

The Board of License Commissioners of Cecil County met in a regular session at the County Administrative Building, Conference Room, 200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Elk Room, Elkton, MD on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 9:15 A.M.

PRESENT: Kristen Ortt, Chairman
Bernard Chiominto, Commissioner
Keith Baynes, County Attorney
Earl Bradford, Chief Alcoholic Beverage Inspector
Sandra Cumm, Administrative Assistant
Kayla Maldeis, Paralegal

Chairman Ortt: Good morning, everyone. I'd like to welcome you all and call to order, The Cecil County Board of Licensed Commissioners. Today is Wednesday, March 25, 2026. We do have a quorum today. Before we begin, I would just like to say our Board is without our Chairman Stephen Miller. Stephen spent several years as Chairman of the Board, as well as giving us time to other organizations in the county. Including the Boys and Girls Club and the Maryland State Troopers Association. Most importantly, we've lost our dear friend. And I know that Steve had a special relationship with all of us here on the board. And I also bet that most of us in the room could tell a good Steve story right now. And in honor of Steve, I'd like to begin our meeting with The Pledge of Allegiance, so if everyone would please stand.

Chairman Ortt: So, if we could just have a... just a moment of silence for Steve.

Chairman Ortt: Asked for everyone that was to testify at today's hearing to stand, raise their right hand and be sworn in.

Administrative Assistant: Sworn in Earl Bradford and audience members who were going to testify today.

Chairman Ortt: Okay, we have a very short agenda this morning, but we have an application for a new license. Received from Robert L. Windsor at Grounded Cafe, LLC, trading as Grounded Cafe, at 4899 Pulaski Highway, Perryville, Maryland, 21903 for issuance of a new Class B beer, wine, and liquor alcoholic beverage license, on-premises only, and Sunday sales. Please come forward.

Commissioner Chiominto: Have a seat. And Kristen, I think we wanted to make a nomination as they're coming forward, before we get started. Good morning, everyone. In honor of Mr. Miller, who was the chairman of the board. I would like to make a motion to nominate Kristen Ort to fill the position of Chairperson for the Board of Licensed Commissioners.

Chairman Ortt: I second your nomination.

Chairman Ortt: All in favor say aye.

Board: Aye. Board unanimously approved the vote for Ms. Ortt Chairman.

Chairman Ortt: Motion carries. Please be seated, thank you.

Attorney Nowicki: Thank you. Newly, Madam Chairman, and thank you. My condolences on Mr. Miller. I've heard great things, never had the pleasure of meeting the gentlemen. I do have binders for everybody. At least for, commissioners, if I may? Thank you. In these proceedings, I always find it perhaps a little easier and given lack of any other public, what I would note, objection to this, is to very simply, produce to the board the, all proper and necessary documentation for the license. I am more than happy to go through it; however, I would note the document speaks for itself. Mr. Windsor, owner to my left, who is here under oath, is happy to answer any and all questions that the board might have. Madam Manager, to my right, Ms. Natalie Conley, is happy to ask answer anything in regards to operations, food menu, events, although Mr. Windsor can also answer that as well. And again, given, that I'm more than happy to just briefly recite a little bit about Grounded Coffee, or I'm at the board's discretion of how

you would like me to proceed. Oh, please continue. Sure, most certainly. I would just note in regards to this matter, Grounded Coffee is an establishment who has been in full operation for almost 3 years now, since July of 2023. They are located here in Perryville, on Route 40 Pulaski Highway, as Madam Chairman indicated, 4899 Pulaski Highway. It is a 10,000 square foot, beautifully renovated coffee shop and cafe. If any of the members have been, it is absolutely wonderful. They also have an event space in the rear of the establishment that they are hoping to host sponsored events, charity events, other community events, and use that rear space for all such matters. I would note, just for population and, in accordance with 4210, Perryville has 4,569 residents and growing. Median age of approximately 40 years old between both male and female, median income of approximately \$80,000. I would note within the 2-mile radius of, grounded coffee. There are only Dunkin' Donuts. Now, not to belittle any franchises, they are established by local franchisees. However, there are no other small business, local cafes, that are run by small business owners and individual, individuals of the community. The closest is Newark Bakery, which is up in North East, and also Chesapeake Bay, which, as my understanding, is now closing. So, most important factor I wanted to note is there are no cafes with a liquor license within a 2-mile radius. And further, Grounded Cafe is a business with already established clientele. So, I would note the public desire, impact on any existence licenses, and the uniqueness as set forth in 4210 would most certainly be satisfied. I would also ask, you consider, Mr. Windsor has also another business in the Perryville area, so he is invested in the community. He wants... he is a part of the community. He is, again, I would note, it's not Atlas Group coming and asking for such a matter. It's not just another franchise coming in asking for such a matter. This is a small business, local entrepreneur. I'd also note it's not just another liquor store asking to open. This is an established business, a well-known business, a well-liked business, has its own clientele, and, the business is just looking to further its, its business and its service to the citizens of Cecil County. With that, if anyone has any questions, I am certainly happy to answer myself, or I could certainly turn any

questions directly to Mr. Robert Windsor, owner, Ms. Natalie Conley, manager.

Chairman Ortt: Yes, so, Mr. Windsor, anything you would like to add?

Robert Windsor: Other than, Grounded Coffee, if anybody's ever been there before, is a special coffee shop. I converted the building, which used to be an old dealership back in the 50s, I want to say, into what it is now, a coffee shop and event space. We do really cool breakfast ideas. It's a great brunch spot, and we want to add to it and do an everyday brunch. So, we want to bring something super special to the area.

Chairman Ortt: That makes me happy. I'm happy. Another brunch spot.

Robert Windsor: It's a great spot. Thank you so much. And we freshly roast our own beans. We have our own roasting machine there and everything, so we've really taken the whole thing to the next level.

Chairman Ortt: Wonderful. And I'm sorry, Natalie? Yeah. Natalie, anything you'd like to add?

Natalie Conley: I think Bobby touched on everything, but we are a little slice of heaven in Perryville, and. We're just trying to upgrade what we have going for us now and bring something new and fresh to Perryville.

Chairman Ortt: Great, thank you, thank you. Mr. Baines, do you have anything?

Judge Baines: Is all the information contained in the application still true accurate?

Attorney Nowicki: Yes. Yes, it is.

Chairman Ortt: Mr. Bradford?

Chief Bradford: Nothing to add, other than I've been there on several occasions and been very satisfied with the food and the entertainment. Thank you.

Chairman Ortt: Wonderful. Commissioner Chiominto?

Commissioner Chiominto: Has everyone attended the TIPS program that's going to be serving?

Robert Windsor: Yes.

Commissioner Chiominto: Okay, so you have a total of 5, I believe it is?

Attorney Nowicki: Tab 2.

Commissioner Chiominto: OK. Yes, sir. And, if your license is granted today, do you have a time frame where you may be setting up events in the back area?

Robert Windsor: That, that comes by, like, sorry, that comes by schedule, and, but we plan on start, like, we've got a really cool special cocktail menu we're gonna do, like, espresso martini flights, we've got a candied bacon old-fashioned, like, we're gonna do some really cool stuff, and we're planning to release that probably the second week in April.

Commissioner Chiominto: Okay. Thank you. I have nothing else.

Chairman Ortt: Are you also open for lunch? Is it just, breakfast and lunch?

Robert Windsor: It's breakfast and lunch, but we treat it like a brunch all day. Brunch, okay. Brunch all day.

Chairman Ortt: Great.

Chief Bradford: And if I may, just for the record, there are 11 alcohol beverage licenses within a 2-mile radius. Two of those are entertainment facilities, the Great Wolf Lodge and Hollywood Casino, a golf club, and then American Legion.

Chairman Ortt: Great. Is anyone here to testify today for or against Grounded Café?

Chairman Ortt: Hearing no opposition, I will entertain a motion.

Commissioner Chiominto: I make a motion we approve the application received from Robert L. Windsor Grounded Coffee, LLC.T/A as Grounded Coffee, 48899 Pulaski Highway, Perryville, Maryland, 21903, for issuance of a new Class B beer, wine, liquor, alcoholic beverage license on-premise only, and sale, Sunday sales.

Chairman Ortt: Hearing a motion from Commissioner Chiominto. I second that motion. All in favor say aye

Board: Aye. Board unanimously approved the new license for Grounded Coffee in Perryville, MD.

Chairman Ortt: Motion carried. Thank you so much, guys. Congratulations!

Chairman Ortt: Moving on to questions and public comment. None. Okay, moving on to general business. We need to approve the December minutes. I will hear a motion.

Commissioner Chiominto: I make a motion Approve the minutes.

Chairman Ortt: Second... All in favor say aye. Aye.

Board: Aye. Board unanimously approved the minutes for December 7, 2025 meeting.

Chairman Ortt: We have some specials.

Chief Bradford: Yeah, we've had several, specials over the last few months, and a couple scheduled for future days. We had the Buffalo Soldiers at Grounded Coffee on 11-30-25. We had the Church of Good Shepherd, a comedy night on 2-7-26. We have the Cecil County Public Library scheduled for a fundraising party on 5-17-26, and the Rising Sun High School Tiger Athletic Boosters on 4-18-26. That also is a fundraiser

Chairman Ortt: Great.

Chairman Ortt: Any old business?

Chief Bradford: I don't believe there's any old business.

Chairman Ortt: We have some discussion to review the Liquor License Management Agreement form. Correct.

Chief Bradford: There should be a copy of that in your packet. That is a form that we're going to utilize in the future with the board's blessing. I think it's been reviewed by Mr. Hill, who's not here today, and Mr. Baines, and I think they gave their approval. It's a form that we will use to indicate who the actual owner of the license is. Any individuals who may be having a financial interest, their trade name, who the day-to-day operator may be who's purchasing the alcohol, and who's responsible for payment of the taxes. This kind of clears things up for us on one form. So, if there's any discussion, the board may have...

Chairman Ortt: Oh, I see, okay. This is great, all consolidated into one document. Do we need to hear a motion?

Chief Bradford: Probably we should make a motion, yeah.

Chairman Ortt: Okay. I will hear a motion.

Commissioner Chiominto: I make a motion we accept the new application for Liquor License Management Agreement form.

Chairman Ortt: I second that motion. All in favor say aye.

Board: Aye. Board unanimously approved the minutes for December 7, 2025 meeting.

Chairman Ortt: Motion carries. I also have Identity Document Fraud Training on May 21st, 2026.

Chief Bradford: We're having a training for all our alcohol and tobacco vendors in Cecil County. For our alcohol vendors, this does meet

the requirements for alcohol awareness certification. We've been having this training for many years now. Last year, we actually had 28 people attend, which was an all-time high. I think we're going to challenge that this year. We have a lot of people who already have expressed interest in that. Again, the training's going to be in this room on May 21st, 1 to 5. It's free to all alcohol and tobacco vendors in Cecil County. We have a grant that funds that. Again, we're looking for a large crowd, and everyone here is invited to attend. Even if you just want to stop by and say hello and introduce yourself, that would be fine. And we're looking forward to that day. Marty Johnson from Howard County is an identity theft or an identity document specialist. He testifies for Homeland Security and all kinds of different things, and he will be, again, teaching the class that day.

Chairman Ortt: Was he the gentleman that was at the Ocean City event?

Chief Bradford: Yes.

Chairman Ortt: Okay, he was very good. Earl, off the top of your head, do you know what day of the week that is?

Chief Bradford: A Thursday.

Chairman Ortt: Thursday, okay. I'd like to sit in on that. Cool. Anything else we need to discuss?

Chief Bradford: We're finishing up our grant work, for tobacco. We are having an extremely difficult time finding someone who is 21 years of age to do our first round of alcohol beverage checks. I mean, we have to spend the money by July 1st, Unfortunately, my grandson, who just turned 21, they don't believe would be eligible to hold that position because of the conflict, but I may try to pass that through one more time, because the other option is we're going to lose those funds.

Chairman Ortt: Is that, is that a paid,

Chief Bradford: It is paid. It's probably a total of 150 hours over a 3-4 month period, but it's \$13—4-month. 150 hours over, I'm sorry. About a 4-month period. 4-month, okay.

Chairman Ortt: And no one has applied?

Chief Bradford: We had 3 people apply. We had four people apply. Three did not show up for the interview. The fourth person was 39 years old.

Chairman Ortt: So, you want someone around the 21 mark?

Chief Bradford: Correct, yeah. Yeah, we've reached out to the University of Delaware, Cecil College. HR had a job fair at Cecil College. No one expressed any interest. We haven't had any interest at all in probably 3 weeks.

Chairman Ortt: Would YES be a good word?

Chief Bradford: Reached out to them as well, yeah. drug-free Cecil, so I've reached out to everyone that I could think of. And it's just not this time that it's been difficult to find someone, it's all the time. Really? Every time we advertise for that, it's extremely difficult. No, that's all I have. Okay, very good.

Chairman Ortt: Anyone else?

Chief Bradford: Well, I apologize. I do have one more thing. We're under a unique investigation right now that may come forward next month. Don't really want to go into a whole lot of detail because the investigation is going on, but it's a very serious matter. Occurring in the lower part of the county. We have some photos and some other documents that we're proceeding with and investigating further, but it could be a very interesting hearing coming up either next month or the month after. That could result in us Revoking a license. More to come.

Chairman Ortt: Okay. I won't ask at this time. Thank you, Earl. If there's nothing else, I'll hear a motion to adjourn the meeting today.

Commissioner Chiominto: I'll make a motion we adjourn the March 25th meeting.

Chairman Ortt: I second that motion. All in favor say aye.

Board: Aye,

Chairman Ortt: Meeting is Adjourned at 9:30am March 25, 2026.

BY:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kristen Ortt", is written over a horizontal line. A vertical line is drawn to the right of the signature.

Kristen Ortt, Chairman

Sandy Cumm

ATTEST:
Sandra L. Cumm, Administrative Assistant