



MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING: Alcohol License Violation by Food Lion LLC on March 11, 2022. March 22, 2022 6:00PM

PUBLIC HEARING: Alcohol License Violation by JST LLC on March 11, 2022. March 22, 2022 6:15PM

CALLED COUNCIL MEETING: March 22, 2022, 6:30 PM

PUBLIC HEARING:

Call to Order: The March 22, 2022, Public Hearing for Food Lion Alcohol Violation on March 11, 2022, was called to order by Mayor Keith Turman at 6:00 PM.

Issue:

- A. **Alcohol License Violation by Food Lion LLC on March 11, 2022:** City Attorney Grant swore in Chief Bolemon and his witness. Chief Bolemon presented the Royston Police Departments case regarding an underage alcohol sale by a clerk of Food Lion on March 11, 2022, to a 19-year-old police department employee. The entire incident was captured on audio recording and repeated to the Royston Police Department Investigator Moorhead. These actions were in violation of the City Ordinance and Georgia State laws. This audit/investigation of city alcohol licensees was due to complaints by parents of teenagers who claimed to have purchased alcohol in the City of Royston. The clerk in question as cited by the Royston Police Department. Food Lion's legal representative Kevin Leff, Esq of Sard and Leff presented Food Lion's response. Mr. Leff also introduce the store manager Julia Frazier. He maintained that the store did not deny the sale and had taken steps to prevent any future incidents. Food Lion has repeated their training of employees regarding store policies and procedures, added more store signage declaring ID requirements, and updated their Point-of-Sale software to require a manager to confirm ID check and approve all alcohol sales. Mr. Leff also informed council that the Georgia Department of Revenue had been notified of the violation.

Invitation of Public Comment: Mr. Leff asked if any of the teenagers who claimed sales were from Royston were cited. Chief Bolemon stated that was not an occurrence in Royston jurisdiction. Mr. Leff also asked if there had been any prior "sting" operations for alcohol violations at Food Lion before. Chief Bolemon responded there had not, but they had not been open long. Mr. Leff asked if any had been made when it was Bi-Lo. Chief Bolemon responded that there had. Mr. Leff asked if there had been any violations at those times. Chief Bolemon responded that there had not been any previous violations when it was Bi-Lo.

Response by Council: Mayor Turman emphasized that the City of Royston is very serious about no sales of alcohol to those under legal age and the requirements to ID, and that means require an acceptable ID to be presented, of all people purchasing alcohol at City licensed retailers.

Close Public Hearing: Mayor Turman closed the Public Hearing at 6:15PM.

Call to Order: The March 22, 2022, Public Hearing for JST LLC Alcohol Violation on March 11, 2022, was called to order by Mayor Keith Turman at 6:15 PM.

Issue:

B. Alcohol License Violation by Food Lion LLC on March 11, 2022: City Attorney Grant swore in Chief Bolemon and his witness. Chief Bolemon presented the Royston Police Departments case regarding an underage alcohol sale by a clerk of the Marathon Gas Station located at 965 Franklin Springs Street owned by JST, LLC on March 11, 2022. The sale was made to a 19-year-old police informant. He was not required to present his ID but was able to give a birthdate instead. These actions were in violation of the City Ordinance and Georgia State laws. This audit/investigation of city alcohol licensees was due to complaints by parents of teenagers who claimed to have purchased alcohol in the City of Royston. There was no direct evidence that this store was the location where the teenagers purchased the alcohol. The clerk in question was cited by the Royston Police Department. The Store Manger Harbinger Singh, known as Rajan, also a relative of the current owner, responded for JST, LLC. Ms. Singh asked the witness if her clerk had asked for a birthdate or ID. The witness stated yes, he had been asked. She stated that her clerk had been having some health issues but since the manager was out of the country, she worked anyway. That was her clerks excuse for what she did, but Ms. Singh stated that was not an acceptable reason she was aware. Ms. Singh stated that she had increased the signage in the store stating an ID was required, and she had repeated the store policies to her clerk. She also had ordered a scanner to be used at the register that will require an ID to be scanned before a purchase will be allowed. She asked that the council please accept these actions and “go easy” on her.

Invitation of Public Comment: Attorney Grant took the opportunity to repeat to council what the ordinance states as possible responses. She read the ordinance for the clarification of those attending.

Response by Council: Mayor Turman emphasized that the City of Royston is not going to except only a birthdate given as acceptable ID. The purchaser must present an ID as required by Ordinance and Georgia state law.

Close Public Hearing: Mayor Turman closed the Public Hearing at 6:30 PM.

CALLED MEETING:

Call to Order: The March 22, 2022, Called Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Keith Thurman at 6:30 PM.

Attendance: Mayor Keith Turman, Mayor Pro-Tem Lee Strickland, Jason Phillips, Matt Fields, Kenneth Roach, Wayne Braswell, David Pressley, City Attorney Andrea Grant, City Clerk Sharleen Ayers.

Invocation & Pledge:

Additions or Deletions to Agenda: None.

Approval of Agenda: Kenneth Roach made a motion to approve agenda; Wayne Braswell seconded the motion; motion carried 6-0.

New Business:

- A. Alcohol License Violation by Food Lion LLC on March 11, 2022: Mayor Pro Tem Lee Strickland stated the thought Food Lion realized the seriousness of the violation and had taken steps to prevent it happening again. He believed the time of the suspension had been long enough and they should be allowed to sell alcohol again. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lee Strickland to end the suspension of the Alcohol License of Food Lion LLC for the first offense of an infraction of underage alcohol sales. Motion was seconded by Matt Fields. Motion passed 6-0. City Attorney Grant added that a letter of the results of the hearing would be mailed out after the meeting.
- B. Alcohol License Violation by JST LLC on March 11, 2022: Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Lee Strickland to end the suspension of the Alcohol License of JST LLC for this first infraction of underage alcohol sales. Motion was seconded by Matt Fields. Motion was passed 6-0.

Adjourn: Mayor Pro Tem Lee Strickland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Matt Fields seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0. Meeting adjourned 6:33 PM.

Sharleen Ayers, City Clerk

Mayor Keith Turman

(SEAL)

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