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8  
9 **BEFORE THE**  
10 **CALIFORNIA GAMBLING CONTROL COMMISSION**  
11 **STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

13 In the Matter of the Statement of Particulars  
for:

14 **CENTRAL COAST CASINO GROVER**  
15 **BEACH, INC. dba CENTRAL COAST**  
16 **CASINO (GEGE-001029, GEOW-003209);**  
17 **DAVID STEARNS (GEOW-002459); and**  
18 **THERESA STEARNS (GEOW-002460)**  
359 Grand Avenue  
Grover Beach, CA 93433

19 **Respondents.**

**BGC Case No. BGC-HQ2023-00001AL**

**CGCC Case No: CGCC-2022-1117-4A**

**STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS**

Hearing Date: June 3-4, 2024

Hearing Time: 9:00 a.m.

Hearing Place: 2399 Gateway Oaks, Ste. 220,  
Sacramento, CA 95833

**This hearing will be conducted by means of  
video conferencing on Zoom. The Zoom  
meeting code is 285 757 8614.**

22  
23 Complainant alleges as follows:

24 **THE PARTIES AND THIS PROCEEDING**

25 1. Yolanda Morrow (Complainant) brings this Statement of Particulars solely in her  
26 official capacity as Director of the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Gambling Control  
27 (Bureau).  
28

1           2.    On December 1, 2000, the California Gambling Control Commission (Commission)  
2 issued Cardroom Owner licenses to Respondents David Stearns (GEOW-002459) and Theresa  
3 Stearns (GEOW-002460). On July 1, 2006, the Commission issued a Cardroom Business License  
4 to Respondent Central Coast Casino Grover Beach, Inc. (GEGE-001029), doing business as  
5 Central Coast Casino (CCCGB, Inc.).

6           3.    On February 4, 2022, the Bureau received a Renewal Application for Owner  
7 Category License for a Cardroom Business License from CCCGB, Inc., its President and  
8 Associated Owner Category Licensee Respondent David Stearns, and endorsed owner  
9 Respondent Theresa Stearns<sup>1</sup> (collectively Respondents). On March 18, 2022, the Bureau  
10 received a Renewal Application for Owner Category License for a Cardroom Endorsee License  
11 from Respondent Theresa Stearns (collectively Applications).

12           4.    On or about April 15, 2022, the Bureau sent its Gambling Establishment and Owner  
13 Renewal Report Level II for Respondents (2022 Renewal Investigation Report) to the  
14 Commission. The Bureau sent an addendum letter to the Commission on May 16, 2022. The  
15 letter stated that on April 18, 2022, David Stearns disclosed to the Bureau that the Stearns Family  
16 Trust UTD February 27, 2014 (Trust) has held a 100 percent shareholder interest in CCCGB, Inc.,  
17 since 2014, with David Stearns and Theresa Stearns as trustees and trustors. On May 13, 2022,  
18 the Bureau requested that the Trust, David Stearns and Theresa Stearns, and any current  
19 beneficiaries submit an Application for Owner Category License by June 12, 2022.

20           5.    On May 26, 2022, the Commission approved a 180-day extension of the State  
21 Gambling License issued to CCCGB, Inc., through November 30, 2022, with the condition that  
22 the Trust apply for and thereafter maintain a Cardroom Business License as a shareholder along  
23 with David Stearns and Theresa Stearns as trustee/trustors of the Trust. On October 27, 2022, the  
24 Bureau send a second addendum letter to the Commission.

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27           <sup>1</sup> Theresa Stearns was identified as the spouse of David Stearns, with only community  
28 property interest in CCCGB, Inc.



1 and thereafter maintain a Cardroom Business License pursuant to Business and Professions Code  
2 section 19852, subdivisions (a) and (b).”

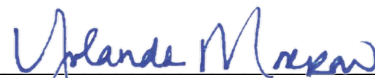
3 12. On August 8, 2022, David Stearns submitted to the Bureau a newly issued stock  
4 certificate reflecting that the 2,000 shares formally held in the Trust were re-issued to David and  
5 Theresa Stearns, as community property. The new stock certificate required Theresa Sterns to  
6 submit an Application for an Owner Category License as a shareholder of CCCGB, Inc.

7 13. On October 18, 2022, the Bureau was provided with newly issued stock certificates  
8 for CCCGB, Inc., indicating that David Sterns was the sole shareholder. The transfers of stock in  
9 CCCGB, Inc., the holder of a state gambling license without Commission approval was a  
10 violation of Business and Professions Code section 19904.

11 **CONCLUSION**

12 WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters herein alleged,  
13 and that following the hearing, the Commission take action as it may deem appropriate regarding  
14 the Applications submitted by Respondents

15  
16 Dated: April 19, 2024



17 Yolanda Morrow, Director  
18 Bureau of Gambling Control  
19 California Department of Justice  
20 Complainant

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**APPENDIX A**

**BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE**

1. Business and Professions Code section 19805 provides, in part:

(x) “Key employee” means any natural person employed in the operation of a gambling enterprise in a supervisory capacity or empowered to make discretionary decisions that regulate gambling operations, including, without limitation . . . cashier operations supervisors . . . or any other natural person designated as a key employee by the department for reasons consistent with the policies of this chapter.

2. Business and Professions Code section 19811, subdivision (b), provides:

Jurisdiction, including jurisdiction over operation and concentration, and supervision over gambling establishments in this state and over all persons or things having to do with the operation of gambling establishments is vested in the commission.

3. Business and Professions Code section 19823 provides:

(a) The responsibilities of the commission include, without limitation, all of the following:

(1) Assuring that licenses, approvals, and permits are not issued to, or held by, unqualified or disqualified persons, or by persons whose operations are conducted in a manner that is inimical to the public health, safety, or welfare.

(2) Assuring that there is no material involvement, directly or indirectly, with a licensed gambling operation, or the ownership or management thereof, by unqualified or disqualified persons, or by persons whose operations are conducted in a manner that is inimical to the public health, safety, or welfare.

(b) For the purposes of this section, “unqualified person” means a person who is found to be unqualified pursuant to the criteria set forth in Section 19857, and “disqualified person” means a person who is found to be disqualified pursuant to the criteria set forth in Section 19859.

4. Business and Professions Code section 19824 provides, in part:

The commission shall have all powers necessary and proper to enable it fully and effectually to carry out the policies and purposes of this chapter,<sup>2</sup> including, without limitation, the power to do all of the following:

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<sup>2</sup> “Chapter” refers to Business and Professions Code, division 8, chapter 5, (commencing with section 19800), also known as the Gambling Control Act.

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(b) For any cause deemed reasonable by the commission, deny any application for a license, permit, or approval provided for in this chapter or regulations adopted pursuant to this chapter, limit, condition, or restrict any license, permit, or approval, or impose any fine upon any person licensed or approved. The commission may condition, restrict, discipline, or take action against the license of an individual owner endorsed on the license certificate of the gambling enterprise whether or not the commission takes action against the license of the gambling enterprise.

\* \* \*

(d) Take actions deemed to be reasonable to ensure that no ineligible, unqualified, disqualified, or unsuitable persons are associated with controlled gambling activities.

5. Business and Professions Code section 19850 provides, in part:

Every person who, either as owner, lessee, or employee, whether for hire or not, either solely or in conjunction with others, deals, operates, carries on, conducts, maintains, or exposes for play any controlled game in this state, or who receives directly or indirectly, any compensation or reward, or any percentage or share of the money or property played, for keeping, running, or carrying on any controlled game in this state, shall apply for and obtain from the commission, and shall thereafter maintain, a valid state gambling license, key employee license, or work permit, as specified in this chapter.

6. Business and Professions Code section 19853, subdivision (a), provides in part:

The commission, by regulation or order, may require that the following persons register with the commission, apply for a finding of suitability as defined in subdivision (i) of 19805, or apply for a gambling license:

\* \* \*

(3) Any person who does business on the premises of a licensed gambling establishment.

7. Business and Professions Code, section 19854 provides, in part:

(a) Every key employee shall apply for and obtain a key employee license.

(b) No person may be issued a key employee license unless the person would qualify for a state gambling license.

1 8. Business and Professions Code section 19856 provides:

2 (a) Any person who the commission determines is qualified to  
3 receive a state license, having due consideration for the proper  
4 protection of the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents of  
5 the State of California and the declared policy of this state, may be  
6 issued a license. The burden of proving his or her qualifications to  
7 receive any license is on the applicant.

8 (b) An application to receive a license constitutes a request for a  
9 determination of the applicant's general character, integrity, and ability  
10 to participate in, engage in, or be associated with, controlled gambling.

11 (c) In reviewing an application for any license, the commission  
12 shall consider whether issuance of the license is inimical to public  
13 health, safety, or welfare, and whether issuance of the license will  
14 undermine public trust that the gambling operations with respect to  
15 which the license would be issued are free from criminal and dishonest  
16 elements and would be conducted honestly.

17 9. Business and Professions Code section 19857 provides:

18 No gambling license shall be issued unless, based on all of the  
19 information and documents submitted, the commission is satisfied that  
20 the applicant is all of the following:

21 (a) A person of good character, honesty, and integrity.

22 (b) A person whose prior activities, criminal record, if any,  
23 reputation, habits, and associations do not pose a threat to the public  
24 interest of this state, or to the effective regulation and control of  
25 controlled gambling, or create or enhance the dangers of unsuitable,  
26 unfair, or illegal practices, methods, and activities in the conduct of  
27 controlled gambling, or in the carrying on of the business and financial  
28 arrangements incidental thereto.

(c) A person that is in all other respects qualified to be licensed  
as provided in this chapter.

10. Business and Professions Code section 19859 provides, in part:

The commission shall deny a license to any applicant who is  
disqualified for any of the following reasons:

(a) Failure of the applicant to clearly establish eligibility and  
qualification in accordance with this chapter.

(b) Failure of the applicant to provide information,  
documentation, and assurances required by this chapter or requested  
by the chief, or failure of the applicant to reveal any fact material to  
qualification, or the supplying of information that is untrue or  
misleading to a material fact pertaining to the qualification criteria.

1 11. Business and Professions Code section 19866 provides:

2 An applicant for licensing or for any approval or consent required  
3 by this chapter, shall make full and true disclosure of all information  
4 to the department and the commission as necessary to carry out the  
policies of this state relating to licensing, registration, and control of  
gambling.

5 12. Business and Professions Code section 19870 provides:

6 (a) The commission, after considering the recommendation of the  
7 chief<sup>31</sup> and any other testimony and written comments as may be  
8 presented at the meeting, or as may have been submitted in writing to  
9 the commission prior to the meeting, may either deny the application  
or grant a license to an applicant who it determines to be qualified to  
hold the license.

10 (b) When the commission grants an application for a license or  
11 approval, the commission may limit or place restrictions thereon as it  
may deem necessary in the public interest, consistent with the policies  
described in this chapter.

12 (c) If, during a meeting, the commission denies an application,  
13 denies approval, or approves with limits, restrictions, or conditions,  
14 the action shall be stayed for a period of 30 days after the meeting,  
during which the applicant may request an evidentiary hearing. If the  
15 applicant does not file a request for an evidentiary hearing within 30  
16 days, the action of the commission taken at the meeting is final. If the  
17 applicant waives the right to hearing and assents to the action of the  
commission in writing, upon receipt of the waiver by the commission,  
the action shall no longer be stayed. If the applicant files a timely  
request for an evidentiary hearing, the action shall be vacated and the  
application shall be reviewed de novo at the evidentiary hearing.

18 (d) When an application is denied, the commission shall prepare  
19 and file a detailed statement of its reasons for the denial.

20 (e) All proceedings at a meeting of the commission relating to a  
21 license application shall be recorded stenographically or by audio or  
video recording.

22 (f) A decision of the commission denying a license or approval,  
23 or imposing any condition or restriction on the grant of a license or  
24 approval may be reviewed by petition pursuant to Section 1085 of the  
Code of Civil Procedure. Section 1094.5 of the Code of Civil  
25 Procedure shall not apply to any judicial proceeding described in the  
26 foregoing sentence, and the court may grant the petition only if the  
27 court finds that the action of the commission was arbitrary and  
28 capricious, or that the action exceeded the commission's jurisdiction.

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<sup>3</sup> “Chief” refers to the Director of the Bureau. (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 19805, subd. (d).)



1 13. Business and Professions Code section 19871 provides:

2 (a) An evidentiary hearing described in Section 19870 shall be  
3 conducted in accordance with regulations of the commission and as  
4 follows:

5 (1) Oral evidence shall be taken only upon oath or  
6 affirmation.

7 (2) Each party shall have all of the following rights:

8 (A) To call and examine witnesses.

9 (B) To introduce exhibits relevant to the issues  
10 of the case.

11 (C) To cross-examine opposing witnesses on  
12 any matters relevant to the issues, even though the  
13 matter was not covered on direct examination.

14 (D) To impeach any witness, regardless of  
15 which party first called the witness to testify.

16 (E) To offer rebuttal evidence.

17 (3) If the applicant does not testify in his or her own behalf,  
18 he or she may be called and examined as if under cross-  
19 examination.

20 (4) The hearing need not be conducted according to technical  
21 rules relating to evidence and witnesses. Any relevant evidence  
22 may be considered, and is sufficient in itself to support a finding, if  
23 it is the sort of evidence on which responsible persons are  
24 accustomed to rely in the conduct of serious affairs, regardless of  
25 the existence of any common law or statutory rule that might make  
26 improper the admission of that evidence over objection in a civil  
27 action.

28 (b) This section does not confer upon an applicant a right to  
discovery of the department's<sup>[4]</sup> investigative reports or to require  
disclosure of any document or information the disclosure of which is  
otherwise prohibited by any other provision of this chapter.

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<sup>4</sup> "Department" refers to the Department of Justice. (Bus. & Prof. Code, § 19805, subd. (h).)

1 **CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS**

2 14. California Code of Regulations, title 4, section 12040, subdivision (a) provides, in  
3 part:

4 An application for an initial or renewal license:

5 (1) Will be denied if the Commission finds that the applicant  
6 has not satisfied the requirements of Business and Professions  
Code section 19857; or,

7 (2) Will be denied if the Commission finds that any of the  
8 provisions of Business and Professions Code section 19859 apply  
to the applicant.

9 15. California Code of Regulations, title 4, section 12054 provides:

10 (a) At a Commission meeting, the Commission may take, but is not limited to  
11 taking, one of the following actions:

12 (1) Issue a license, temporary license, interim license, registration, permit, finding  
of suitability, renewal or other approval.

13 (2) Issue a license, work permit, finding of suitability, or other approval with  
14 conditions, restrictions, or limitations, and for a renewal application, issue an interim  
15 renewal license pursuant to Section [12035](#).

16 (3) Deny an application for a license, work permit, finding of suitability, or other  
17 approval, and for a renewal application, issue an interim renewal license pursuant to  
Section [12035](#).

18 (4) Elect to hold or retract an evidentiary hearing in accordance with  
19 Section [12056](#) and, for a renewal application, issue an interim renewal license pursuant to  
20 Section [12035](#). The Commission will identify those issues for which it requires additional  
information or consideration related to the applicant's suitability.

21 (5) Table or continue an item for consideration at a subsequent meeting, for any  
22 purpose, including obtaining new or additional information from the applicant, Bureau or  
23 Commission staff, provided that in the case of renewal applications, the Commission must  
act on the application before the license expires.

24 (6) Extend a cardroom category license, TPPPS category license, registration, or  
25 finding of suitability for up to 180 calendar days, as necessary, if an applicant has  
26 submitted their renewal application prior to the original expiration date of the current  
license, Commission work permit, registration, or finding of suitability, and the  
Commission is unable to act on the application prior to the expiration date.

27 (7) Approve or deny a request for withdrawal pursuant to Section [12015](#).  
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1 (8) Make a finding of abandonment pursuant to subsection (c) of Section [12017](#).

2 (9) If the Bureau has filed an accusation with the Commission pursuant to  
3 Business and Professions Code section 19930 prior to Commission action on a renewal  
4 application, the Commission will issue an interim renewal license pursuant to  
Section [12035](#).

5 (10) Issue a default decision pursuant to Section 12057.

6 (11) Consider a request for reconsideration pursuant to Section [12064](#).

7 (b) An applicant does not have a right to an evidentiary hearing pursuant to  
8 Section [12056](#) if the Commission approves or denies a request for withdrawal pursuant to  
9 paragraph (5) of subsection (a) or makes a finding of abandonment pursuant to paragraph  
10 (6) of subsection (a), and that decision is final when issued, unless the Commission  
specifies otherwise.

11 16. California Code of Regulations, title 4, section 12056, subdivision (a) provides, in  
12 part:

13 If the Commission elects to hold an evidentiary hearing, the  
14 hearing will be conducted as a GCA hearing under Section 12060,  
15 unless the Executive Director or the Commission determines the  
hearing should be conducted as an APA hearing under Section  
12058 . . . .

16 17. California Code of Regulations, title 4, section 12060, provides:

17 (a) If the Executive Director determines it is appropriate, he or she may set an  
18 application for consideration at a GCA hearing in advance of a meeting pursuant to  
19 Section 12054. The Executive Director will give notice to the applicant, pursuant to  
20 paragraph (2) subsection (c) of Section 12052, to the Office of the Attorney General,  
21 and to the Bureau no later than 90 calendar days in advance of the GCA hearing. The  
Executive Director's determination will be based on information contained in the  
Bureau's report or other appropriate sources including, without limitation, a request  
from the Bureau or applicant as well as the Commission's operational considerations.

22 (b) When a GCA hearing is elected pursuant to Section 12056, subsection (a), the  
23 Executive Director will give notice to the applicant, pursuant to paragraph (2)  
subsection (c) of Section 12052, to the Office of the Attorney General, and to the  
Bureau no later than 60 calendar days in advance of the GCA hearing.

24 (c) An applicant may request that his, her, or its GCA hearing be held at a Southern  
25 California location instead of the Commission's principal office in Sacramento, by  
26 completing the appropriate section on the Notice of Defense, CGCC-CH1-03 (Rev.  
08/21). The request must be made on the initial Notice of Defense form submitted to  
the Commission and Bureau within the timeframes specified on the form.

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1 (1) The Executive Director will approve a Southern California GCA hearing, if the  
2 request is timely made on the initial Notice of Defense form and meets all of the  
following criteria:

3 (A) The GCA hearing is estimated by Commission staff to last no longer than four  
4 hours.

5 (B) The primary residence of the applicant is located in one of the following counties:  
6 Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, San  
Bernardino, Santa Barbara, or Ventura.

7 (C) A GCA hearing will be noticed for a Southern California location only when it is  
8 in the best public interest, promotes judicial economy, and comports with the  
Commission's availability.

9 (2) If at any time before the hearing, the Executive Director determines that the  
10 criteria in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of paragraph (1) are no longer met,  
Commission staff may cancel the Southern California GCA hearing and issue a new  
notice for a hearing at the Commission's principal office in Sacramento.

11 (d) The presiding officer and her or his support staff will have no communication  
12 with the Commission or Commission staff upon the merits of an application prior to  
the evidentiary hearing. The Executive Director will designate a presiding officer  
which will be:

13 (1) A member of the Commission's legal staff; or,

14 (2) An Administrative Law Judge.

15 (e) The applicant or the complainant, or the applicant and the complainant, may  
16 request a continuance in writing to the Executive Director stating the reason for the  
17 continuance and any proposed future hearing dates. The Executive Director or  
18 Commission may approve the request. For a Southern California GCA hearing, if a  
19 continuance is granted, the hearing may be scheduled in Sacramento or Southern  
California based on the criteria specified in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of  
paragraph (1) of subsection (c).

20 (f) The complainant will provide to the applicant, subject to subsection (b) of Section  
21 12056, at least 45 calendar days prior to the GCA hearing, and the applicant must  
provide to the complainant, at least 30 calendar days prior to the GCA hearing, the  
following items:

22 (1) A list of potential witnesses with the general subject of the testimony of each  
23 witness;

24 (2) Copies of all documentary evidence intended to be introduced at the hearing and  
not previously provided;

25 (3) Reports or statements of parties and witnesses, if available; and

26 (4) All other written comments, writings, or other items containing relevant evidence.

27 (g) The provisions of subsection (f) of this section provide the exclusive right to and  
28 method of discovery between the applicant and complainant to a GCA hearing.  
Discovery is not permitted upon a Commission member or an advisor of the

1 Commission unless a showing is made that they have direct personal factual  
2 information pertaining to material issues related to the application at issue and the  
3 information to be gained from the Commission member or advisor of the Commission  
4 is not available through any other sources.

5 (h) A presiding officer will rule on the admissibility of evidence and on any  
6 objections raised except for objections raised under subsection (h). A ruling by the  
7 presiding officer is final.

8 (1) In advance of the GCA hearing, upon a motion of a party or by order of the  
9 presiding officer, the presiding officer may conduct a pre-hearing conference, either  
10 in person, via teleconference, or by email exchange, subject to the presiding officer's  
11 availability and will issue a pre-hearing order if appropriate or requested by either  
12 party. The pre-hearing conference and order may address the following:

13 (A) Evidentiary issues;

14 (B) Witness and exhibit lists;

15 (C) Alterations in the Bureau recommendation;

16 (D) Stipulations for undisputed facts and/or the admission of evidence including  
17 without limitation the Bureau's report;

18 (E) Authorizing offsite livestreaming appearances for parties or witnesses if good  
19 cause has been presented and only if the process for offsite livestreaming has been  
20 approved by the Executive Director; and,

21 (F) Other issues that may be deemed appropriate to promote the orderly and prompt  
22 conduct of the hearing.

23 (2) The GCA hearing need not be conducted according to technical rules of evidence.  
24 Any relevant evidence may be considered, and is sufficient in itself to support  
25 findings if it is the sort of evidence on which reasonable persons are accustomed to  
26 rely in the conduct of serious affairs, regardless of the existence of any common law  
27 or statutory rule that might make improper the admission of that evidence over  
28 objection in a civil action.

(i) The Commission may, at any time upon a showing of prejudice by the objecting  
party:

(1) Prohibit the testimony of any witness or the introduction of any documentary  
evidence that has not been disclosed pursuant to subsection (f); or

(2) Continue any meeting or hearing as necessary to mitigate any prejudice.

(j) The complainant will present all facts and information in the Bureau report, if any,  
and the results of the Bureau's background investigation, and the basis for any  
recommendation, if the Bureau filed one with the Commission according to Business  
and Professions Code section 19868, to enable the Commission to make an informed  
decision on whether the applicant has met his, her, or its burden of proof. The  
complainant may but is not required to recommend or seek any particular outcome  
during the evidentiary hearing, unless it so chooses.

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(k) The burden of proof is always on the applicant to prove his, her, or its qualifications to receive any license or other approval under the Act.

(l) The applicant may choose to represent himself, herself, or itself, or may retain an attorney or lay representative. Lay representatives may assist the applicant but are not authorized to serve as an attorney as otherwise defined and regulated by state law.

(m) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (i), the complainant and applicant will have the right to call and examine witnesses under oath; to introduce relevant exhibits and documentary evidence; to cross-examine opposing witnesses on any relevant matter, even if the matter was not covered in direct examination; to impeach any witness, regardless of which party first called the witness to testify; and to offer rebuttal evidence. If the applicant does not testify on his, her or its behalf, the applicant may be called and examined, under oath, as if under cross-examination.

(n) Oral evidence will be taken upon oath or affirmation, which may be administered by the Executive Director, a member of the Commission, or the presiding officer if an Administrative Law Judge.

(o) At the conclusion of the evidentiary hearing, the members of the Commission will take the matter under submission, may discuss the matter in a closed session meeting, and may schedule future closed session meetings for deliberation.