

LIQUOR COMMITTEE MEETING
April 15, 2019

A meeting of the City of Jackson Liquor Committee was held on April 15, 2019 at 6:00 P.M. at the new Jackson Municipal Liquor Store building located at 101 Prospect Lane in Jackson, Minnesota. Those attending included Liquor Committee members Brandon Finck and Dave Cushman, City Administrator Matt Skaret, Liquor Store Manager Michelle Bratrud and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff. (Liquor Committee member Matt Madden was absent.) (A quorum of the Liquor Committee was present.)

Overview of the New Liquor Store

Cushman commented the new liquor store looks nice. He said he's heard nothing but good compliments about the store.

Finck noted the store's wine cooler looks nice. He said customers will probably take some time to shop because of the displays and aesthetics of the new store.

Cushman concurred with Finck.

Bratrud said she has seen new customers from Jackson at the new liquor store that she never saw shopping at the old store.

Bratrud said at first she thought the storage area in the rear of the store seemed kind of small, but with the capability of keeping so much merchandise on the sales floor, the storage area works out nice and helps to keep things organized.

Liquor Store Manager's Report

Bratrud reported sales for March of 2019 was \$97,610.56 compared to sales of \$101,551.05 in March of 2018, a decrease of \$3,940.49. Bratrud noted the liquor store was closed four days during March. She said three of those days were to move from the old location to the new store. Bratrud also noted there were more colder days in March of this year compared to March of 2018.

Regarding customer count, Bratrud said there were 4,069 customers in March of this year compared to 4,530 in March of 2018, a decrease of 461.

Bratrud said the ticket average actually went up a \$1.57. She said the ticket average was \$23.98 for March of this year compared to \$22.41 in March of last year. Bratrud said individual customers are purchasing more items when they're shopping at the store. She pointed out the daily average for wine sales at the old liquor store was less than \$200. Bratrud said she didn't know if they have even seen daily average wine sales less than \$200 since the new liquor store has opened. She said average daily wines sales at the new store have been between \$300 and \$600. Bratrud noted during the first couple of weeks that the new liquor store was open wine sales were between \$800 and \$900 a day.

Bratrud said liquor store purchases in March of 2019 were at \$93,735.70 compared to purchases of \$68,521.34 in March of 2018, an increase of \$25,214.36. She explained the purchases were up due to restocking.

Bratrud said gross profits were \$24,520.71 for March of this year compared to gross profits of \$26,434.41 in March of 2018, a decrease of \$1,913.70.

Bratrud noted there were 23 days of operation in March of 2019 compared to 27 days in March of last year, a decrease of four days.

Regarding year-to-date sales, Bratrud said sales have totaled \$268,293.39 so far this year compared to \$267,649.92 by this time last year, up \$643.47. Bratrud noted so far through April 13th, 2019, liquor store sales are up \$3,314 over last year. She noted the liquor store had \$10,000 in sales on a Friday last April because that was the weekend of the big blizzard so there were a lot of customers stocking up. Bratrud said during the most recent storm, business at the liquor store was actually slower. She said it may have been due to people being busy with no electricity or less people travelling to Jackson because AGCO was closed down.

Finck pointed out it was also a weekday blizzard verses a weekend.

Bratrud said the most recent storm actually hurt business at the liquor store.

Finck asked Bratrud how much more inventory in dollar value does the new liquor store have verses the old downtown liquor store.

Bratrud said she didn't have those figures immediately available, but could compile the information. She said she doesn't think the new liquor store has a huge amount more than the old store did.

Finck asked Bratrud if she's seen any new local customer traffic from the Industrial Park area of town at the new store that didn't she didn't see shop at the old store downtown.

Bratrud said she's seen a little bit of an increase. Bratrud said she's probably seen more new out-of-town customers than in-town customers.

Bratrud asked if the signs pointing out the direction to the liquor store that were downtown could be posted in the vicinity of the new liquor store.

Skaret said the signs can be posted anywhere as long as they are posted off the road right-of-way.

Bratrud said until the new store gets it's highway sign, she's still hearing comments that people are having a hard time finding the new store.

Finck said he thought that would have gotten better with the new signage on the front of the store.

Cushman suggested putting one of the liquor store street signs from downtown on City property along Industrial Parkway to inform people that they can access the liquor store by travelling down Prospect Lane off of Industrial Parkway. He said that would also be good as racing season approaches so people know there's another way to get to the liquor store. Cushman said that's something Street Superintendent Phil Markman could look into.

Finck asked if Snick's Signs are ready to install the highway sign.

Bratrud said she hasn't heard back from Snick's Signs.

Skaret said the City's Electric Department would be available to dig a 24 inch diameter hole for the sign. He said if the Electric Department digs the hole, Snick's indicated they would reduce their price by \$1,700.

Bratrud said Street Superintendent Markman stopped by the new store last week and indicated they may be able to make the hole bigger if needed. Bratrud explained she left Snick's Signs a message asking how big the diameter of the hole had to be for the sign, but she hasn't heard back from them.

Finck asked when the landscaping will be taking place.

Bratrud said she hasn't heard.

Skaret said it will probably depend on the weather.

Liquor Committee members reviewed the punch list items of the new store.

Cushman said the sign and the landscaping are two items that need to be completed, especially the highway sign.

Finck commented he thinks Snick's has done a great job on the indoor signage.

Bratrud said she would call Snick's Signs.

Resignation of Part-Time Liquor Store Clerk

Skaret reported part-time liquor store clerk Colleen Steenstra submitted her resignation on April 15th. With Steenstra's resignation, Skaret said the City is now looking to fill two part-time liquor store clerk positions.

Skaret said April 15th was the deadline for people to submit applications for the current vacant part-time liquor store clerk position. He said as of last count, there were 17 applicants. Skaret asked the Liquor Committee members if they would be comfortable with Bratrud and himself going through the interview process or if they wanted to be involved.

Cushman and Finck said they would be fine with Bratrud and Skaret doing the interviews. Finck suggested sharing the names of the final two or three candidates with Liquor Committee members before making a recommendation to the City Council.

Skaret said it was stressed in the ad seeking applicants for a part-time liquor clerk that everyone has to work weekend shifts. He said there were other part-time employees hired in the past who were told they wouldn't have to work weekends.

Cushman asked if that situation has been addressed.

Bratrud said that issue has been addressed. She said those part-time employees who were told they wouldn't work weekends have been helping out on the weekends. Going forward, Bratrud said it will be made sure that everyone is hired with the same expectations.

Cushman noted the awesome work by Bratrud getting the new liquor store to this point. He said the effort did not go unnoticed.

Skaret said the transition from the old to the new liquor store was as seamless as it could have been.

Finck said the transition was smooth and went well. He said he didn't hear any complaints from anyone.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Liquor Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary

