

CANNABIS CONTROL COMMISSION

**April 7, 2026
10:15 AM**

**In-Person at Cannabis Control Commission, Second Floor Public Meeting Room,
Worcester Union Station, 2 Washington Square, Worcester and with Remote Access via
[Microsoft Teams Live*](#)**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Documents:

- Application Materials associated with:
 - Staff Recommendations on Renewal Licenses
- [Meeting Packet](#)
- Email from Co-CIE Goodin to the Chair.
- July 11, 2023, Commission internal email regarding possible recusal.

In Attendance:

- Chair Shannon O'Brien
- Commissioner Carrie Benedon
- Commissioner Kimberly Roy
- Commissioner Bruce Stebbins

Minutes:

- I. Call to Order
 - The Chair recognized a quorum and called the meeting to order.
 - The Chair gave notice that the meeting is being recorded.
 - The Chair gave an overview of the agenda.
- II. Commissioners' Comments & Updates – 00:01:36
 - Commissioner Benedon remarked about the new agreed-upon Cannabis bill by the legislature and emphasized that change can be scary but also it presented opportunity. She stressed recent accomplishments by the Commission. Commissioner Stebbins recounted his recent visits to two Licensees in Salem, a team from Hometown Harvest and the Athol Town Manager, and a Licensee with a business in Rutland. He mentioned the recent work by the Social Consumption (SC) Responsible Vendor Training (RVT) working group. He also mentioned his work with Commissioner Benedon on census tracts, his work with Commissioner Roy regarding License



renewals and finally, he cited his work with the Chair pertaining to the Executive Director (ED) selection process and the Executive Session (ES) process. Commissioner Roy discussed the recent legislative consensus on the new Cannabis bill, particularly in reference to sections in the bill about raising purchase limits and anonymizing the complaint process. She echoed Commissioner Benedon's comments which lauded the Commission's recent work. The Chair echoed the comments concerning the Commission's progress achieved in the past six months. She lauded advances in safety in the industry and emphasized the need to address and correct testing fraud. She added that she and Commissioner Roy recently met with the Attorney General's Office (AGO) to correct testing fraud violations. The Chair remarked that during the current Public Meeting (PM), the Commission would address expendable trusts and move toward an independent testing center. The Chair lauded Chief Financial and Accounting Officer Lisa Schlegel (CFAO Schlegel) work in the area, as well as the work of Director of Research Director Julie Johnson (Director Johnson)'s efforts. In that vein, she urged budgetary outlays be made to protect consumers.

III. Minutes – 00:15:20

1. March 6, 2026

- Commissioner Roy moved to approve the March 6, 2026, Commission Public Meeting minutes.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O'Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the March 6, 2026, Commission Public Meeting minutes.

2. March 16, 2026

- Commissioner Roy moved to approve the March 16, 2026, Commission Public Meeting minutes.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O'Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the March 16, 2026, Commission Public Meeting minutes.



- The ED recommended taking up the discussion under Commission Discussions and Vote regarding Clarification of Tier Regulations was related and needed to be resolved first prior to Staff Recommendations on Renewal Licenses.

IV. Commission Discussion and Votes – 00:16:50

1. Clarification on Tier Relegations

- ED Travis Ahern recommended taking up this issue first, before any votes on License Renewals, which the Commissioners agreed to do. Director of Licensing Olivia Koval (Director Koval) read into the record regulatory and motion language from August 14, 2025's PM. She then read into the record Mandatory Tier Relegation Considerations, presenting four options for the Commission's discussion. Co-Chief of Investigations and Enforcement Armond Enos (Co-CIE Enos) detailed the factors for the Commissioners to consider, emphasizing potential diversion risk, in response to a query by the Chair. Director Koval mapped out how tier relegation could occur (i.e., only relegation down one tier, or multiple tiers, for example). Co-CIE Enos mentioned how a Licensee may attempt to return to a higher tier. Commissioner Roy raised the possible subjectivity of tier calculations, with Director Koval raising the legal issue of whether a Licensee's property interest might be implicated. The Chair requested an answer to her question, regarding whether one particular Licensee allegedly had to destroy its entire product. She cited her concern that maybe there was a discretion issue involved, and whether Commissioners should play a role in this decision-making and enforcement process. The ED remarked about how a Licensee might potentially yo-yo back and forth between tiers and there might be refund if a Licensee might go down one tier and potentially might later return to its former tier and pay a different fee. Finally, the ED raised the possibility that a hybrid model might be adopted to address these fee issues. The Chair cited the fiscal difficulties experienced by a Licensee, with the specific example of one Licensee which recently expressed to her that it might have to close. It was explained how relegation fees were addressed in the past, with destruction of product occurring, while Co-Chief of Investigations and Enforcement Timothy Goodin (Co-CIE Goodin) provided more detail, particularly with penalties levied when overages occurred. Historically, an October 7, 2021, document was discussed, with the Licensee's response regarding Tier 3 considerations, along with its proposed Plan of Correction. On December 9, 2022, the Commission voted on this Stipulated Agreement and ratified it. The Chair raised the possibility of altering relegation regulations, particularly, how does the Commission address on the entire tier issue to protect honest Licensees and ensure quality over quantity. Commissioner Roy mentioned that other jurisdictions, such as Colorado, cite total plant count and not canopy. Commissioner Benedon also thought that counting plants rather than area should be considered as an alternative way to measure tier(s), with a future regulatory change concerning how canopy is measured. The Chair raised the issue regarding if/when a Licensee is not selling all its product, as well as account receivables problems and whether an audit should be performed. The ED did state that further regulatory changes could be explored. Commissioner



Roy mentioned that there might be a more objective way to measure inventory and agreed with Commissioner Benedon that the Commission defer taking action on the matter that day. Co-CIE Enos responded to a query from Commissioner Stebbins concerning how staff evaluated how numbers. Co-CIE Enos cited the mechanics regarding how much product a Licensee produces and then releases and puts out to the public. Commissioner Stebbins mentioned the issue of when a Licensee goes into receivership and simultaneously dumps product and floods the market. Commissioner Roy returned to the difficulties that many Licensees face to stay in business, with projections of future production needed. The Chair tabled the discussion on the matter.

V. Staff Recommendations on Renewal Licenses – 01:12:48

- Commissioner Benedon moved to approve the Renewal License for Debilitating Medical Condition Treatment Centers (#MCR141003) and for Alternative Therapies Group (#RMD1530).
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O’Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the Renewal License for Debilitating Medical Condition Treatment Centers (#MCR141003) and for Alternative Therapies Group (#RMD1530).

- Commissioner Roy moved to take a recess returning at 11:45 AM.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O’Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion.
- The Commission took a brief recess. (Returned at 01:28:26.)

VI. Enforcement Actions

1. Stipulated Agreement: Boston Bud Factory, Inc.
 - Co-CIE Goodin identified the Licensee and its principals and then recited the terms of the proposed Final Order and Stipulated Agreement, with revisions made by the parties since the last PM, including but not limited to a agreeing on a payment plan and an acceleration clause. The Chair requested all correspondence between then-Enforcement Counsel (EC) Rebecca Lopez and the remaining members of the



Enforcement Team, to address past potential process issues. Commissioner Stebbins requested that a signed copy of this Final Order and Settlement be sent to the City of Holyoke. The Chair urged more consistency regarding the imposition of fines to occur. The Chair also requested an opinion regarding any possible future changes to the parameters of the agreement. Co-CIE Goodin opined that there would be no re-negotiation of the terms, and Commissioner Roy confirmed this by reading consistent language of the Commission's applicable February 19, 2026, vote, into the record.

- Commissioner Roy moved to approve the Stipulated Agreement.
 - Commissioner Stebbins proffered a friendly amendment to allow for minor ministerial and typographical changes without the Commissioners needing to vote on them. The Chair said she would not agree to do so. He also suggested that the municipality should receive a copy of this agreement.
 - Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
 - The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O'Brien – Yes
 - The Commission unanimously approved the motion.
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- Commissioner Stebbins moved to direct staff to communicate a copy of the Stipulated Agreement to the host community city of Holyoke.
 - Commissioner Roy seconded the motion.
 - The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Chair O'Brien – Yes
 - The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

VII. Commission Discussion and Votes Continued – 01:45:44

1. Approval of Executive Director Performance Review Form

- The Chair requested that the Commissioners fill out the form for the ED performance review within a week, anonymized, with the Chair assembling a composite final report card. Also, the ED will receive this two weeks before the April 30, 2026, meeting. Commissioner Benedon requested clarification so that this process will comply with the Open Meeting Law (OML), citing precedent from 2018. Commissioner Benedon suggested that Commissioners' comments be completed by April 14, 2026, and consolidated with comments on unveiling on April 16, 2026, with an April 30, 2026, public review. The ED raised his concerns on making his rebuttals to the final Commissioner's comments for him to review if the Commissioners' comments are filed on April 16th. Chief People Officer Debra Hilton-Creek (CPO



Hilton-Creek) 's advice was sought, concerning the necessity of this being produced in a written form. She noted it was not required but has been past Commission practice and policy. Commissioner Roy did opine that an ED's potential merit increase is based in part on this review and therefore, the current Commissioners should weigh in on the process now. Commissioner Benedon agreed but questioned if a composite evaluation is necessary at all, or if it is needed to be rushed. The Chair thought that the evaluation need not be consolidated, as suggested by Commissioner Benedon; therefore, each Commissioner should submit their individual evaluations to Human Resources Generalist Wendy Sanchez who would then send the conclusions to the ED. The language at the bottom of the evaluation form was changed, given the newly agreed-to legislative Cannabis law, to provide a public hearing of the evaluation on April 30, 2026.

2. Update on Testing Protocols Package 1

- Co-CIE Enos introduced the discussion by citing the work by all the team members on the project, and read into the record the deadlines through April 16, 2026, for the Independent Testing Labs (ITLs) to provide feedback. He also commented upon the anticipated progress for Package 2, and the deadlines for the Commission team, and stated that consultants must be weigh in but recommendations by the Testing team will likely occur and be submitted for review in the next 1-2 months. Commissioner Roy did not know before today that the industry impacted Package 1 through the submission of their feedback; Package 1 to date has not been influenced by consultants. Co-CIE Enos opined that there might be more packages after Package 2. The ED anticipated ITLs and the public's feedback received by April 16, 2026, on Package 1. Commissioner Stebbins queried about how and when the Commissioners receive ITL feedback, to be followed by Commissioners' votes. He asked if Package 1 could be fully implemented before other packages are finalized, and Co-CIE Enos answered affirmatively. Co-CIE Enos explained how Package 2 would build upon Package 1, with unique additional factors involved such as vitamin E acetate removal, residual solvents guidance, and Certificates of Analysis (COAs) standardized requirements. Commissioner Roy wondered if all packages should be presented and approved all at once at the end, and not by one package at a time. Interim Director of Testing Timothy Barwise (Interim Director Barwise) explained how the recommendations relate to each other and explained conflict with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) regarding how much of a pesticide is not violative. He explained the intent was to hammer home what is required. Whether feedback be transmitted in a two-by-two communication to Commissioners or in full public, was also considered.
- Commissioner Roy moved to direct the Executive Director to request the Executive Office of Administration & Finance (A&F) establish an Expendable Trust Fund for the Cannabis Control Commission to accept all funds for the 'Center for Cannabis Research & Policy' with the exception of budget allocations and federal grants that



are separately accounted for; further, to assign the role of ‘Trustee’ to the CFAO, as defined by A&F.

- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O’Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

- Commissioner Roy moved to take a recess returning at 1:45 PM.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O’Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion.
- The Commission took a brief recess. (Returned at 03:24:56.)

3. Discussion on Pending Enforcement Processes Including But Not Limited to Massbiolytics (ITL); Assured (ITL) Stipulated Agreement; Greatest Hits Enforcement Action; MCR Labs Enforcement, and Boston Bud Factory

- The Chair referred to a track record established in this instance here and referenced an email she received from Co-CIE Goodin and expressed the possibility that any privilege might have to be waived by the Commissioners, in order to discuss its contents publicly.

- Commissioner Roy moved to waive privilege that may apply to the contents of the email from Co-CIE Goodin.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Chair O’Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

- The Chair focused on disparate processes cited by the Inspector General’s Office (IGO) and the State Auditor’s Office (SAO), mentioning a recent Boston Globe article alleging that a previous ED may have interfered with an investigation and she additionally referenced a July 11, 2023, Commission internal email, concerning the possible need to recuse. She added in that instance, no appearance of a conflict was



ever filed by or with the Board. There may be an enforcement action based on a regulation which apparently did not exist at that time. The Chair then referred to an August 2025 vote, whereby a discretionary role was taken away from the Commissioners. The Chair introduced a discussion of the Commission's discretion and authority, in light of M.G.L c. 30A concerns and preferential treatment issues raised on July 11, 2023. The Chair emphasized the key roles of protecting public safety and preventing Consumer fraud. Commissioner Roy asked Co-CIE Goodin if Notices to Show Cause are a public record. He replied in the affirmative, subject to possible appropriate redactions. Commissioner Roy asked Co-CIE Goodin if Notices to Show Cause are not accessible to Commissioners, and he stated that had been past practice, but that he is reaching out to other agencies to compare. Co-CIE Goodin did point out a M.G.L c. 30A concern regarding Notices to Show cause in pending matters. Commissioner Roy asked why a Public Record Request (PRR) by a citizen or the media can result in them receiving this document(s), but why a Commissioner is not entitled to receive it. The Chair urged that public health concerns should trump M.G.L c. 30A considerations. Commissioner Benedon wanted to know whether Orders to Show Cause should routinely be made available to Commissioners, and the ED referenced that these reports can be redacted in part. Commissioner Benedon expressed an interest in being informed about the specific nature of the notice, i.e., an issue about inversion or sales to minors, for example. Co-CIE Goodin was queried if a Letter of Notice of Enforcement's Intent precedes an Order to Show Cause. Co-CIE Goodin explained that a Notice of Enforcement Intent is an informal tool providing an invitation to identify issues, facts and potential violations, to allow Licensees to informally address issues, which differs from an Order to Show Cause which commences an Enforcement action. In the past Notices of Enforcement Intent were utilized approximately 75% of the time and Orders to Show Cause were utilized about 25% of the time, but currently Orders to Show Cause are employed with increased frequency. Co-CIE Goodin believed that once a Notice of Enforcement Intent or Order to Show Cause was issued, there was no dropping of an entire action. Co-CIE Goodin emphasized that there are no penalties attendant when a Notice of Enforcement Intent is issued, so therefore there is almost universally no need to rescind it. Co-CIE Goodin discussed Commissioner's involvement during the Notice of Enforcement Intent phase and an example of why it may prejudice the matter and discussed other M.G.L c. 30A considerations. Commissioner Roy expressed concern about a Notice of Enforcement Intent potentially being issued and potentially involving policies which do not exist. The Chair observed that the IGO and SAO observed bias in past Commission investigations. The Chair emphasized that the Commissioners must have the tools to uphold their oaths as public officials, when juxtaposed with an emphasis on expediting processes in light of M.G.L c. 30A concerns. She expressed the need for guidance for the length of investigations, with a stress on considerations of how long is too long. Commissioner Stebbins discussed skepticism about setting deadlines on open investigations. Commissioner Roy read proposed motion language. Commissioner Stebbins made a friendly amendment to substitute oversight for review. Commissioner Benedon agreed in suggesting that the



substitution of the term review be made in lieu of oversight, which was then duly changed in the motion.

- Commissioner Roy moved to direct the Executive Director to distribute any Order to Show Cause and Letter of Enforcement Intent, once issued, to the Commissioners in a timely manner, subject only to minimal redactions necessary to protect information that is legally confidential or otherwise exempt from disclosure. The Executive Director shall ensure that any such redactions are narrowly tailored and limited to the specific material required by law to be withheld, and that the substantive basis for the Order remains available to the Commissioners for their review. Further, the Commission directs that this revised process be memorialized in a policy or SOP, with a draft to be prepared and presented for review and approval by the Board by April 30, 2026.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O'Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

4. Publication of Approved Receivers Discussion

- The Chair suggested that pre-approval of a receiver implies a seal of approval and expressed the wish that there be a further certification that receivers have no License ceiling cap issues and also raised other concerns. Efficiency in expediting processes to protect distressed licensees was discussed. The Chair opined that there was no need to vote on this issue. The ED explained the process of how information may be posted by the Commission. Commissioner Roy questioned why there is a \$500.00 fee, while the Chair thought that maybe a nominal fee should be required.

5. Product Catalog / Open Data Update

- The Chair requested an update, and Chief Technology and Innovation Officer Paul Clark (CTIO Clark) stated that the testing data for 2025 had been released with 2024 data anticipated to be released this week, with older data to be released thereafter. He discussed why masking had been employed in the past, but once the Data Use Agreement (DUA) was signed, (anticipated on April 16, 2026), this information would be released. He described the policy behind masking. The Chair mentioned where competitive intellectual property should be protected, but that there is a competing concern that a cheater can cheat and that there is no competitive advantage. The Chair endorsed de-anonymization due to public health concerns. CTIO Clark raised the concern that manufacturing data might be released. CTIO Clark outlined how Metrc had moved hundreds of thousands of documents into the catalog, with the COAs included, and some have not been removed. Metrc is working on removing a bug in the system, with no estimated time for correction currently.



Director of Investigations Katherine Binkoski cited regulations concerning product databases, written for infused manufactured products initially, repackaging of product, and what must be inserted into the product catalog and gave examples of problems with the current process. Commissioner Roy discussed drafting the appropriate regulations for all License types to make such entries appropriately.

6. Discussion of Marijuana Research Facility License Type and Research Permits Including Intellectual Property Considerations

- The Chair observed the need to address research License types and research permits, because of the need to protect intellectual property for this License type due to the research of the Licensee becoming a public record. The ED cited a regulation that the Commission would receive the information in a public setting and agreed about the requirement for regulatory change to accomplish the goal of the policy.

VIII. New Business Not Anticipated at the Time of Posting – 05:04:58

- The Chair stated that there was no new business not anticipated at the time of posting. She asked Commissioner Benedon why new business not anticipated at the time of posting needed to be set at each meeting as an agenda item. Commissioner Benedon stated that the placing of new unanticipated business at 48 hours before a PM, as an agenda item is done so that the public is aware that this might occur.

IX. Next Meeting Date – 05:07:00

- The Chair stated that the next meeting was scheduled for April 16, 2026.

X. Adjournment – 05:07:10

- Commissioner Benedon moved to adjourn.
- Commissioner Stebbins seconded the motion.
- The Chair took a roll call vote:
 - Commissioner Benedon – Yes
 - Commissioner Roy – Yes
 - Commissioner Stebbins – Yes
 - Chair O'Brien – Yes
- The Commission unanimously approved the motion to adjourn.

