

# PA Malt and Brewed Beverage Industry Promotion Program Board Meeting

**July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 – 09:00 a.m. – 01:00 p.m.**

Virtual on Teams

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## Agenda

09:00 a.m.	<b>Call to Order</b>	Chair
09:05 a.m.	<b>Approval of Minutes – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025</b>	Board
09:10 a.m.	<b>Review &amp; Discuss Full Proposals</b>	Board
11:00 a.m.	<b>Break/Lunch</b>	Board
11:30 a.m.	<b>Review &amp; Discuss Full Proposals</b>	Board
12:30 p.m.	<b>Other Business</b>	Board
12:45 p.m.	<b>Public Comment</b>	Board
1:00 p.m.	<b>Adjourn</b>	Board

## PENNSYLVANIA MALT AND BREWED BEVERAGE INDUSTRY PROMOTION BOARD

Member	Member
<p>Jeffrey Reeder <b>Chair</b></p> <p>Ace Distributing 80 Industrial Drive Chambersburg, PA 17201 717-816-6194 Personal Email: <a href="mailto:jreeder@acebeer.com">jreeder@acebeer.com</a></p>	<p>Michele Meloy Burchfield</p> <p>The MBM Group 1382 Old Freeport Road, Suite 3B Pittsburgh, PA 15238 Allegheny County 412-508-0421 (mobile) Personal Email: <a href="mailto:mburchfield@thembmgroup.net">mburchfield@thembmgroup.net</a></p>
<p>Sean C. Casey</p> <p>Church Brew Works 3525 Liberty Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15201 Allegheny County 412-292-7761 (mobile) Personal Email: <a href="mailto:caseypgh5@gmail.com">caseypgh5@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>Laura Lacy</p> <p>Attic Brewing Co. 36 West Logan Street Philadelphia, PA 19144-6019 Philadelphia County 708-204-7376 Personal Email: <a href="mailto:laura@atticbrewing.com">laura@atticbrewing.com</a></p>
<p>Frank Pistella <b>Vice Chair</b></p> <p>Pistella Beer Distributors 5518 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15224 Allegheny County 412-361-0915 (office) 412-580-5326 (mobile) Personal Email: <a href="mailto:fpistella@gmail.com">fpistella@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>John Matter <b>Advisory Member</b></p> <p>Juniata College, Department of Biology 1700 Moore Street Huntingdon, PA 16652 Huntingdon County 814-641-3585 (office) 814-599-9303 (mobile) Personal Email: <a href="mailto:matter@juniata.edu">matter@juniata.edu</a></p>

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**PENNSYLVANIA MALT AND BREWED BEVERAGE INDUSTRY PROMOTION BOARD**

**Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**

**2301 North Cameron Street**

**First Floor, Lobby Conference Room**

**Harrisburg, PA 17110**

**Minutes of the April 30, 2025 Board Meeting**

Public notice of the April 30, 2025 Pennsylvania Malt and Brewed Beverage Industry Promotion Board Meeting was given as stipulated by the Sunshine Law.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Jeffrey Reeder, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Board members in attendance along with Mr. Reeder included Laura Lacy; Michele Meloy-Burchfield, and Sean Casey. Patrick Andrews, and Michael Keefe, were present via Teams.

Also present were Adam Morris, Esquire, and Brooke Christie.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 05-APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion by: Michele Meloy-Burchfield**

**Second by: Sean Casey**

**Passed: Unanimously.**

To approve the Minutes of the March 26, 2025 meeting.

[The motion passed unanimously.]

**STATEWIDE MARKETING CAMPAIGN SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW OF APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS ON APRIL 16, 2025**

[Ms. Meloy-Burchfield reported on she and other Board members attending the agency presentations, noting the significant differences between Mighty Group LLC, and Gatesman. She described Mighty Group LLC, as a small, enthusiastic but inexperienced group that would need to outsource much of the required work, whereas Gatesman was a full-service national agency with the internal capability to meet all needs, including media buying. Gatesman impressed the group with their thorough preparation and passionate delivery, leading her to conclude they were the stronger choice in terms of capability, experience, and enthusiasm.

Chair Reeder concurred with Ms. Burchfield, acknowledging Mighty Group LLC,'s potential but affirming it did not align with their immediate needs for a comprehensive, full-service agency. He was impressed by Gatesman's depth and believed their capabilities would allow for effective execution of the project. Reeder emphasized the purpose of the meeting was to determine

which agencies should be invited to submit full proposals, not to make final decisions. He recommended requesting a full proposal from Gatesman and noted that doing so would require the group to evaluate remaining proposals in the context of limited funding and strategic alignment with the marketing-focused direction of the current year.

Ms. Burchfield added that the committee had already provided Gatesman with feedback to improve their future proposal and reiterated their potential to lead the broader marketing effort. She also emphasized the importance of strategically integrating other marketing-related proposals, such as GK Visual and Bucks County Trail, to create a unified branding initiative.

Chair Reeder formally appointed Ms. Burchfield as the Board's point of contact for Gatesman, citing her authorship of the RFP criteria and evident expertise. He praised her willingness to lead the effort and expressed confidence in the project's direction with her coordination.

Mr. Casey supported the decision, complimenting the quality and depth of the RFP materials that Ms. Burchfield had developed.

Mr. Andrews outlined the next procedural steps, advising the group to review all proposals, reach consensus on which should move forward, and record their decisions in the proposal scoring spreadsheet. He reminded them of the RFP's funding limits—\$700,000 for marketing and \$700,000 for other projects—and explained that full proposals could be requested even if not all could be funded immediately.

Chair Reeder acknowledged the financial constraints but agreed that inviting full proposals exceeding the current budget was reasonable, given that final funding decisions would be made in June. He suggested continuing down the proposal list and evaluating marketing-focused submissions for potential synergy with Gatesman's future proposal.

Ms. Burchfield emphasized that strategically aligning strong independent marketing efforts—such as GK Visual, Erie Trail, and Bucks County—with Gatesman could elevate the overall impact and promote a cohesive message for the Pennsylvania beer industry.

Chair Reeder agreed, underlining the need to support forward-facing marketing proposals to help stimulate a struggling industry and generate momentum at the front end of the business. He proposed inviting all viable marketing proposals for full submissions to explore synergistic potential.

Ms. Lacy cautioned against prematurely assuming Gatesman's involvement, as they had not yet submitted or been approved for funding.

Chair Reeder clarified they were speaking strategically, not operationally, and the current task was to identify promising proposals for full submission.

Mr. Keefe confirmed this approach, explaining that inviting full proposals would allow for later assessment and potential collaboration opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the process.

Chair Reeder stated Gatesman and GK should be invited to submit full proposals based on their concept papers and strategies, while In Focus Enterprise and Mighty Group LLC, Group should not. Chair Reeder emphasized the importance of supporting the Craft Brewers Association due to the national significance of their event and suggested inviting a full proposal. He also proposed adjusting the Mighty Group LLC, Group's score downward, in line with the subcommittee's recommendation, due to strategic misalignment.

Ms. Lacy confirmed the need to adjust Mighty Group LLC's score and supported a new score of 60. Mr. Keefe explained that lowering Mighty Group LLC's score would allow more strategically aligned projects above the cutoff to advance. Ms. Burchfield agreed with reducing Mighty Group LLC's score, suggesting 50–55. The Board collectively decided to revise the scoring.

Mr. Casey recalled a prior decision to separate beer category lift efforts, which was derailed by the unavailability of \$700,000 in funding. Chair Reeder confirmed this, explaining the standalone category lift was merged into the regular funding stream due to bureaucratic delays and statutory limitations.

Mr. Andrews described the funding issue as an administrative problem tied to state statutes and account structures, reaffirming the availability of funds but difficulty accessing them. Chair Reeder clarified that this led to the integration of the category lift into general funding, and potential standalone efforts were postponed.

The Board discussed recalibrating strategy around unified branding and better resource allocation. Chair Reeder suggested thinking creatively about marketing exposure rather than just budget, and Mr. Casey noted that some applicants intentionally inflated requests expecting partial awards. Ms. Burchfield emphasized the need for a centralized agency to develop a branding toolkit for local trails and proposed stronger integration of local initiatives through a hub-and-spoke model.

The Board acknowledged this effort as a long-term strategy, with Ms. Burchfield recommending that future agency contracts account for multi-year commitments and performance metrics. Chair Reeder reiterated that while annual decisions are required, the intent is ongoing support for the category lift project.

Mr. Keefe confirmed invitations would be extended to Gatesman, GK, Visual Bucks, In Focus, and the Craft Brewers Association. Chair Reeder supported inviting the Lake Erie Rail Trail project, and the Board agreed, discussing lab equipment requests and overlapping resources offered by Pittsburgh Brewing Company.

The Board also approved proposal invitations for Point Park, a women-focused beer initiative, and Barrel & Flow, a growing and nationally recognized beer festival. Ms. Lacy and Ms. Burchfield highlighted the event's broad reach and marketing potential, noting a need for better Board visibility and branding at such events.

Chair Reeder moved to invite proposals from Lancaster County but expressed reservations about the Mid-Atlantic Grain Affair, citing limited strategic fit. Ms. Burchfield agreed to lower her score to align with the strategic direction, and the Board decided not to invite some lower-ranked academic proposals.

Mr. Casey advocated for including the “Dry Hop Astringency” research project, citing its value to brewers. Despite Ms. Lacy’s concern that such research does not reach many brewers or align with the current marketing strategy, the Board elected to request a proposal. Scores were adjusted accordingly to meet the threshold.

The Board realigned its selection criteria to favor marketing-focused initiatives with broad impact, refined project scoring, and laid the groundwork for a long-term, unified branding strategy for Pennsylvania’s beer industry.]

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 06-PROPOSALS**

**Motion by: Sean Casey**

**Second by: Laura Lacy**

**Passed: Unanimously.**

Motion that all proposals scored above 70, be requested to submit a more formal grant proposal.

[Ms. Burchfield asked whether the Board would provide feedback to applicants not invited to submit full proposals.

Mr. Casey cautioned against offering individual explanations, noting legal advice and concerns about creating a precedent. Mr. Keefe supported giving minimal justification, referencing practices from other boards like the Wine Board. Ms. Lacy suggested stating that decisions were based solely on scoring.

Chair Reeder proposed a generalized explanation, emphasizing the Board’s new strategic focus on category lift and statewide marketing. He noted that limited funding and a shift in priorities meant some proposals simply did not align with current goals.

Mr. Andrews stressed that constructive feedback improves future proposals and supported the idea of providing basic strategic context. He also recommended including clearer priorities in the next RFP to guide applicants.

Chair Reeder and Ms. Burchfield agreed that generic, unified feedback would be fair and protective, while Mr. Casey reiterated resource constraints. Mr. Andrews countered that feedback has historically been given and can be delivered constructively.

The Board agreed that for this round, strategic focus and budget constraints, would suffice. However, they acknowledged the need for clearer guidance in future RFPs.

Regarding Mighty Group LLC, Ms. Lacy asked whether they would receive specific feedback. Chair Reeder and Mr. Andrews agreed on a tailored but polite explanation, noting that while their strategy aligned, another group presented a more comprehensive approach. Chair Reeder praised the agency's potential but stated the decision came down to comparative presentation strength.]

## **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF CONCEPT PAPERS**

[Mr. Michael Keefe initiated the discussion by asking if the Board should provide guidance or feedback on concept papers moving to the full proposal stage, especially concerning budget reductions or changes in proposed work. Ms. Lacy suggested reviewing the Craft Brewers Conference proposal, particularly the \$350,000 budget and spending on items like glassware.

Mr. Casey supported collaboration between the proposal team and Visit Philly and emphasized focusing on promotional efforts rather than unnecessary expenses like speaker fees or glassware. He also questioned conference attendance and vendor presence, suggesting more targeted local investment. Chair Reeder agreed that this proposal warranted specific feedback and suggested trimming the budget to focus solely on media and promotion in Pennsylvania and the surrounding region.

The Board collectively agreed the \$350,000 request was too high and supported a budget cap of \$200,000. They recommended removing non-essential expenses like equipment, supplies, and speaker fees, and proposed including a component to subsidize admission for small Pennsylvania brewers. The Board agreed this would provide greater value and align with strategic goals.

Chair Reeder emphasized the importance of feedback being clear and constructive, suggesting the applicants be encouraged—but not required—to collaborate with Visit Philly. He reiterated that feedback should focus on media, promotion, and offering free admission to PA brewers.

Mr. Andrews pointed out inconsistencies in the budget totals, and Ms. Lacy clarified a likely error in the budget spreadsheet. The Board confirmed the \$200,000 cap, expressing that further trimming might still be necessary depending on the final proposal.

Chair Reeder noted, while the Craft Brewers Conference warranted immediate feedback, other proposals should be reviewed in full before issuing comments. He noted that future collaboration across campaigns would benefit from consistent branding and strategy, potentially guided by Gatesman's work. Mr. Casey and Ms. Burchfield discussed previous campaigns and affirmed confidence in Gatesman to develop effective, unified branding for the Board's efforts.

Mr. Keefe suggested revisiting the idea of encouraging groups like Bucks County, Erie, Lancaster, InFocus, and GK to collaborate with the Gatesman Agency. He also proposed that the Barrel & Flow project be asked to incorporate more visible Board recognition during their event, possibly through branding or programming mentions.

Chair Reeder responded that such coordination was premature, as Gatesman had not yet been officially selected. He emphasized the importance of following proper protocol and not getting ahead of the process, noting that decisions would be more appropriate after contract discussions in June. He also felt it was too early to provide tactical feedback to projects like Barrel & Flow without knowing final collaborators.

Mr. Casey agreed with Chair Reeder's caution, noting that approved applicants have previously opted not to proceed.

Ms. Burchfield asked for clarification about the June 25th meeting format, and Mr. Keefe confirmed it would be a virtual review of submitted proposals rather than live presentations unless otherwise requested.

Mr. Keefe also confirmed with Mr. Andrews that no additional motions were needed beyond the previously approved motion to request full proposals from applicants scoring above 71. Chair Reeder concluded that the Board was in good shape moving forward.

Mr. Casey asked whether the reimbursement process under the Department of Agriculture (Ag) would be more flexible compared to the stricter and problematic system previously used by the PLCB, citing past issues with delayed payments and unclear requirements.

Mr. Andrews assured the Board that the Department of Agriculture would offer a more cooperative and consistent process. He emphasized that while documentation and standard reimbursement requirements would remain, applicants would be treated fairly and with trust. He cited past issues like the GK Visual case under PLCB oversight as examples of unnecessary bureaucratic rigidity that would not occur under the new administration. He added that Ag's only limitation was a lack of deep expertise in liquor code compliance, particularly for projects involving physical alcohol, but those situations would be rare and handled with caution.

Chair Reeder agreed, stating that previous problems originated from the PLCB, and the new structure under Ag should function smoothly. He noted that past issues had hurt participation, but with statutory changes and a clearer, more professional approach, interest was rebounding.

Mr. Andrews added that their long-term goal included getting Penn State to remove the beer and wine grant programs from their "high-risk" list, which was a result of past PLCB-related challenges. He emphasized the importance of encouraging research institutions to reengage with the programs and committed to reaching out to Penn State to communicate that the new system is more stable and applicant-friendly.

Ms. Burchfield encouraged Andrews to also be transparent with Penn State about the Board's current focus on marketing and revenue generation rather than research, to avoid any confusion about why some academic proposals may not receive funding.



Chair Reeder concurred, stating that future funding rounds should be more directionally focused, and the Board should clearly communicate its evolving priorities to all potential applicants to ensure transparency and alignment.

Mr. Keefe stated he was still waiting on legislative reports for three projects from round five and noted that additional reports would be due for round nine. He mentioned he had reached out to individuals regarding the missing reports.

Ms. Burchfield acknowledged she was behind on her reports and promised to submit them soon.

Mr. Keefe added that two reports from Mr. Pistella were also outstanding, and he would follow up with him directly.

Mr. Keefe introduced a funding issue from a round eight project for Batesburg. He explained that contracts for projects funded the previous year had not yet been sent out, causing some awardees concern. He confirmed that the contracts had been finalized and approved by legal, with only final steps remaining before distribution. He also noted that Batesburg had requested a budget amendment.

Ms. Burchfield asked whether the amendment included a request for additional funds, to which Mr. Keefe clarified it did not. Instead, Batesburg requested to shift \$2,000 from their \$25,000 contractual services line to increase their supplies budget from \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Mr. Casey asked for input from staff. Mr. Andrews stated the adjustment was reasonable and common in grant programs, and said he would approve it if he were a voting member. He added that approval would allow the change to be incorporated into the contract.

Chair Reeder and the Board generally agreed the amendment was minor and routine.]

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 07-BUDGET REALLOCATION**

**Motion by: Laura Lacy**

**Second by: Michele Meloy-Burchfield**

**Passed: Unanimously.**

Motion to approve the Budget Amendment Request for the Batesburg Project to reallocate the \$2,000 difference to their supplies budget

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

[Mr. Patrick Andrews explained that the Batesburg budget amendment only needed approval from the Secretary before being sent to the contract's office. Mr. Casey asked whether the contracts dated back to July of the previous year, which Chair Reeder confirmed.

Mr. Andrews clarified the delay was due to Act 57, which took effect in mid-September, followed by a slow funding transfer and a lengthy contract review process involving both the Office of General Counsel and the Attorney General. Mr. Casey inquired about contract timelines, asking whether recipients would be forced to compress work into the current calendar year or be allowed a full 12-month cycle. Mr. Andrews responded that while they must follow the RFP's original terms, extensions were now more flexible without the constraints of the PLCB.

The Board agreed that future contract cycles would be faster, since this year's delay was due to the new Act. Mr. Andrews confirmed the newly approved contract could be used for at least five years and wouldn't require repeating the full review process unless new terms were added. Chair Reeder expressed relief about this improvement.

Mr. Casey asked whether Batesburg was in its second year of funding. Ms. Burchfield confirmed it was their second year, and they had applied for a third year in the current round.]

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

[Mr. Michael Keefe identified a public member previously present in the meeting.]

#### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025 - 08-ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by: Michele Melroy-Burchfield**

**Second by: Sean Casey**

**Passed: Unanimously.**

To adjourn the meeting.

There being no further business, the Pennsylvania Malt and Brewed Beverage Industry Promotion Board Meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Emma Edwards, April 30, 2025