## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD

## MEETING

IN THE MATTER OF: Sav-on Liquors, Inc., t/a Sav-on Liquors

1414 14th Street, N.W. : Show Cause Retailer A - ANC 2F : Hearing (Status)

License No. 178 Case #17-CC-00116 (Sale to Minor Violation,:

Failed to Take Steps Necessary to Ascertain Legal Drinking Age, No ABC Manager on Duty)

> Wednesday March 7, 2018

The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board met in the Alcoholic Beverage Control Hearing Room, Reeves Building, 2000 14th Street, N.W., Suite 400S, Washington, D.C. 20009, Chairperson Donovan W. Anderson, presiding.

## PRESENT:

DONOVAN W. ANDERSON, Chairperson NICK ALBERTI, Member BOBBY CATO, JR., Member MIKE SILVERSTEIN, Member JAMES SHORT, Member

## ALSO PRESENT:

PETER CHATTRABHUTI, OAG WILLIAM DRAKE, Attorney for Licensee LETAI MERESIE, Licensee

| 1  | P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S                            |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|--|
| 2  | 10:40 a.m.                                       |  |  |  |
| 3  | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. The             |  |  |  |
| 4  | next case on our calendar is Case No. 17-CC-     |  |  |  |
| 5  | 00116, Sav-on Liquors, License No. 178.          |  |  |  |
| 6  | Would the parties, please, approach              |  |  |  |
| 7  | and identify themselves for the record, please?  |  |  |  |
| 8  | MR. CHATTRABHUTI: Good morning,                  |  |  |  |
| 9  | Members of the Board. Pete Chattrabhuti on       |  |  |  |
| 10 | behalf of the District of Columbia.              |  |  |  |
| 11 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Good morning,              |  |  |  |
| 12 | Mr. Chattrabhuti.                                |  |  |  |
| 13 | MR. DRAKE: Good morning, Members of              |  |  |  |
| 14 | the Board. Will Drake on behalf of Letai Meresie |  |  |  |
| 15 | of Sav-on Liquors. I am an attorney.             |  |  |  |
| 16 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Drake,                 |  |  |  |
| 17 | you're an attorney?                              |  |  |  |
| 18 | MR. DRAKE: Yes.                                  |  |  |  |
| 19 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. And             |  |  |  |
| 20 | can  |  |  |  |
| 21 | MR. DRAKE: Can you introduce                     |  |  |  |
| 22 | yourself?  |  |  |  |
|    |  |  |  |  |

| 1  | MS. MERESIE: My name is Letai                    |
|----|--|
| 2  | Meresie. I owner of Sav-on Liquors.              |
| 3  | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Okay.                      |
| 4  | MS. MERESIE: 1414 14th Street, N.W.              |
| 5  | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Can you spell              |
| 6  | your name for the record, please? And there is a |
| 7  | sign-in sheet, I need you to sign your name in.  |
| 8  | Everyone, please, sign their name in also, too.  |
| 9  | MS. MERESIE: L-E-T-A-I my first name             |
| LO | and my last name M-E-R-E-S-I-E.                  |
| L1 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you,                 |
| L2 | ma'am. Sir, I'm sorry, give me your name again.  |
| L3 | MR. DRAKE: William Drake.                        |
| L4 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Drake.                 |
| L5 | Okay. I guess there is a preliminary matter and  |
| L6 | I'll ask Mr. Chattrabhuti, there is some         |
| L7 | confusion, at least on my part, regarding        |
| L8 | ownership. So can you clarify that for the       |
| L9 | record what is going on with ownership, please?  |
| 20 | MR. CHATTRABHUTI: Yes. And if I make             |
| 21 | any misrepresentations, I'm sure Mr. Drake will  |
| 22 | correct me.                                      |

To my understanding, at the time of these events, the previous owner on the license was deceased and that the license had transferred over to his wife upon his death and they have gone through the process and had gone through the process of transferring the license to the current licensee, at the time of the events as well.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So did these incidents occur during this individual's watch or did it occur on the previous owner's watch?

MR. CHATTRABHUTI: My understanding is the license had already transferred by the time that these events occurred, so it was -- she was the owner at the -- I believe it was September of last year that this event occurred.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. So our -- and I'm asking questions I should know the answer, but you know, lawyers should not ask that. I don't know the answer to this, so who is the owner of this establishment as of today, as far as your records are concerned?

MR. CHATTRABHUTI: As far as the 1 2 representations that have been made today that the person sitting at the table, I do not mean to 3 4 misstate your name, but she is the owner of the 5 establishment currently. CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. 6 Mr, 7 Drake, do you want to make any representation before --8 9 MR. DRAKE: Yes. Ms. Meresie's 10 husband was the owner and licensee of the establishment. He died from brain cancer in July 11 12 of last year, July 17th of last year. As soon as 13 he passed away, we began the process of 14 transferring the license to her name. And my 15 understanding is that had occurred prior to the 16 event that brought us here today, which was on 17 September 30th of last year. 18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. All 19 Mr. Chattrabhuti, you know, you need to right. 20 appear before me more often, so your name will 21 just roll off the tip of my tongue.

All right.

MR. CHATTRABHUTI:

So I apologize 1 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: 2 to you also. Are there any preliminary matters in 3 4 this case? 5 MR. CHATTRABHUTI: Yes. The parties have an Offer in Compromise to bring before the 6 7 Board this morning. CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And what's the 8 9 Offer in Compromise, sir? 10 MR. CHATTRABHUTI: For Charge 1, the 11 sale to minor, there will be a \$3,500 fine 12 payable within 30 days or the license shall be 13 suspended indefinitely until the fine is paid. In addition, the license will be 14 15 suspended for 10 days with four days served and 16 six days stayed for one year. 17 All employees who serve alcoholic 18 beverage in the licensed establishment must 19 complete an alcohol training program within 3 20 months of the OIC's date. 21 And in addition, the respondent must 22 serve the five days of suspension that was stayed

from a previous case, which is 16-CC-00094. 1 2 is for a total of nine days of suspension served. For Charge 2, the failure to take 3 4 reasonable steps necessary to ascertain legal 5 drinking age, there will be a fine of \$1,000 payable within 30 days or the license shall be 6 7 suspended indefinitely until the fine is paid. Additionally, the license shall be 8 9 suspended for five days with all five days stayed 10 for one year. 11 And then for Charge 3 --12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Hold on, hold 13 on, hold on. You said five days suspension and 14 they are stayed for one year? That is correct for 15 MR. CHATTRABHUTI: 16 Charge 2. 17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. And 18 for Charge 3? 19 MR. CHATTRABHUTI: For Charge 3, no 20 ABC Manager/owner on premises, given the 21 representations, this charge would come with a

warning. No additional requirements for this,

for Charge 3.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Going back to Charge 1, you said that there would be nine days served. What are the days that would be served?

MR. CHATTRABHUTI: The suspension would start on March 11 and run consecutively for nine days, so I believe the end date would be March 19th.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Well, it can't be believe. You have to look at the calendar.

MR. CHATTRABHUTI: Well, March 19th.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So it's March 11 through March 19th? Because if -- it will be written in the order, so we need to be clear what the days are. So the nine days are -- so that's nine days, March 11th through March 19th. Do you need a moment to -- because we need to know the exact dates, so maybe if you guys want to take the time to figure out the days?

All right. We are back. Mr.

Chattrabhuti, are you -- do we have the days?

MR. CHATTRABHUTI: Yes. The days

would be March 11 through March 19th.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: March, so the nine days served would be March the 11th through March 19th. And March 11 is this weekend, right?

MEMBER SHORT: May I ask what days they are normally closed?

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Do you know what is the -- well, this is a whole week, Mr. Short.

MEMBER SHORT: Yes, okay.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. So that's the OIC?

MR. CHATTRABHUTI: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. Mr.

Drake, I just need to get some clarification from
you, because I'm not sure. I'm getting some
information from the Board that there is no
transfer, that she is not actually the owner
because the property has not been transferred, so
what is the representation from your client
regarding the ownership that she owns the
establishment and that it was transferred into

| 1  | her name?   |
|----|---|
| 2  | MR. DRAKE: May I have one moment?                 |
| 3  | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Sure. I mean,               |
| 4  | we can take a recess. Let's recess these          |
| 5  | proceedings for a couple of minutes, so you can   |
| 6  | talk to your client and get some clarification.   |
| 7  | All right.  |
| 8  | MR. DRAKE: Thank you.                             |
| 9  | (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter             |
| 10 | went off the record at 10:48 a.m. and resumed at  |
| 11 | 10:51 a.m.)                                       |
| 12 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. We               |
| 13 | are back on the record. Mr. Drake, any            |
| 14 | representation you want to make before I ask you  |
| 15 | about the settlement?                             |
| 16 | MR. DRAKE: Yes, sir. The                          |
| 17 | understanding that I have now after speaking with |
| 18 | counsel for the Board is that the transfer        |
| 19 | process may have begun, but has not yet been      |
| 20 | approved, but that the process is ongoing.        |
| 21 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. So               |
|    |   |

it's my understanding that the OIC that was

presented by the Government is that there is a 1 2 fine of, for Charge 1, \$3,500 payable in 30 days. That there is a 10 day suspension with four days 3 4 served and six days stayed for one year. That all employees who sell alcohol 5 will undergo training within 90 days. 6 That five days -- that there is a five 7 day suspension from a previous case, meaning that 8 9 for Charge 1 nine days -- there is a nine day 10 suspension for Charge 1 and the nine days will be 11 served March the 11th through March the 19th. 12 That on Charge 2, there is a fine of 13 \$1,000 payable in 30 days. That there will be a 14 five day suspension and all five days will be 15 stayed for one year. 16 And for Charge 3, a written warning 17 will be issued. 18 Is this your understanding, sir, of 19 the Offer in Compromise? 20 MR. DRAKE: Yes, sir. 21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And is your 22 client aware that by accepting an Offer in

Compromise, that she is giving up her right to a hearing?

MR. DRAKE: She is.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And is your client also aware that by accepting an Offer in Compromise, that she is giving up her right to appeal this matter?

MR. DRAKE: She is.

CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. Any questions by any Board Members?

The Board will take this matter under advisement.

So as Chairperson of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board for the District of Columbia and in accordance with Section 405 of the Open Meetings Amendment Act of 2010, I move that the ABC Board hold a closed meeting for the purpose of seeking legal advice from our counsel on Case No. 17-CC-00116, Sav-on Liquors, per Section 405(b)(4) of the Open Meetings Amendment Act of 2010, and deliberating upon Case No. 17-CC-00116, Sav-on Liquors, for the reasons cited

| 1  | in Section 405(b)(13) of the Open Meetings        |
|----|---|
| 2  | Amendment Act of 2010. Is there a second?         |
| 3  | MEMBER SHORT: Second.                             |
| 4  | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Short has               |
| 5  | seconded the motion. I will now take a roll call  |
| 6  | vote on the motion before us now that it has been |
| 7  | seconded.   |
| 8  | Mr. Silverstein?                                  |
| 9  | MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: I agree.                      |
| 10 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Short?                  |
| 11 | MEMBER SHORT: I agree.                            |
| 12 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Alberti?                |
| 13 | MEMBER ALBERTI: I agree.                          |
| 14 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Cato?                   |
| 15 | MEMBER CATO: I agree.                             |
| 16 | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Anderson?               |
| 17 | I agree.  |
| 18 | As it appears the motion has passed,              |
| 19 | I hereby give notice that the ABC Board will hold |
| 20 | a closed meeting in the ABC Board conference room |
| 21 | today pursuant to the Open Meetings Amendment Act |
| 22 | of 2010.  |

We will be in recess. We will be back 1 2 shortly. Thank you. (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter 3 went off the record at 10:55 a.m. and resumed at 4 5 10:56 a.m.) CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. 6 7 We're back on the record for Sav-on Liquors. I make a motion that the fine of 8 9 \$3,500 payable in 30 days with a 10 day 10 suspension, four days served and six days 11 suspended for one year; that all employees who 12 serve alcohol undergo training within 90 days; that there is also a five day suspension served 13 14 from a previous case, meaning that the establishment will be closed for nine days. 15 16 nine days that it will be closed for alcohol 17 sales are March the 11th through March the 19th. 18 For Charge 2, that there is a \$1,000 19 fine payable in 30 days, five days suspension and 20 all five days will be stayed for one year. 21 And for Charge 3, that a warning be

Is there a second?

22

issued.

| 1          | MEMBER SHORT: Second.                              |
|------------|--|
| 2          | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Short has                |
| 3          | seconded the motion.                               |
| 4          | Those in favor say aye.                            |
| 5          | ALL: Aye.  |
| 6          | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Those opposed?               |
| 7          | The matter passes 5-0-0.                           |
| 8          | We will issue are we issuing a                     |
| 9          | Board Order?                                       |
| LO         | PARTICIPANT: Yes.                                  |
| L1         | CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. So                |
| L2         | we will be issuing a Board Order, but the it's     |
| L3         | clear that the suspension will start on March the  |
| L <b>4</b> | 11th. So March 11th through March 19th. All right. |
| L5         | Thank you.   |
| L6         | (Whereupon, the Show Cause (Status)                |
| L7         | Hearing was concluded at 10:58 a.m.)               |
| L8         |  |
| L9         |  |
| 20         |  |
| 21         |  |
| 22         |  |
|            |  |

| 1                                       |
|---|
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# Е

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| Manager 1:11               |                            |                             |                        |
| II                         | •                          | •                           | •                      |

|                              | I                      | I                           | I                          |
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## <u>C E R T I F I C A T E</u>

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Sav-on Liquors, Inc.

Before: DC ABRA

Date: 03-07-18

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Court Reporter

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