



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

**560 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886**

## **Cannabis Control Commission**

### **Open Meeting Minutes**

**DATE:** Tuesday August 27, 2024  
**TIME:** 10:30 AM  
**PLACE:** 560 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, RI 02886

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair Kimberly R. Ahern, Esq.  
Commissioner Robert B. Jacquard, Esq.  
Commissioner Olayiwola Oduyingbo, Esq.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Michelle Reddish, MS, MPH, Administrator, Cannabis Office  
Mariana Ormonde, Esq., Chief of Legal Services, Cannabis  
Control Commission  
Carla Aveledo, Esq., Policy Liaison and Legal Support, Cannabis  
Control Commission

Chairperson Ahern called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

The first item of business was:

#### **Introductory remarks from Chairperson Ahern, which included:**

- Moving from introductory remarks straight into the next agenda item.

The next item of business was:

#### **Motion to approve the minutes of the Open Session Meeting held on June 28, 2024.**

Upon motion made by Commissioner Jacquard and duly seconded by Commissioner Oduyingbo, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the open session meeting held on July 30, 2024.

The next item of business was:

**Discussion, review, and potential vote on the annual reporting requirement on diversity in the medical and adult use cannabis industry, to be submitted to the General Assembly by September 1, 2024, which included:**

- Chairperson Ahern reviewed the reporting requirement of diversity in the medical and adult-use cannabis industry.
- Noted the report is due on September 1, 2024 to the Governor and General Assembly.
- Commission staff reviewed the reporting requirements found in the Rhode Island Cannabis Act § 21-28.11-31(e) and (h).
- Noted that a request was sent to cannabis licensees for feedback on the barriers to entry in the cannabis industry and other statutory requirements found in § 21-28.11-31(e) and (h).
- Findings from the report included barriers to entry such as access to capital, complex regulatory compliance, systemic barriers for people of color, and high licensing fees.
- Noted that a letter will be submitted to the Governor and legislature with findings.
- Also noted that with the drafting of the regulations, presentations on key topics will be held at Commission meetings, and it is believed that next year's September report will be a more complete data collection including specifics of the Social Equity Assistance Program and Fund.
- Chairperson Ahern thanked all licensees that submitted feedback for this report and highlighted that the Commission is required by law to complete these reports.

The next item of business was:

**Public Comment:**

Three people provided public comment, which included:

- Requested more retail stores be opened as soon as possible.
- Noted concerns on the amount of time that has passed since adult-use was legalized and the lack of new retail stores and regulations.
- Suggested that retail licenses be merit-based, and partially based on those that can be operational as soon as possible.
- Suggested assisting cultivators by allowing testing batches to increase from ten

- pounds to fifteen pounds.
- Mentioned that state regulation of payment from retailers to cultivators needs to be looked into.
  - Mentioned that a number of newer cultivators have come to market in the past six months with nowhere to sell their product.
  - Noted the challenges of having sixty cultivators, with seven compassion centers, five of which who can cultivate their own product.
  - Cultivators spent a lot of money to get set up and bring their product to the market, and many are losing money.

The next item of business was:

### **Executive Session**

At 10:46 a.m., upon motion made by Commissioner Jacquard and duly seconded by Commissioner Oduyingbo it was unanimously voted:

**Motion to go into Executive Session, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1), for the purpose of:**

- a. Review, discussion, and potential vote on the Commission's hiring of a Chief Financial Officer, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-46-5(a)(1).

At 10:56 a.m. the Commission reconvened in Open Session.

The next item of business was:

**Motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on August 27, 2024.**

Upon motion made by Commissioner Oduyingbo and duly seconded by Commissioner Jacquard, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To seal the minutes of the Executive Session held on August 27, 2024, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 42-46-5(a)(1)

The next item of business was:

**Report out on actions and votes taken in Executive Session.**

Chair Ahern reported the following Commission action(s):

1. Reviewed and discussed the interview and hiring processes for the Chief Financial Officer position. A unanimous vote was cast to recommend that Administrator Reddish extend an offer to hire the recommended candidate.

The next item of business was:

**Adjournment:**

Upon motion made by Commissioner Jacquard and duly seconded by Commissioner Oduyingbo, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

**Next Meeting Date:** September 6, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.