litigation, and it
3 cost everybody a lot of time and effort and
4 heartache. And it's something that I think
5 everybody in this room who had a part in it should
6 be very proud of.

7 We've got some team members that want
8 to address the Board, and so I'll turn it over to
9 them. I'm not sure where they come up on the
10 agenda.

11 MR. PREM: Thank you. Thank you,
12 Board members and Rivers Casino for allowing me to
13 speak today. Good afternoon. My name is James
14 Prem, P-R-E, M, as in Michael.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER: Before you begin,
16 James, did you stand to be sworn when we swore in -?

17 MR. PREM: I don't think anybody did
18 on this side of the room.

19 Do I need to?

20 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

21 I have you registered as an individual
22 speaker later on, but if there are people here from
23 Rivers or you're going to speak on behalf - if
24 you're an employee, if you're still in the audience,
25 and James, if you'd raise your right hand to be

1 sworn by the court reporter.

2 ---

3 JAMES PREM,

4 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND

5 HAVING FIRST BEEN DULY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS

6 FOLLOWS:

7 ---

8 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

9 You can begin again. Thank you.

10 MR. PREM: Good afternoon. My name is

11 James Prem. I am a team member in the Facilities

12 Department of Rivers Casino Philadelphia. Even

13 though I've been a team member since 2013, my

14 history with Rivers started when I was 19 years old.

15 Growing up in Fishtown, an industrial

16 town, meant that most of us worked at the local

17 factories after graduating high school. Seeing that

18 my father, my grandmother, all my friends and most

19 of my other family members worked at the Jack Frost

20 Sugar Refinery, it seemed the next logical step was

21 for me to work there after high school. I worked at

22 the refinery for five years. No one prepared for

23 the day when we came to work and were handed a pink

24 slip and told to go home because the factory was

25 closing that day.

1 After a few odd jobs here and there, I
2 joined the Carpenters Union and spent the next 25
3 years there. As I neared retirement, I started
4 hearing about a new casino being built on the old
5 refinery land. I thought, there's no way that will
6 happen in my neighborhood, but after attending a few
7 neighborhood meetings, it was clear that the casino
8 would bring jobs, strengthen the economy and bring
9 positive change to our community. However, not
10 everyone felt that way, but I'm glad that didn't
11 stop the casino from being built.

12 All the things the naysayers thought
13 would happen, like higher crime rates, increase in
14 drugs, never happened. I mean, take a look at
15 Fishtown now. Now many of the people who originally
16 opposed the casino come here to eat at the
17 restaurants, see a show, enjoy a slot machine or
18 two.

19 After retiring, I needed to supplement
20 my income, and coming to the casino was the natural
21 choice. I just celebrated nine years here, but it
22 feels like yesterday. Many people I started with
23 are still here and it feels good to come to work and
24 be with this team. I'm proud to be a lifelong
25 Fishtown resident and work in a neighborhood where I

1 lived all my life, on the land where I had my first
2 and where I know I'll have my last job.

3 It will be hard when I retire from the
4 Rivers Casino. Everything has come full circle for
5 me. It means everything to me. Thank you all for
6 your time.

7 PRESIDING ORDER: Do you have your own
8 order or should I call the next name? Bill
9 Francisco?

10 ---

11 BILL FRANCISCO,
12 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
13 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
14 FOLLOWS:

15 ---

16 MR. FRANCISCO: Good afternoon,
17 everybody. My name is Bill Francisco,
18 F-R-A-N-C-I-S-C-O, and I'm the owner of Fishtown
19 Fleet Wash. We are located about six blocks from
20 the casino, and we've been in business for 26 years.

21 I think it's safe to say Fishtown
22 Fleet Wash is Rivers Casino's longest-running
23 neighbor. I can say this because we did our first
24 piece of work for them in June '07. And if you're
25 doing the math, that is three years before it

1 opened.

2 The next month, July '07, we helped
3 move in their first employee into the 10A Building
4 across Delaware Ave. That same summer we were asked
5 to clean up the property where the casino is
6 currently located. The weeds were six-foot high
7 with an abundance of wildlife running around in it.
8 We cleaned the property again the next summer. It
9 usually took a week. And at the end of one of the
10 days, with myself and my crew looking like coal
11 miners, a car that was probably worth more than our
12 current houses pulled into the lot. A man got out
13 of his car and told me I had a snake wrapped around
14 my ankle, which I didn't notice, and asked me what
15 we were doing.

16 This man had a British accent. With
17 all of us being Irish-Catholic growing up in
18 Fishtown, we were raised not to be so fond of Brits.
19 So I replied to his question with a little attitude,
20 what's it look like we're doing? He took a look
21 around and after about 30 seconds he said, do a good
22 job on my land. We found out later that this man at
23 the time did own the property. He also owned the
24 Parks Casino, which, as you can expect, after
25 hearing the story, might have been the reason we

1 never receive any work from that casino.

2 Our work in the early days consisted
3 of cleaning in some form or another, but that soon
4 morphed into all kinds of jobs. For example, a few
5 weeks after the opening in September of 2010, we
6 lost electricity in half of the building. I woke up
7 around 11:00 p.m. and was made aware of this
8 problem. I was then asked could I get to the
9 Grainger Warehouse in Robbinsville, New Jersey, as
10 soon as possible.

11 I made it there in 45 minutes. The
12 warehouse sat in an Industrial Park and had to be
13 two football fields long. So, I'm sitting in this
14 huge parking lot in the middle of the night, and the
15 only car in the lot, and after about ten minutes
16 this man came out of the entrance with the smallest
17 brown bag I've probably ever seen. This bag
18 contained one fuse. I laughed at the guy, and he
19 asked me what I was laughing at. And I said, I just
20 broke numerous traffic laws to get to this gigantic
21 building and then sitting in this humongous parking
22 lot, all the while half the electricity is out at
23 our casino, and you come out with this bag? He
24 didn't get my humor, but we did get everything back
25 online by 1:00 a.m.

1 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
2 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
3 FOLLOWS:

4 ---

5 MR. ALVAREZ: I just want it to be
6 clear this is for the opposing party.

7 PRESIDING OFFICER: Excuse me?

8 MR. ALVAREZ: This is for the opposing
9 party. This is both for and against the -.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

11 You are not an employee of the -?

12 MR. ALVAREZ: I used to be.

13 PRESIDING OFFICER: Used to be?

14 MR. ALVAREZ: Yes.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

16 Speak your mind.

17 MR. ALVAREZ: So my name is Anthony
18 Alvarez. I am here because, ultimately, I care
19 about my city, the City of -.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

21 I'm sorry. I just learned our court
22 reporter needs a restroom break, so we're going to
23 take a short break.

24 ---

25 (WHEREUPON, A SHORT BREAK WAS TAKEN.)

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PRESIDING OFFICER: I return to Mr. Alvarez, now that our court reporter is back with us.

MR. ALVAREZ: Thank you so much. We're good?

PRESIDING OFFICER: We are good. We are good now.

MR. ALVAREZ: All right. So all the things that I could do today, I thought that this was one of the most important. The reason for this being because I very much care about my city. I very much care about the City of Philadelphia and the issues that come with the City, such as drug issues, addiction issues, whatever the case may be.

I grew up in one of the worst neighborhoods, Kensington. I became employed as a Security Officer for the overnight shift for Rivers Casino. I believe my start date was December - excuse me, December 21st of 2021. I was at Rivers Casino I believe for a month. What I saw at Rivers was beyond disorder. It was chaos. It was not what someone that put their everything into a business would want for it to happen.

How I found out about this event, I

1 was just reading the newspaper one day and - about
2 two weeks ago, and I saw that in 2016 there were -
3 Rivers got fined four different times for ten grand
4 for allowing minors to come into the casino. Well,
5 I can tell you of one particular situation on my
6 very, very first day out of orientation, on the
7 floor, because Rivers had a restaurant, Hugo's, that
8 had no security, no connection between the
9 restaurant and the main casino. On my very first
10 task, which was a CRU run, there was a child,
11 probably 11, 12 years old, at a slot machine with
12 their mother, I assumed, but at that time, literally
13 because we were doing a CRU run, no one could attend
14 to that child. Right?

15 Later on, maybe about like two weeks
16 later during the overnight shift there was a man who
17 broke into Hugo's and started serving himself a
18 drink. This is because he was not - or excuse me,
19 because Security was not supervising the area nor
20 was Surveillance.

21 Also while I was there, there were
22 issues that I had tried to speak on, but I was only
23 limited to because I'm only a new employee, but I'm
24 like, what I'm seeing is not okay. I saw EPS
25 Workers, Security Officers and a few of the Guest

1 Services employees use the gender neutral bathroom
2 as a bathhouse. It was literally, literally a
3 meet-up area for these individuals to get together
4 and do inappropriate acts instead of actually being
5 on their jobs.

6 There were several times where
7 overnight people would be coming in drunk, smelling
8 of alcohol, and they would also be leaving the
9 building to go out to their cars, smoking weed, and
10 then coming back and ranking of weed, literally
11 smelling like skunk, but these are the individuals
12 that were supposed to keep children out of the
13 casino, keep the place safe, you know, and such, you
14 know.

15 I very much care about the City, but
16 what I do not want to ever, ever see is any child
17 become an alcoholic because somebody can't check the
18 ID properly or, you know, because there's free
19 alcohol in the casino, or anyone become ill or get a
20 disease that they can because they're somewhere
21 doing something that they should not. You know what
22 I mean?

23 I just personally feel that what I saw
24 - I get that, you know, this is a business. The
25 point is to, you know, do the best that we possibly

1 can, you know, in a business and to, you know, have
2 it grow and serve the community in the best way
3 possible, but what I see in this video, what I hear
4 in orientation is not what I saw on the overnight
5 shift.

6 And to just push further the idea of
7 what cover-ups are, right, I personally went -. I
8 came in so professionally in my job that I was
9 actually given the opportunity by the Assistant
10 Director himself to become a Dispatcher rather than
11 a regular Security Officer. I was called a racial
12 and homophobic name by a Security Officer because
13 two Security Officers wanted to act inappropriately
14 on the phone. And then when I informed the
15 Assistant Director of this, the Assistant Director's
16 reaction - now, mind you, this is the Assistant
17 Director of Security.

18 His reaction was, oh, you know, how do
19 you know he was talking about you? I was watching
20 the cameras. I know he was there. He's cool. He's
21 been working over three years. That's my boy, don't
22 worry about him. I'm like, what, this dude just
23 called me a homophobic name and racist name. Like
24 how am I not supposed to take this to HR. Right?

25 So, it's like for me, I get that

1 Rivers employs many individuals. I get, you know,
2 that Rivers is the first casino on the scene in
3 Philadelphia, but however, ultimately, as a human
4 being, if you care about your community, if you care
5 about your young ones, right, ultimately you have to
6 think about are we saving lives or are we destroying
7 lives by allowing casinos to stay open that is -
8 that can't even secure their own personnel?

9 That's all I have to say. Thank you.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER: Thank you.

11 James Cartwright, your name is on the
12 list.

13 Are you prepared or is this a
14 surprise?

15 MR. CARTWRIGHT: No, I'm prepared.
16 I'm prepared.

17 ---

18 JAMES CARTWRIGHT,
19 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
20 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
21 FOLLOWS:

22 ---

23 MR. CARTWRIGHT: Good afternoon,
24 Honorable Chairperson and Board members. My name is
25 James Cartwright. That's C-A-R-T-W-R-I-G-H-T. And

1 please, no Bonanza jokes. As a lifelong
2 Philadelphian, I'm proud to stand before you today
3 as the Director of Information Technology and the
4 longest-serving team member at Rivers Casino in
5 Philadelphia.

6 When the Pennsylvania legislature
7 passed and then Governor Rendell signed the Gaming
8 Act in 2004, I knew that the move would be good for
9 Pennsylvania in general and Philadelphia
10 specifically. It was hoped that tax dollars would
11 be generated. It was hoped that well-paying jobs
12 would benefit and be created. It was hoped that the
13 surrounding communities would develop and grow.
14 Well, honorable Gaming Board members, I am here to
15 tell you that hope has been realized. Rivers Casino
16 of Philadelphia has delivered on that vision, over
17 and above, some 18 years ago.

18 The Rush Street Gaming team has
19 delivered to the citizens of Pennsylvania and the
20 City and County of Philadelphia quality gaming and
21 entertainment property, a property that I can say
22 without fear of contradiction has earned its license
23 renewal.

24 I was hired as a part of the Rivers
25 team in late 2009. There was no building as you see

1 it today. There was only a massive piece of land
2 once owned by the Jack Frost Sugar factory. Our
3 temporary offices was located across Delaware
4 Avenue, on the 8th Floor of the 1080 Building. Each
5 day I literally watch hundreds of construction
6 workers build the structure that would fulfill the
7 vision outlined in the Gaming Act. New tax dollars
8 will be created. New jobs and community development
9 will result from the City's first casino.

10 What I didn't know was that Rivers
11 Casino was going to build a culture that I still
12 enjoy coming to work some 13 years later. I
13 remember when I received a phone call. I was
14 driving on Walnut Street. It was December 2009 when
15 I got the call to join the Rivers team. I was very
16 excited in that moment. As you all know, in 2008,
17 the economy - the economy dropped out. I actually
18 worked for the City in this very building. A lot of
19 us was let go. And Rivers - the SugarHouse was the
20 only place hiring in 2009. And I was excited to
21 receive that phone call. And for the next 13 years
22 I've been excited every day to be a part of the
23 Rivers' team.

24 I went off script there a little bit.
25 So Madam Chairperson, the Rush Street organization

1 and the Rivers Philadelphia team has worked hard and
2 dedicated its efforts to provide a quality, safe
3 gaming facility for the citizens of Pennsylvania.
4 So, I implore you to reward those efforts with a
5 vote in the affirmative to renew Rivers Casino
6 Philadelphia's license to operate in the great State
7 of Pennsylvania, in this great City of Brotherly
8 Love. Thank you.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER: And Mr. Donnelly
10 informed me that Jerry Johnson is not here, Mr.
11 Donnelly? Okay. So, then I think the next one is
12 Maria Castillo.

13

14

MARIA CASTILLO,

15 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
16 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
17 FOLLOWS:

18

19

20 MS. CASTILLO: Hello. My name is
21 Maria Castillo. I have been a Rivers Casino team
22 member since 2017. I applied to work at Rivers
23 Casino because my friend works here and said that it
24 was a great place, where you were treated well. I
25 had never worked at a casino before. It sounded
like something different and fun. I worked in the

1 EVS Department for about one year. I learned a new
2 set of skills, procedures and how to work as a team.

3 During this time my income grew and I
4 was able to support my family better. However, I
5 was working two jobs. I was looking to work one
6 job, but I didn't want to leave Rivers. My manager
7 told me about free Dealer School Training Program.
8 I knew nothing about dealing or table games and I
9 was nervous going back to school. However, I knew
10 it was an opportunity to grow in my career, so I
11 signed up.

12 The teachers made it easy to learn the
13 skill and taught me the strategies I need to become
14 successful. I have been a Dealer for three years
15 now, and since then I've grown my skillset and I had
16 money to purchase my first home. Working at Rivers
17 has taught me we can all learn something new and
18 work as a team. I came here because I need a job.
19 I have stayed because it has become a career. I
20 love it. It has helped me make a better life for my
21 family.

22 It's true in some case, but in my case
23 specifically I came to Rivers because there have
24 been people over there, women and family, we need
25 like a job, we need to make money. We find our

1 careers. I have four children and I need to have
2 knowledge - I need to grow in my career. I think -
3 I need my income. So, while there I want to be over
4 there, and I want to learn more. Thank you.

5 PRESIDING OFFICER: Chantelle Parker?

6 ---

7 CHANTELLE PARKER,
8 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
9 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
10 FOLLOWS:

11 ---

12 MS. PARKER: Hello. My name's
13 Chantelle, C-H-A-N-T-E-L-L-E, P-A-R-K-E-R, and I am
14 an internal Staff Auditor at Rivers Casino. I've
15 been a team member at Rivers casino since July 2018.
16 Before coming to Rivers, I worked two different
17 customer service jobs. I had hit a ceiling of
18 growth at both of my places of business, so I was -
19 I got stuck. Even though there were many companies
20 in Philadelphia where I could apply, I chose Rivers
21 Casino, because I could see myself working in many
22 roles that they offered.

23 Starting off at Rivers, I started off
24 in Soft Account as a Soft Account Team Member. It
25 was just my way to get my foot in the door. I've

1 never been afraid of hard work, both physically and
2 mentally, and Soft Account kept me moving. I was
3 able to see how the casino functioned through that
4 department and how the departments worked together
5 and determined what my next steps would be from the
6 casino.

7 Denise, who was my Supervisor at the
8 time in Soft Account, was upfront and honest and
9 helped me and pushed me to grow out of that
10 department. She saw that I had something more in me
11 and encouraged me to apply for a promotion in
12 Revenue Audit, so I did. Her support meant
13 everything to me because it was something I wasn't
14 used to.

15 That's what Rivers does. You're given
16 all the tools you need to succeed and forge your own
17 path to success. Because of that support, I
18 continued to work hard, learn, and was able to
19 recently get promoted to the Internal Audit
20 Department as a Staff Internal Auditor.

21 I know I am appreciated for the work I
22 do and what my potential is. My job means something
23 to me now and to others. I'm not just pushing
24 paper. I'm helping advance myself and others in the
25 company while making a statement with the quality of

1 my work and fulfilling my long-term goals for
2 myself, which is to help others grow, just as Denise
3 did for me. Now I'm in a position where I gained
4 enough experience and knowledge to do this for
5 others. Four years to promotion and look at the
6 opportunity for growth Rivers has given me.

7 Rivers is a career, not just a job.
8 Even though I did go to college, what's been so
9 great about working at Rivers is being able to gain
10 field experience in a variety of different
11 departments. Rivers is a place you don't need
12 college experience to - a college degree to make the
13 best life, but they do become your family and your
14 friends. And that's needed also throughout your
15 career. Rivers taught me that if I can do it, I
16 know anyone else can.

17 To piggyback off of what Patty said, I
18 came for a job, but I stayed for a career. Thank
19 you.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER: John, I think that
21 was the end.

22 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: It was. I'd like
23 to move into evidence the PowerPoint presentation.
24 And I believe there's 20 letters that were submitted
25 by various community groups and were posted on the

1 website in support of the license renewal of Rivers.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER: And we'll mark it
3 as Rivers Philadelphia Exhibit Number 1.

4 ---

5 (Whereupon, Rivers Philadelphia Exhibit Number 1,
6 PowerPoint Presentation, was marked for
7 identification.)

8 ---

9 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Armstrong, any
10 objection?

11 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: No objection.

12 ---

13 (Whereupon, Rivers Philadelphia Exhibit Number 1,
14 PowerPoint Presentation, was admitted.)

15 ---

16 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: I would just like
17 to add I'd like to commend Rivers on their
18 presentation. It was one of the finer ones I've
19 ever seen. Thank you.

20 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Thank you.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

22 Well, with that we'll move to Mr.
23 Armstrong, if he has any questions for any of the
24 witnesses from Rivers at this point.

25 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: We do. Thomas

1 Monaghan is going to ask some questions on behalf of
2 OEC in regard to the presentation.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

4 And whoever can answer the question
5 just wants to stay at their seat and use the
6 microphone in front of them, it will cut down on the
7 shuffle over there.

8 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Thomas Monaghan,
9 M-O-N-A-G-H-A-N.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER: Tom, can you put
11 on your -.

12 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Thomas Monaghan,
13 M-O-N-A-G-H-A-N.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER: I'm in charge of
15 the starship. Okay. Go ahead.

16 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: All right.

17 Can I draw your attention to slide
18 number nine, please. Are there any plans at this
19 time to make a change in the size of the Gaming
20 Floor?

21 MR. MOORE: As far as square footage
22 or game count?

23 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Square footage,
24 the size of -.

25 MR. MOORE: There's no plans at this

1 time.

2 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Turning to slide
3 12, can you explain further what the \$6 million in
4 slot investment entails?

5 MR. MOORE: Yeah. So, that would be
6 slot units, just keeping ourselves relevant with the
7 latest and greatest technology that comes out. For
8 example, last year we spent about a million dollars
9 in slot revenue or slot capital for new games, and
10 then we plan to do about 1.2 million this year. So,
11 we were about 800 to a little over a million a year,
12 basically, in that slot reinvestment.

13 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Did the COVID-19
14 closures and layoffs in 2020 have any impact on
15 Rivers Philadelphia's ability to meet its initial
16 annual problem gambling training, including underage
17 gamblers, excluded individuals and slot patronage?

18 MS. CHAMBERS: No, there wasn't.

19 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Turn to slide 25
20 of the presentation, the Responsible Alcohol
21 Management Program. The list of employee positions
22 and departments that received RAMP training did not
23 include the Surveillance Department. Does the
24 Surveillance Department receive RAMP training?

25 MS. CHAMBERS: There are some

1 Surveillance Officers and members of that department
2 who have not received their RAMP training, but that
3 was due to them having it previously to being at our
4 casino.

5 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Moving to slide
6 28, you list approximately 1,128 team members.

7 Do you know how many of them are full
8 time versus part time?

9 MR. LEAR: We're about 85 to 90
10 percent full time.

11 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Staying on slide
12 28, 71 percent of your employees are Pennsylvania
13 residents. I assume that the 29 percent are from
14 the surrounding states, such as New Jersey and
15 Delaware?

16 MS. ROCCO: Yes.

17 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: Under the Gaming
18 Act there's a goal for 85 percent of slot machine
19 licensed table game employees to be Pennsylvania
20 residents.

21 Do you know what approximate
22 percentage of your table games employees are
23 Pennsylvania residents?

24 MS. ROCCO: I don't have that
25 information today, but we can get you that answer.

1 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: And are there any
2 set stands or policies for trying to recruit
3 specifically Pennsylvania residents, minorities and
4 women?

5 MS. ROCCO: I mean, sure. I mean,
6 that's our goal. That's why we have a lot of these
7 programs. I've worked with a lot of our partners.
8 We reach out to schools like Temple and Philadelphia
9 County College, but we, again, we use our own
10 workforce to recruit for us, which we've had
11 competition, so we do, yes.

12 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: And do you ever
13 conduct job fairs or job-recruiting events outside
14 of the State of Pennsylvania?

15 MS. ROCCO: We have. I mean, we have
16 - not since I've been there. Not to my
17 recollection. Most of them are done - we actually
18 just came from Citizens Bank Park last week, but
19 most of them are done in Philadelphia.

20 ATTORNEY MONAGHAN: I have no further
21 questions.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Donnelly, any
23 follow-up?

24 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: None. thank you.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER: Then I'll turn to

1 the Board members.

2 Chair Smyler, any questions?

3 CHAIR: I'd actually like to go last.

4 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay. She would
5 like to go last.

6 So, we'll start - Ms. Ralston, do you
7 have any questions?

8 MS. RALSTON: I think you were trying
9 to trick me with the mic. I had to make sure it was
10 on. No, no questions.

11 I would just like to commemorate
12 Rivers on the presentation. I thought it was very
13 thorough. Also, as a Philly native, I'm slightly
14 biased to just commending you on the community
15 outreach that you have done.

16 I think through the presentation it
17 was reflected, not only the diversity of your
18 employees, but also the partnerships that you guys
19 have done. I think that, you know, with the, you
20 know, economic growth that you guys have laid out
21 for us, that it's very important that, you know,
22 you're not only focused on the growth of your
23 corporation, but you're also - through the
24 presentation you show that you're also in tune with
25 what's going on in the surrounding communities.

1 And I think we've also heard from not
2 only employees working here but also from members
3 that live in the community of the impact that you
4 guys have had. So, I just wanted to commemorate you
5 on that.

6 MS. REGAN: I just wondered if any of
7 you have any comments regarding Mr. Alvarez's
8 critiques of your security?

9 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: No. Number one,
10 we don't comment on personnel matters.

11 Number two, I think - this is in
12 anticipation of litigation. I'm not going to
13 discuss it and I think it would be inappropriate to
14 discuss it in this forum.

15 MS. REGAN: And my other question,
16 regarding slide six, just personal interest, a
17 question, I guess, you mentioned archaeological
18 discoveries on the property.

19 MR. MOORE: A number of things
20 happened, but when they started digging on the
21 property some Revolutionary War items were found.
22 We thought that was - it turned out it was British
23 soldiers who were stationed at the property for some
24 time. So, they did find some property, some little
25 items like that, but nothing of great interest,

1 really, but again - where you have people and you
2 look to see what was on the property and so on, but
3 I found it interesting that the British soldiers
4 were camped there.

5 MS. REGAN: It's interesting. And
6 thank you. It was a great presentation.

7 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Thank you.

8 PRESIDING OFFICER: Commissioner
9 Dermody?

10 COMMISSIONER DERMODY: Thank you. I
11 just wanted to follow up a little on Mr. Alvarez's
12 testimony also.

13 I mean, can you tell us whether or not
14 he made a report that evening, if there was a
15 problem with the Security? Did he make you aware of
16 it?

17 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: What I understand
18 is Mr. Alvarez resigned his position and then had
19 communications post resignation.

20 COMMISSIONER DERMODY: Okay. Thank
21 you.

22 MS. MANZANO-DIAZ: In terms of the
23 supplier -. I'd like to know in terms of dollars
24 and cents, what are we talking about in terms of the
25 impact of that. So, in terms of the partners that

1 you have and supplier diversity, how much money are
2 we really talking about that you spend with them?
3 That would be important to know. Also a breakdown
4 of - when you say minority, do you mean Asian as
5 well, Latino? You know, a better - a more clear
6 breakdown of that would be helpful.

7 MR. LEAR: Sure, I can take that one.
8 So it's \$36 million since 2015.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER: Can you speak up?

10 MR. LEAR: I'm sorry. So, \$36 million
11 - minority and women-owned businesses in 2015.

12 COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry, I'm still
13 having trouble hearing.

14 MR. LEAR: \$36 million since 2015.
15 And it's minority and women-owned businesses. We
16 can get the breakdown between minority and
17 women-owned breakdown between minority segments
18 themselves. So, we have African-American, Hispanic
19 or Asian businesses.

20 MS. MANZANO-DIAZ: And you don't keep
21 track of it internally?

22 MR. LEAR: We do not. Actually - I
23 can get you the full number, actually, because I
24 don't have it.

25 MS. MANZANO-DIAZ: Okay. Thank you.

1 MR. LEAR: You're welcome.

2 PRESIDING OFFICER: And Mr. Donnelly,
3 if you want to compile your answers to any of the
4 questions and then send them to the Board clerk,
5 we'll distribute them to the Board members.

6 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Yes.

7 PRESIDING OFFICER: Now, Chair Smyler.

8 CHAIR: Just a brief follow-up on
9 minority business breakdown. I noticed that 20 are
10 part of non-construction standards for minority and
11 women.

12 What is the construction standard for
13 minorities and women?

14 MR. LEAR: I'm sorry. I'll have to
15 get that to you.

16 CHAIR: Okay. All right.

17 And what prompted you to install metal
18 detectors. I looked at some of the stack of police
19 activity. And it didn't seem like there were a lot
20 of guns found on the premises, so what was the -
21 what prompted you to implement that and install it?

22 MR. MOORE: Well, that was - we got a
23 lot of feedback from guests of safety in the areas,
24 perception of safety. We also - I saw another
25 property practicing that, and I felt that was a

1 great way - great presentation to say, come on, this
2 is safe, we care about you, we care about your
3 safety. We also found it to be a proactive measure.
4 So, if this is something that can deter a bad guy
5 from coming into the casino with a weapon, then it's
6 a hundred percent worth doing.

7 And the process the team put together
8 to make it as convenient for the guests as possible
9 is fantastic, and I'm very happy with having them on
10 the property. I think they have done tremendous
11 work for us in some cases. And a specific example
12 is they've done their job.

13 CHAIR: I think it's great. I just
14 didn't know if there was something in particular
15 that prompted you to do it. So, thanks.

16 As far as inclusion, I'm assuming that
17 this Director of Diversity will be working with your
18 team and other organizations to help minority
19 personnel.

20 And the Best of the Best, what do you
21 give your employees who get the Best of the Best
22 Award?

23 MS. ROCCO: So they get a cash award,
24 they get a parking spot. And then they get put into
25 - and the recognition itself, but then they get put

1 into a year-end program where that will be - as of
2 each quarter, and they will also be -.

3 MS. REGAN: Thank you. Parking spots
4 are very important. Thank you.

5 MS. ROCCO: They are. They are.

6 MS. REGAN: Thank you. That was a
7 great presentation. Thank you very much.

8 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Linda, may I ask a
9 question of -?

10 PRESIDING OFFICER: Yes.

11 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Because I know the
12 answer. Otherwise, I wouldn't ask it, but Justin,
13 how - in response to the question from the Chair,
14 how has the public responded to the detectors?

15 MR. MOORE: It's been positive, though
16 we do have an occasional - an extra step to get into
17 your casino. We do have some of the smokers because
18 right now, at the moment, we do not offer smoking
19 inside the casino. So, some of the smokers have to
20 leave and then come back through. So, that's a
21 negative, but overall, I'd say about 80 percent of
22 the remarks I get on the detectors have been
23 positive.

24 CHAIR: And this is of Chireen -.
25 Have you always had a no smoking

1 policy or has that just been since COVID? And have
2 you noticed any difference in the earnings?

3 MR. MOORE: So the policy currently is
4 as a side effect of COVID. And we also were
5 monitoring cases in the City and we felt, at the
6 time, when we were going with masks on, masks off,
7 and masks back - you know, it just -.
8 Operationally, we felt as though it was for the best
9 interests of our - of the team members and guests
10 and their health at the time. So, we are still a
11 non-smoking casino. And we - that's not to say that
12 that is a permanent measure. It's just currently
13 that's where we're at.

14 CHAIR: So you anticipate that you
15 might be going back to allowing smoking in some
16 portion of the casino?

17 MR. MOORE: We're going to let the
18 pandemic dictate that at the moment.

19 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

20 I don't think we have any other
21 questions from our Commissioners.

22 Any follow-up, John?

23 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: No. Thank you
24 very much for this late hour, and I appreciate your
25 attention.

1 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

2 Well, we are not finished yet. We are
3 now going to turn to our OEC for their presentation.

4 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: Thank you,
5 Director Lloyd, Chair and Commissioners. The OEC
6 and Rivers Casino Philadelphia have entered into the
7 following stipulations concerning Rivers Casino
8 Philadelphia's application for renewal of its
9 license, which I have provided to you as Exhibits 1
10 through 8.

11 The Pennsylvania State Police have
12 provided the OEC with SRS Summary Reports for the
13 time period of July 15th through March 22nd, 2022,
14 addressing incidents at Rivers Casino Philadelphia
15 since its Category 2 Slot Machine License was last
16 renewed. The SRS Summary Reports are OEC Exhibit 1.

17 ---

18 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 1, Summary Reports, was
19 marked for identification.)

20 ---

21 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: On March 25th,
22 2022, the Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement
23 issued a letter to OEC stating that there are six
24 Incident Reports written for Rivers Casino
25 Philadelphia but no citations and/or adjudications

1 were issued against Rivers Casino Philadelphia since
2 its Category 2 License was last renewed.

3 The Bureau of Liquor Control
4 Enforcement Letter is OEC Exhibit 2.

5 ---

6 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 2, Liquor Control
7 Enforcement Letter, was marked for
8 identification.)

9 ---

10 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: On April 1st of
11 2022 the Board's Office of Compulsive and Problem
12 Gambling issued a memorandum to OEC attesting that
13 Rivers Casino Philadelphia is in compliance with its
14 Compulsive and Problem Gambling plans and is meeting
15 the requirements under the Gaming Act and the
16 Board's regulations as they pertain to this plan.

17 The memorandum is OEC Exhibit 3.

18 ---

19 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 3, Memorandum, was marked
20 for identification.)

21 ---

22 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: On March 25th,
23 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue, Bureau
24 of Compliance, issued a letter to OEC attesting that
25 Rivers Casino Philadelphia is in compliance and is

1 in good standing with the Pennsylvania Department of
2 Revenue.

3 The Department of Revenue, Bureau of
4 Compliance letter, is OEC Exhibit 4.

5 ---

6 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 4, Bureau of Revenue
7 Letter, was marked for identification.)

8 ---

9 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: OEC Exhibits 5, 6
10 and 7 are Consent Agreements, Compliance Memorandums
11 and Warning Letters respectively, which are not
12 before you today but are accessible through an
13 access link provided to the parties and Board
14 members.

15 ---

16 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 5, Consent Agreements,
17 was marked for identification.)

18 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 6, Compliance
19 Memorandums, was marked for identification.)

20 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 7, Warning Letters and
21 Responses, was marked for identification.)

22 ---

23 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: OEC and Rivers
24 Casino Philadelphia have entered into 18
25 Board-approved Consent Agreements since the time of

1 Rivers Casino Philadelphia's last renewal. Copies
2 of the Board-approved Consent Agreements are
3 included in OEC's evidence as OEC Exhibit 5 and
4 accessible through the access link.

5 OEC conducted 20 compliance
6 conferences at Rivers Casino Philadelphia's facility
7 since the time of its last renewal. The Compliance
8 Memorandums are OEC Exhibit 6 and are accessible
9 through the link. OEC would ask that OEC Exhibit 6
10 be kept confidential.

11 OEC has issued Rivers Casino
12 Philadelphia 105 warning letters since the time of
13 its last renewal for various violations of the Act
14 and Board regulations. Rivers Casino Philadelphia
15 has appropriately responded to each of these warning
16 letters issued by OEC. Copies of the warning
17 letters and Rivers Casino Philadelphia's responses
18 are OEC Exhibit 7 and accessible through the access
19 link. OEC would ask that OEC Exhibit 7 be kept
20 confidential.

21 ---

22 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 8, Stipulation, was
23 marked for identification.)

24 ---

25 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: Finally, OEC

1 Exhibit 8 is the Stipulations Agreement executed by
2 the parties on April 20th, 2022. OEC requests that
3 Exhibits 1 through 8 be admitted into the record,
4 with the additional request that OEC Exhibits 6 and
5 7 be kept confidential.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Donnelly, any
7 objection?

8 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: None. Thank you.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER: And we'll enter
10 those exhibits, 1 through 8, with Exhibits 6 and 7
11 remaining confidential at this time.

12 ---

13 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 1, Summary Reports, was
14 admitted.)

15 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 2, Liquor Control
16 Enforcement Letter, was admitted.)

17 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 3, Memorandum, was
18 admitted.)

19 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 4, Bureau of Revenue
20 Letter, was admitted.)

21 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 5, Consent Agreements,
22 was admitted.)

23 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 6, Compliance
24 Memorandums, was admitted.)

25 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 7, Warning Letters and

1 Responses, was admitted.)
2 (Whereupon, OEC Exhibit 8, Stipulation, was
3 admitted.)

4 ---

5 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: Thank you.

6 OEC also intends to offer the
7 testimony of three witnesses who are - I'm sorry.

8 PRESIDING OFFICER: Go ahead.

9 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: OEC also intends
10 to offer the testimony of three witnesses who are
11 with the Pennsylvania State Police, the Board's
12 Bureau of Casino Compliance, and the Board's Bureau
13 of Investigations and Enforcement (BIE). With your
14 permission, Director Lloyd, I'll call my first
15 witness.

16 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Armstrong, I
17 do have one question. The warning letters - you
18 said there were warning letters and responses from
19 Rivers, but some of the warning letters did not
20 require a response.

21 Is that correct?

22 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: That happens
23 sometimes.

24 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

25 I just wanted to make sure I was

1 reading it correctly. Thank you. And you may call
2 your first witness.

3 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: Thank you. OEC
4 would like to call Sergeant Lacy Roane.

5 As a matter of housekeeping, Director
6 Lloyd, I don't know if our three witnesses have been
7 properly sworn in. Some of them stood up and - the
8 Trooper is a witness.

9 TROOPER ROANE: I totally did.

10 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: Oh, you did.

11 PRESIDING OFFICER: If you are an OEC
12 witness and have not been sworn, let us know before
13 you start and we'll get you sworn. Thank you.

14 ---

15 SERGEANT LACY ROANE,
16 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
17 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
18 FOLLOWS:

19 ---

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 ---

22 BY ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG:

23 Q. Sergeant Roane, can you state your name
24 and spell it for the record?

25 A. Lacy Roane, L-A-C-Y, R-O-A-N-E.

1 Q. And how long have you been employed by
2 the Pennsylvania State Police?

3 A. I've been employed for 11 years as of May
4 2022.

5 Q. And what is your current assignment and
6 how long have you been in that assignment?

7 A. My current role is the Office Commander
8 of Rivers Casino Philadelphia. I've been assigned
9 this location since July 11th of 2020.

10 Q. Can you briefly describe your duties?

11 A. My current duties are to manage the
12 day-to-day activities for the Pennsylvania State
13 Police within Rivers Casino Philadelphia. This
14 entails keeping a working relationship with the
15 employees of the Rivers Casino as well as to help
16 law enforcement.

17 Q. Can you briefly describe the role between
18 the State Police and Rivers Casino Philadelphia?

19 A. The role of the Pennsylvania State Police
20 within the casino is to investigate criminal
21 activity as well as enforce the laws of the
22 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, i.e., Titles 1875,
23 Title 4. Additionally, we try to keep a positive,
24 professional relationship with patrons and employees
25 in the corporate system.

1 Q. And in regard to jurisdiction, what law
2 enforcement agency has primary police jurisdiction
3 over Rivers Casino Philadelphia and its parking lot?

4 A. The Pennsylvania State Police are
5 responsible for the Gaming Floor and employee area
6 outside of the casino floors. The Philadelphia
7 Police Department are responsible for the parking
8 lots, the garages and the exterior of the casino and
9 non-gaming areas within the casino.

10 Q. Can you briefly describe the working
11 relationship the Pennsylvania State Police personnel
12 have with the Philadelphia Police assigned to cover
13 Rivers Casino Philadelphia?

14 A. The relationship between the State Police
15 and the Philadelphia Police Department is very
16 cooperative. It's professional and built on mutual
17 respect. We strive to work together and assist one
18 another as needed in any incident or investigation.

19 Q. Can you briefly describe the working
20 relationship the Pennsylvania State Police personnel
21 have with Rivers Casino Philadelphia personnel,
22 particularly its Security and Surveillance
23 Departments?

24 A. The relationship is professional in
25 whatever respect. Security and Surveillance work

1 together and were accepting of our members. The
2 relationship between the Directors and the Security
3 Director and myself is one of open communication and
4 professionalism.

5 Q. And can you briefly describe the working
6 relationship Pennsylvania State Police personnel
7 have with personnel for casino compliance that are
8 assigned to Rivers Casino Philadelphia?

9 A. Well, the working relationship - well,
10 one is actually responsible for the regulatory and
11 another for the investigative, slash, criminal
12 enforcement. We work together in a cooperating
13 effort. We have our regulations - it allows for our
14 relationship to be very professional and mutual
15 respect.

16 Q. Turning to the SRS Summary Report, are
17 you familiar with the SRS Summary Report?

18 A. Yes, I am.

19 Q. What is SRS an acronym for?

20 A. It's the Summary Reporting System.

21 Q. Can you briefly describe the Summary
22 Reporting System?

23 A. The SRS collects monthly reported crime
24 statistics from participating law-enforcement
25 agencies. The agencies participate on a voluntary

1 basis as part of a Federal Bureau of Investigations
2 Uniform Crime Reporting System.

3 Q. Which agency compiles the information
4 contained in the SRS Summary Report System?

5 A. The FBI compiles and publishes the UCR
6 data annually across the United States, but then in
7 Pennsylvania each law-enforcement agency is
8 responsible for entering their information into the
9 UCR system. They compile it for the State of
10 Pennsylvania.

11 Q. Is it in an electronic format?

12 A. Yes, it is.

13 Q. Is the SRS Summary Report System
14 available to the public on the Pennsylvania State
15 Police website?

16 A. Yes, it is. You can navigate to it
17 directly from our State Police website, pa - I'm
18 sorry, psp.pa.gov. And the site can also be
19 accessed from the ucr.pa.gov/paucrgov.

20 Q. And how frequently is the information
21 updated?

22 A. The information is updated monthly with
23 information from the month prior.

24 Q. Is the information contained in the
25 database subject to edit?

1 A. With the introduction of our NIBRS
2 system, the information will be updated
3 automatically from our record management system.

4 Q. Under what circumstances?

5 A. As the status of a case changes, cases
6 are closed or communicated, a subject turns to an
7 accused, that information becomes readily available.

8 Q. What information is contained in the SRS
9 Summary Reporting System?

10 A. NIBRS and UCRs, they capture details on
11 each single crime of an incident, as well as
12 separate offenses within the same incident. This
13 would include information on victim, offenders or
14 the relationship between the two, as well as age,
15 sex, race, ethnicity of victim or offender. During
16 the incidents that involve theft or property damage,
17 it will also capture money lost and recovered. The
18 NIBRS data is much more detailed in comparison to
19 the previous UCR data captured.

20 Q. Before you are documents, which we also,
21 of course, intend to offer into evidence in this
22 matter.

23 Can you identify for the record OEC
24 Exhibit 1?

25 A. This would be the data compiled from the

1 NIBRS UCR system from July 2015 through March of
2 2022 for each individual year or partial year for
3 Rivers Casino Philadelphia. I obtained these
4 reports at the request of the OEC. The SRS Summary
5 Report for 2021 was not available. In its place is
6 a copy of the annual standard report from 2021. The
7 Pennsylvania State Police submits this report, as I
8 said, each year. It includes the same statistics as
9 the SRS Summary Report for 2021 -.

10 Q. Are criminal offenses that occurred at
11 the Rivers Casino Philadelphia listed in the SRS
12 Summary Reports?

13 A. Yes, they are.

14 Q. And how are the offenses that occurred at
15 a licensed Pennsylvania casino entered into the SRS
16 Summary Report System?

17 A. Prior to January of 2021, the process
18 would be that a State Police trained member on the
19 UCR system would compile the statistics from the
20 incidents within the casino. That person would
21 enter the data at the beginning of each month for
22 the month prior.

23 Currently, the process, there would be
24 more information automatically uploaded to NIBRS
25 from our RMS system, our Records Management System,

1 into our NIBRS unit. Unfortunately, we are still in
2 the process of compiling data for processing to be
3 finalized. This information is still being
4 captured, but the entry of each - all the
5 information, which is in our department - each
6 office or station is responsible for weekly audits
7 of the NIBRS system to ensure that the appropriate
8 information is being captured.

9 Q. Does the SRS Summary Report System list
10 the numbers of actual offenses that are prosecuted?

11 A. The SRS Summary Report System lists the
12 offenses investigated and prosecuted.

13 Q. What are the most common criminal
14 offenses at Rivers Casino Philadelphia, based on the
15 reports?

16 A. Theft and trespassing.

17 Q. Can you give us an example of one of the
18 offenses?

19 A. A theft - a victim walked outside from
20 his Baccarat table to have a cigarette. When he
21 returned a short time later, he discovered that four
22 of his black chips totaling \$500 were missing. It
23 was determined that an unknown male had taken the
24 chips and left the casino.

25 Q. Do the Pennsylvania State Police have any

1 theories or an explanation as to why Rivers Casino
2 Philadelphia experienced more incidents of theft or
3 trespass than other events?

4 A. I think it's likely because of the
5 patrons - those patrons that would be considered
6 criminals, they're criminals of opportunity. So, in
7 their normal lives they may not attempt to do
8 something of this nature, but being in a casino
9 atmosphere, sometimes it's a little bit more
10 tempting when something's right in front of your
11 face.

12 They wouldn't normally do it, but some
13 bad people or a bad situation makes a person do a
14 little bit more dangerous thing they wouldn't
15 normally do.

16 In reference to the trespassing, I think
17 it's just people still like to gamble and they're
18 willing to try and see if they can get in.

19 Q. Since 2017, when the highest number of
20 reported incidents of theft occurred, has there been
21 a decrease in theft incidents at Rivers Casino
22 Philadelphia?

23 A. Yes, there has.

24 Q. Is this reduction in theft attributable
25 to normal incident records filed at the Pennsylvania

1 State Police?

2 A. The reduction, I believe, is a joint
3 effort between the State Police, as well as efforts
4 from the casino personnel. It is also attributed to
5 the pandemic and the restrictions reducing the
6 number of patrons in some of the places.

7 Q. Are there a significant number of violent
8 crimes at Rivers Philadelphia?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Are there a significant number of crimes
11 regarding individuals under the age of 21?

12 A. Not that I'm aware.

13 Q. Has there been a noticeable increase of
14 any specific crimes between July 2015 and the
15 present?

16 A. Not to my knowledge.

17 Q. After reviewing the SRS Summary Reports
18 for Rivers Casino Philadelphia, do you see a pattern
19 for the type of actual offenses that have occurred
20 at the licensed facility?

21 A. The only pattern that I've seen is that
22 someone, if they were evicted for theft or a
23 cheating incident, they will go back, they're repeat
24 offenders, but returning - attempting to return to
25 the property -. And if they do, they will more

1 likely be a person that will likely commit some sort
2 of offense.

3 Q. Generally are the Pennsylvania State
4 Police satisfied with the level of cooperation
5 between the staff at Rivers Casino Philadelphia and
6 the Troopers stationed within the facility?

7 A. We are satisfied with the cooperation,
8 communication and assistance we receive from all
9 employees within Rivers Casino Philadelphia on the
10 whole.

11 Q. Are there any issues or concerns that you
12 think would negatively impact the suitability of
13 Rivers Casino Philadelphia at this time?

14 A. Not impact, no.

15 Q. Thank you, Sergeant. I have no further
16 questions.

17 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Donnelly, any
18 questions?

19 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: I have none.
20 Thank you.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER: Any of our Board
22 members? Mr. Armstrong?

23 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: The next, OEC
24 would like to call David Quinn.

25 Were you sworn in?

1 Creek. Everywhere I go changes names. Stayed there
2 until the end of December 2020 and then transferred
3 back to Rivers as the Supervisor -.

4 Q. And what are your duties and
5 responsibilities?

6 A. Main duties and responsibilities for the
7 Casino Compliance - Casino Compliance Supervisor is
8 to provide onsite supervision for the Casino
9 Compliance Representatives and the TFRs, the
10 Technical Field Reps, that are stationed at Rivers.

11 Q. Can you describe the role of Bureau of
12 Casino Compliance at a licensed Pennsylvania casino?

13 A. Sure.

14 Some of the duties that we perform, we
15 provide working relationships with law enforcement,
16 like the PSP and Philadelphia PD, when necessary,
17 casino property management and PGC staff assigned to
18 Rivers Philadelphia. We participate in surveillance
19 reviews in order to accomplish investigative needs
20 and maintain the security of gaming facilities. We
21 regulate activities of gaming and slot machines,
22 table games, sportsbook, cashier cage areas, count
23 rooms, any voucher-redemption kiosks or ticket
24 redemption kiosk areas. We investigate patron
25 complaints, unusual or suspicious activity on the

1 casino floor or other sensitive casino areas, which
2 include any kind of underage gaming. We monitor the
3 submissions of the Currency Transaction Reports,
4 CTRs, and Suspicious Activity Reports, SARs, to make
5 sure they're in compliance with Title 31. We
6 investigate and enforce State Exclusion and
7 Self-Exclusion lists when - especially when there's
8 violations. We enforce compliance with all PGCB
9 regulations, casino policies and casino internal
10 controls and supervise all record storage and
11 submissions.

12 Q. And can you describe the types of access
13 the Bureau of Casino Compliance has within Rivers
14 Casino Philadelphia in the - first the surveillance
15 room?

16 A. We have full access to the surveillance
17 room and all surveillance equipment.

18 Q. And the count room?

19 A. We have full access to the count room at
20 any time.

21 Q. The central control computer room?

22 A. Full access, when necessary. We also
23 have the ability to monitor that from our office via
24 surveillance.

25 Q. Can you describe your interaction with

1 the Department of Revenue?

2 A. We work or assist with them whenever
3 they're at property or to complete whatever they're
4 to complete.

5 Q. Are there any issues with the
6 connectivity regarding the central control computer
7 at Rivers Casino Philadelphia?

8 A. No, not that I'm aware of, not anything
9 that's out of the ordinary.

10 Q. Was there ever a need for emergency
11 access?

12 A. At times there could be, if there's like
13 an alarm response in a room or if any kind of
14 emergency repair might be necessary, but nothing
15 other than that, not on a regular basis.

16 Q. Does the Bureau of Casino Compliance
17 interact with Rivers Casino Philadelphia's patrons?

18 A. We do.

19 Q. Do you respond to complaints?

20 A. We do. We're required to investigate any
21 complaint made by a patron, whether it's in person
22 or made online or via phone. Sometimes they'll call
23 Harrisburg or they'll email Harrisburg directly and
24 we'll handle whatever might be sent to us.

25 Q. Does the Bureau of Casino Compliance

1 conduct self-exclusion intakes?

2 A. Not currently in person due to COVID.
3 Back in 2020 they ceased that for the safety of
4 everybody, but we can and do provide information to
5 any patron that requests it regarding
6 self-exclusion. And if it was absolutely necessary,
7 if something was set up prior, we can probably
8 assist them in person at the property. Just
9 normally that doesn't take place at the property.

10 Q. And can you describe the relationship
11 between the Bureau of Casino Compliance and the
12 Pennsylvania State Police?

13 A. I'd say it's a very good relationship.
14 We work basically out of the same office. We have
15 daily contact. We rely on them for documents for
16 our reports and things of that nature.

17 Q. Can you describe the relationship between
18 the Bureau of Casino Compliance and Rivers Casino
19 Philadelphia?

20 A. I think it's good. I've worked directly
21 with Chireen. Recently it's been very good. I
22 think everybody gets along pretty well and pretty
23 professional.

24 Q. And has Rivers' staff been cooperative in
25 compliance reviews conducted by the Bureau of Casino

1 Compliance?

2 A. Yes. I have no issue with the way they
3 provide requests that we have, documents or anything
4 of that nature. They're timely in their providing
5 the documents.

6 Q. Are the regulatory issues at Rivers
7 Casino Philadelphia comparable to the regulatory
8 issues found at other Pennsylvania casinos?

9 A. Yeah. Most instances of those - the
10 three places that I've worked at, including Rivers,
11 I would say they're very similar to the issues that
12 are at other places.

13 Q. And do you know of any issues or concerns
14 that would negatively impact Rivers Casino
15 Philadelphia's suitability for continued licensure?

16 A. I do not.

17 Q. Thank you. I have no further questions.

18 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Donnelly, any
19 questions?

20 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: No questions.

21 Thank you.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER: Board members?

23 Seeing no questions, your next
24 witness, Mr. Armstrong?

25 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: OEC would like to

1 call Jessica Williams.

2 ---

3 JESSICA WILLIAMS,
4 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
5 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
6 FOLLOWS:

7 ---

8 DIRECT EXAMINATION

9 ---

10 BY ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG:

11 Q. And for the record, would you please
12 state and spell your name?

13 A. Jessica Williams, J-E-S-S-I-C-A,
14 W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.

15 Q. And with whom are you employed, Ms.
16 Williams?

17 A. I'm an Investigator with the Pennsylvania
18 Gaming Control Board, BIE, and -.

19 COURT REPORTER: Can you speak up,
20 please?

21 BY ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG:

22 Q. What's your current title, Ms. Williams?

23 A. An Investigator with the Pennsylvania
24 Gaming Control Board, BIE. I am currently the case
25 agent assigned to Rivers Casino Philadelphia.

1 Q. And for how long have you been in that
2 position or positions?

3 A. I began working for BIE in July 2021, and
4 I was promoted to Case Agent in November 2021 for
5 Rivers Casino.

6 Q. What are your responsibilities as an
7 Investigator in the BIE?

8 A. I do the financial background
9 investigations of individuals and/or companies who
10 wish to conduct business with or participate in
11 gaming activities in the Commonwealth of
12 Pennsylvania. I'm also responsible for conducting
13 investigations pertaining to potential regulatory
14 violations at Rivers Casino Philadelphia.

15 Q. In your professional capacity, have you
16 been deeply involved in the investigation of Rivers
17 Casino Philadelphia's Renewal Application?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. When did the BIE begin its renewal
20 investigation of Rivers Casino Philadelphia?

21 A. The investigation began in March - on
22 March 5th, 2021, when it was originally assigned to
23 another Case Agent, who has since retired. The
24 investigation was then reassigned to me on
25 December 7th, 2021 and has been ongoing since.

1 Q. Can you describe the scope of the
2 investigation?

3 A. After reviewing the Bureau policy for
4 renewal investigation, I review the applications and
5 send correspondence to the applicant, supporting
6 documentation relating to the investigation. This
7 includes extensive financial documentation, family
8 history, military history, criminal and/or civil
9 litigation and federal bankruptcy and lien
10 information. I also conduct numerous database
11 searches to verify the applicant's credit history,
12 criminal history, education and residence history,
13 travel history, PCGB regulatory enforcement actions,
14 special conditions, Gaming Licenses and federal and
15 state compliance.

16 I then arrange with the applicant to
17 conduct an interview, which includes a review of all
18 the requested documents, a review of the
19 application, supporting documents, to ensure all
20 information is complete and correct. Once the
21 investigation is complete, I prepare a Report of
22 Investigation.

23 Q. And did you review Renewal Applications
24 filed by Rivers Casino Philadelphia, its Principals,
25 principal entities and affiliates?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Does the investigation conduct a criminal
3 history, civil litigation history, tax clearances
4 and other checks?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Has the Rivers Casino Philadelphia
7 personnel been cooperative in the investigation?

8 A. Yes, they have all been cooperative.

9 Q. Is the investigation complete?

10 A. Yes, it is to date. However, monitoring
11 of the entity is an ongoing process.

12 Q. Did the BIE discover any areas of
13 interest in the course of the investigation?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Did the BIE discover any areas of concern
16 during the course of the investigation?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Did the BIE discover anything during the
19 course of the investigation that would preclude a
20 finding of suitability for the Rivers Casino
21 Philadelphia?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Thank you. I have no further questions.

24 A. Thank you.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Donnelly?

1 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: No questions.

2 Thank you.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER: Board members?

4 Mr. Armstrong?

5 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: That concludes
6 the OEC's presentation, Director.

7 PRESIDING OFFICER: And I think you've
8 already moved your exhibits into the record.

9 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: Yes, we have.

10 PRESIDING OFFICER: Then we'll move on
11 to the public comment portion. I think that we have
12 four very patient community group speakers with us
13 today.

14 If you haven't been sworn in, if you
15 could stand and raise your right hand. It's Marc
16 Collazzo, Erica Zaveloff, Souleymane Fall and Lynn
17 Strickler. I see two of the four names. Well,
18 we'll start with the two of you and we'll get him
19 when he comes in. If the court reporter could swear
20 these two.

21 ---

22 (WHEREUPON, WITNESSES WERE SWORN EN MASSE.)

23 ----

24 PRESIDING OFFICER: Erica Zaveloff.

25 ---

1 ERICA ZAVELOFF,
2 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
3 HAVING BEEN PREVIOUSLY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SSAID AS
4 FOLLOWS:

5 ---

6 MS. ZAVELOFF: That's the best I've
7 heard in a long time. My name is Erica Zaveloff,
8 E-R-I-C-A, Z-A-V-E-L-O-F-F. I am the Director of
9 Development and Communications for the Lutheran
10 Settlement House. We are a 120-year-old nonprofit
11 organization based in Fishtown, just a couple blocks
12 down from - I still want to call you SugarHouse, and
13 it's been how many years - from Rivers Casino.

14 I started with the organization in
15 2017 and have since been building a - really a
16 multi-tiered partnership with Emily and countless
17 volunteers at Rivers. They're really instrumental
18 in, I believe - in helping us fulfill our mission.
19 We serve almost 6,000 Philadelphia residents every
20 year through our bilingual domestic violence
21 program, food pantry, shelter for families
22 experiencing homelessness and a senior center.

23 We have volunteers regularly based off
24 our quarterly community meal and our food pantry.
25 They are one of our largest corporate sponsors of

1 our annual event, Powerful Together: A Fishtown
2 Feast, Tuesday, May 10th. You can find the link on
3 our website at Lutheransettlement.org.

4 Yeah, they are - they give us turkeys
5 during the holidays. Anything that we need to help
6 serve our clients, I can call Emily or anyone at
7 Rivers and they are there when I -. A big part of
8 my job is to build corporate partnerships that
9 support Lutheran Settlement House. And I often
10 think of the one that we have with Rivers as the
11 gold standard.

12 I've never had a corporate partner
13 where I can call and say, hey, do you have extra
14 hand sanitizer? We need jackets, I need money.
15 Anything that we need, Rivers is there for us, and
16 they're really one of our most important partners in
17 our work. Thank you.

18 PRESIDING OFFICER: Souleymane Fall.
19 And I - beautiful name, and I probably mispronounced
20 that as well.

21 MR. FALL: My name is Souleymane Fall,
22 Director of Employment Services. I've been with
23 Rivers since April 5th, 2005, at 7:45 a.m. It
24 happened to be a Tuesday morning. I only remember
25 because it was the independence of my country, so -.

1 There are three things that I want to make sure that
2 I talk about today when it comes to the
3 collaboration between my prestigious organization
4 and Rivers Casino.

5 The first one has to do with staffing.
6 A lot of people, especially young folks that want a
7 job -.

8 COURT REPORTER: Can you speak up,
9 please?

10 MR. FALL: Can you hear me?

11 COURT REPORTER: I'm having some
12 trouble hearing you. Speak into the microphone.

13 MR. FALL: My name is Souleymane Fall,
14 Director of Employment Services. It's spelled
15 S-O-U-L-E-Y-M-A-N-E. And I want - there's three
16 things that I want to talk about today when it comes
17 to the collaboration between DAES and Rivers Casino.

18 The first thing is talking about
19 staffing. We have a lot of folks, including
20 minorities and women. We talk about ABCs of
21 employment, a job leading to a better job that leads
22 to a career. And most jobs in Philadelphia and
23 around - most employees focus on the two, can you
24 find me a job, can you find me a better job?

25 One thing that we realize is Rivers

1 focuses on career pathway. This comes from a lot of
2 companies that we work with. And you hear a lot of
3 people that talked today, previous people, money was
4 not what it should be, talk about how they were
5 promoted, how they were given a chance, how they
6 were trained, how they were retained, and how they
7 were promoted.

8 And I think each one of us deserve a
9 chance to go to a job where you feel like you are a
10 member, you're making part of an impact on your
11 community, but also for your family.

12 And the second one I want to talk
13 about is volunteering. We have a lot of young folks
14 who need attention. And sometimes our funders would
15 not give us enough to provide what resources our
16 young folks need and also elderly people need.
17 Rivers has been instrumental in terms of
18 volunteering the staff time to talk about interview
19 skills, mock interviews, but also résumé review.
20 And I think it's valuable for us to recognize this
21 today.

22 Our last but not least one has to do
23 with donation. I've seen Emily, I've seen every one
24 over here, other folks that could not be in this
25 room for various reasons doing 30-hour turkey

1 drives, participated with them for our clients'
2 clothing, underwear, socks. You know, it's just
3 unbelievable.

4 And one thing that I want to remember,
5 during the COVID-19, when we come to Rivers, they do
6 donation. And we were working - to provide needs to
7 the population of Philadelphia who needed it. So, I
8 will never forget that.

9 And the last one I will say is, Rivers
10 is instrumental in terms of participating in terms
11 of our quarterly engagement meetings. Every quarter
12 DAES meets with different folks from Philadelphia
13 who are hiring and say, let's go where the market -
14 let's support our clients' needs, and Rivers always
15 participates. And also they donate. They donate
16 some - donate to our organizations.

17 So, I just want to say thank you, keep
18 what you're doing and make an impact to our
19 community, because one hand washes the other. Thank
20 you.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER: Thank you. Lynn
22 Strickler? I'm not sure I saw - then we'll move on
23 to Marc Collazzo.

24 Come on up, Marc. And I don't think
25 you were sworn in. Although some were sworn in

1 twice, you weren't sworn in, were you?

2 MR. COLLAZZO: I was not.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

4 We'll have the court reporter swear
5 you in.

6 ---

7 MARC COLLAZZO,
8 CALLED AS A WITNESS IN THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING, AND
9 HAVING FIRST BEEN DULY SWORN, TESTIFIED AND SAID AS
10 FOLLOWS:

11 ---

12 MR. COLLAZZO: Good afternoon,
13 everyone. My name is Marc Collazzo, M-A-R-C,
14 C-O-L-L-A-Z-Z-O. That's the Italian version of
15 Smith. I'm here on behalf of the Fishtown
16 Kensington Area Business Improvement District.

17 And to all those wonderful things that
18 you heard earlier about the growth of Fishtown and
19 everything that happened, honest to God, it brings
20 me back to something that I think is very important.
21 Because I have sort of a rare kind of view of the
22 casino from its inception to being a partner. I'm
23 going to get to that in a minute, because that's
24 exactly what they are.

25 Back when the casino was passed and

1 ultimately built, in my prior life I was Chief of
2 Staff for Commissioner Dermody's former colleague,
3 Representative John Taylor. And I remember - and
4 casinos come in - and that was when everybody was
5 trying to get a license. And one of the key things
6 was their commitment to not just community, but what
7 they would mean to the development of not just the
8 commercial corridor, but the birth, really, of
9 renaissance to our neighborhood.

10 Many of you who aren't from here don't
11 know what Fishtown was before its - I think I'll be
12 the third person to mention the Forbes article that
13 we've taken a lot of pride that we are the - now the
14 monitoring guide or national guide for urban
15 development. And that's for creativity, art or art
16 ingenuity and business commitment.

17 And what we saw with the casino, and
18 especially where you see it now, they became an
19 anchor that we could build upon. So, even though
20 our corridor kind of extends right from them back
21 into Fishtown on Frankford, all of a sudden, you had
22 a place where people came to eat, to celebrate, to
23 enjoy nightlife safely and have a place where they
24 can park.

25 Well, that begat our entertainment

1 district, which has The Fillmore Philadelphia. Now
2 we have Brooklyn Bowl, Other Half Brewery, coming
3 soon Five Iron Golf. And all of that now - all of
4 these attractions come from what these fine people
5 do.

6 And that can't be minimized of what
7 that means to a community. And one of the things
8 that - as I was watching all the videos, and I want
9 to criticize Emily because I wasn't in it - next
10 renewal, my hair will grow back, but in all
11 seriousness, when we talk about partners -. What a
12 business improvement district is, as I'm sure many
13 of you know, is property owners of businesses
14 partnering together to create a way to continue for
15 long-term growth, so that we're not the flash in the
16 pan now, but 10, 20, 30, 40 years we don't have the
17 best in nightlife, dining, residential. And these
18 folks walk it the way they talk it.

19 It's very easy, I've seen it a lot of
20 time in my local career and my community-development
21 career, that groups like them could easily write a
22 check or a lot of checks. And they are generous
23 with their checks. I know that. I will - I think
24 it's a wonderful thing. And that's it. Their
25 people get involved in making the lives of our

1 community better. There's three things I want to
2 share.

3 During the pandemic, when - you know,
4 during the holidays, especially, when there was
5 nowhere for anyone to go, but kids needed to see
6 Santa, Emily and I got on the phone and we created
7 our - which turned out to be miraculous to us, this
8 overwhelming success, this drive-through Winter
9 Wonderland, where families from - it turns out from
10 all over the region, not just Philly, came in their
11 cars. We closed the street in front of The
12 Fillmore. We had fake snow. We had Santa. I was
13 dressed as a tree.

14 It was beautiful, but what we got more
15 than anything was thank yous. And what I saw were
16 all of us standing together handing out hot
17 chocolate and coffee to what we counted over two
18 hours over 600 cars coming through. It worked so
19 well, we had leftover candy, we did it again the
20 next week.

21 But also the impact on jobs can't be
22 minimized. You know, at any time jobs are at a
23 premium. And in a way to create that for people
24 that need it, students that are growing into a need
25 for it, the casino responded. I do some work with

1 the Liguori Academy. Their name was mentioned in
2 the video. And a lot of kids now, they're not - you
3 went to college. That was just - you're on the
4 college track. Kids want to do things on their own
5 and want to create on their own. So, we, in
6 partnership with the casino, started a, quote,
7 unquote, hospitality school, which, in essence, was
8 these kids, 18 years old, of course, would have a
9 track to become - to learn how to be Dealers.

10 And they were kids who maybe weren't
11 going to go to school have a chance to make \$50,000
12 to \$60,000 a year. Lutheran Settlement House, for
13 all the people to be trained who are in need, they
14 partner with the casino to get them jobs.

15 I could go on and on, but I can tell
16 you that a healthy neighborhood economy - it takes a
17 lot of partners, but they're a major part of them
18 and I'm proud to call them friends, and I hope that
19 you'll approve their application. Thank you.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER: Thank you. I'm at
21 the end of my list of registered speakers.

22 Is there anyone out there that thought
23 they registered and I have not called your name?
24 Raise your hand. Seeing no hands, Mr. Donnelly, do
25 you have any further -?

1 ATTORNEY DONNELLY: Nothing further.
2 Thank you.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER: Mr. Armstrong?

4 ATTORNEY ARMSTRONG: We have nothing
5 further either.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER: Okay.

7 I have one or two more small items. I
8 turn my page. The record will remain open until the
9 Board hears this matter at a later public Board
10 meeting. A summary report of the events today will
11 - once prepared, will be given to all the Board
12 members, along with all the documents and transcript
13 of today's proceeding. And the Board, at its
14 convenience, will schedule the matter to be heard at
15 a future public Board meeting in Harrisburg.

16 I would like to thank the SEPTA Board
17 and Carol Looby and the IT staff - I'm not sure if
18 Matt's still up here - he's back there, for all
19 their help in allowing our Board to use this
20 beautiful room today and to hold our hearing. It
21 was a wonderful space. And I want to thank all of
22 you for coming today and for your cooperation, and
23 the hearing is now concluded and adjourned. Thank
24 you.

25 * * * HEARING CONCLUDED AT 5:12 P.M. * * *

CERTIFICATE

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I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings, hearing was held before Director, Presiding Officer Lloyd, was reported by me on April 26, 2022 and that I, Jennifer Corb, read this transcript, and that I attest that this transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceeding.

Dated the 17 day of June, 2022

Jennifer Corb

Jennifer Corb,
Court Reporter