

Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission

Minutes

August 25, 2021

A meeting of the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission was held in Room 200 of the Alabama State House on August 25, 2021. The meeting was convened by Chairman Steven Stokes, at 1:03 pm.

Attendance roll call was taken. Commission members present for the meeting were Dr. William Saliski Jr., Dr. Jerzy P. Szaflarski, Mr. Sam Blakemore, Mr. Dwight Gamble, Dr. Angela Martin, Dr. Eric Jensen, Ms. Loree Skelton, Mr. Rex Vaughn, Judge Charles Price, Dr. Steven Stokes, Ms. Taylor Hatchett, Mr. James Harwell, Counsel Katherine Robertson, and Special Agent Dion Robinson.

Chairman Stokes and Vice Chairman Vaughn each made opening remarks. This was followed by a motion to adopt an amendment to the agenda, which was the reading of the letter signed by Chairman Stokes to the State Treasury Department for the establishment of funds, budget structure, travel expenses and payments, and more for the Commission. Vice Chairman Vaughn made a motion to amend the agenda to add the letter for consideration - the motion passed on unanimous voice vote.

This was followed by a report from Mr. Gamble on the Director search. Mr. Gamble noted that he asked the state personnel department to draft a job description for the Director position. He also emphasized the job was posted August 16th and the deadline is August 30th. Mr. Gamble estimated the Commission would vote on approval for the new Director on September 9th, the next Medical Cannabis Commission meeting.

This was followed by a report from Dr. Saliski Jr. in which he noted his subcommittee and Dr. Szaflarski's work with Mr. Matt Hart and Mr. William Perkins of ALMBE to adopt rules. Dr. Saliski Jr. cautioned about the aggressive timeline and addressed concerns about physician sign up as well as the Medical Society Education program. Dr. Szaflarski added that the lecture series applies from growing to recommending.

Following the subcommittee reports, Mr. Patrick Moody from the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries spoke before the Commission and highlighted the timeline, lessons learned from growing hemp, security concerns, and the need for new labs for analysis. Mr. Vaughn and Dr. Stokes questioned Mr. Moody on specific growing practices, including indoor growing. Mr. Jordan Pilato from Aero Innovative Solutions also provided crucial insight about aeroponics and the indoor growing process. As the discussion continued, Mr. Moody confirmed that there will not be a product in the ground in the spring which would add to the timeline. The Commission agreed it would be best to try to re-work the timeline, to which Senator Melson concurred and noted he would work with the Legislature toward an expedited solution.

Following the timeline discussion, Dr. Jensen noted the subcommittee on Development and Rules' added focus on learning from states such as FL, IL, OR, and LA. Dr. Jensen also emphasized the need for the most effective and streamlined process possible.

Mr. Tom Albritton from the Alabama Ethics Commission then gave a presentation to the Commission with the focus being on two key principles, those being against the use of an official position or office for personal gain and to refrain from solicitation and corruption. Neither Commission members nor their family members may benefit financially from the office. Mr. Albritton discussed Section 5.1 and the "Thing of Value" definition and explained the principles. Mr. Albritton also noted Mr. Bryan Patterson as a resource for the Commission. Following his presentation and questions from the members, Mr. Albritton handed out his personal email and phone number for the Commission.

The next meeting of the Alabama Medical Cannabis Commission will take place on September 9th, 2021, at 1:00 PM in Room 807 of the Alabama State House. There being no further business of the commission, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.