



City of Methuen, Massachusetts

License Board

Office of the City Clerk
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Bryan Chase, Esq. *Chair*
Larry Giordano
Ana Camargo

MEETING MINUTES

METHUEN LICENSING BOARD
SEARLES BUILDING, 41 PLEASANT STREET
SECOND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM #208

Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting of the Methuen Licensing Board on February 11, 2026, 41 Pleasant Street, was called to order by Chairman Chase. Members present were Chairman Chase, Commissioner Camargo, Commissioner Giordano, and Commissioner Fisher.

Approval of the agenda for February 11, 2026. Commissioner Giordano motioned to approve the agenda for February 11, 2026. Commissioner Camargo seconded. All in favor.

Approval of the minutes of the January 14, 2026, licensing meeting. Commissioner Camargo motioned to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2026, licensing meeting. Commissioner Giordano seconded. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

An application has been submitted for a new Club, All Alcohol license from the American Legion Post 122 at 190 Broadway.

Cynthia Donahue, 28 Peaslee Terrace, Methuen stepped forward as Manager at the Post submitting for a new license. Commander Tom Hargraves, 226 Oakland Avenue stood up as Commander of Methuen Post 122. His wife, Barbara Hargraves stood up as well at 226 Oakland Avenue. Mr. Gordon Hollsworth, Senior Vice Commander of the Legion came forward from 54 Butternut Lane, Methuen. Mr. Hargrave stated he's there to support Ms. Donahue.

Ms. Donahue stated there was a failure of timely renewal for the past license and they're submitting to get their club back open. She stated they have been closed for over a month. Chairman Chase stated that his understanding is that for the year 2025 they received a renewal of their alcohol license from the city but not

from the state and that although the state did not renew the liquor license, they continued to operate. Ms. Donahue states that they got their alcohol license for 2026 and two weeks later were called and told their license was not active with the state and they should not be operating. They shut down the same day. The licensing clerk spoke to state their state license was not renewed with the state for the calendar year of 2025. Ms. Donahue stated that it was unknown to them and there was no way of them knowing that.

Chairman Chase stated that it is their responsibility as a licensee to be sure that their license is renewed with both the city and the State. Ms. Donahue stated that they did not receive an ABCC renewal to their mailing address in 2025 (this would not have been sent as they were listed with ABCC as non-renewing at the end of 2024). Chairman Chase asked if she understood that the license needs to be renewed at both the city level and the state level. She stated that she does know but didn't realize that they must keep putting in for a renewal with the ABCC yearly. Chairman Chase asked Ms. Donahue how long she's been the manager. She stated that since the last time she sent in the ABCC form in 2023 for the 2024 licensing year that was the last form she had that was handed to her when she took over as Manager.

Chairman Chase stated that she took over in 2023 and that she renewed with the state and the town for 2024 but that she didn't think she had to do that in 2025? She said it's because she wasn't given the form. She said the only reason she knew about it was when she was handed the form from the previous manager. She said it was never sent to them and that she said she had no idea that she had to. Chairman Chase asked her if she has ever had any responsibilities for renewing an alcohol license. She said no that she is new to the business and stated it is something that none of them knew about.

Mr. Hargraves stated that one of the issues is that any form may have been sent to the physical building address and it is not a location where they receive mail. He stated that they have a P.O. Box, listed on their documents. The Licensing Clerk stated that the P.O. Box is not listed on their city alcohol license application and that the street address is the only one that appears in their prior state and city alcohol licenses.

Chairman Chase stated that it is not the obligation of the state or the town to make sure they complete the steps. It's the licensee's obligation to make sure that their application is complete and followed through. If the ABCC does not contact a licensee, it does not mean that they can proceed and continue to serve alcohol. He stated that the fact their distributors continued to sell alcohol to them is shocking because they operated without a state license for a year, and that's an issue. He reiterated it was their responsibility and suggests that they might want to hire an attorney because of their lack of experience in the management of liquor licenses and they need assistance. He stated that this falls squarely on the licensee, not on the city, not on the state. The ABCC will not chase licensees.

Mr. Hargraves stated that they have an attorney working with them. He said they were not told about any of this when they took over running the Legion. He stated they are working with Atty Anthony Copani and Chairman Chase stated that they should rely on his advice and he will get them in good stead.

Ms. Donahue apologized for her negligence and that this was not her intention. Mr. Hargraves stated that their prior manager did everything. They never did anything or were involved on the paperwork side. The prior manager was in charge of and took care of everything related to their licensing, for many years. He abruptly left and they closed the doors as they didn't know what to do. They hired Cynthia. He stated that they've been there for 80 years and if they don't get their license back, they will have to close.

Ms. Donahue stated that all that was done was to keep the club open. She said she didn't come into this role posing as a manager that knew everything. She wanted to do the best she could to keep it open/get it back open. She stated that she did renovations by herself for 6 months to try and get it back to a place of standing. She

learned all of this without being given anything, that they did not have any of the account numbers, etc. Mrs. Hargraves, the Commander's wife spoke. She said it really got dumped on them. She stated that they did not have any knowledge of running a bar; the previous bar manager walked out and did not give them anything. He left and did not help in any way.

The clerk spoke stating that Cynthia has been really great to work with. She provided all the documents, everything that was needed and there was no delay in getting anything for the ABCC filing. Ms. Donahue stated that she put the P.O. Box address in a comment section on the application and wants to know that any paperwork will be going to the P.O. Box in the future. The clerk states they will send future correspondence to the P.O. Box requested.

Commissioner Camargo stated she has concerns about the management of the business going forward and how it will be handled. She said this is a practice of business with huge liability and risk that they took being open and it was negligence. There was no further discussion.

Commissioner Giordano made a motion to accept the application; Chairman Chase seconded the motion. Commissioner Camargo abstained from voting.

No other business. Next meeting is March 11, 2026. Commissioner Giordano made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Camargo seconded. All in favor.

Next Meeting will be March 11, 2026.

Respectfully Submitted by
Beth Rizzo
Licensing Clerk