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BOARD OF LIQUOR LICENSE COMMISSIONERS FOR BALTIMORE CITY ANNOUNCES STAFFING CHANGES – LAUDATORY REMARKS FOR OUTGOING DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY - WELCOMES NEW DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND NEW INSPECTOR

Baltimore, MD – On Monday, January 4, 2021 the Board of Liquor License Commissioners for Baltimore City (BLLC) announced personnel changes for the agency. The agency recognizes and thanks Mr. Thomas R. Akras, outgoing Deputy Executive Secretary, and welcomes a new member to the team, Mr. Nicholas T.R. Blendy, as the incoming Deputy Executive Secretary. The BLLC is also excited to welcome April Bennet-Burman to the role of Inspector I.

The Board recognized outgoing Deputy Executive Secretary Tom Akras for his tenure and exemplary contributions to the BLLC during the December 10, 2020 hearing. During a special point of the hearing, Chair of the Board Albert J. Matricciani declared, "During my entire tenure as Chair of the Liquor Board, I've had the privilege of working with Douglas Paige and Tom and they are a great team and run an effective agency. In my experience, Tom has been involved in all aspects of the operation and has done an outstanding job. We wish him well in his future endeavors."

Commissioner Aaron J. Greenfield concurred, "Tom has played such an integral role to an agency operating at a high level. His work is a testament to all of our success and we really appreciate it."

Commissioner Harvey Jones added, "Congratulations to Tom on his new position, he will be missed. He was very active and involved and every effort has been a plus. Good luck, Tom!"

The role of Deputy Executive Secretary will be filled by Mr. Nicholas Blendy. Mr. Blendy comes to the BLLC having most recently served as Deputy Director of Government Relations under former Baltimore City Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young. Mr. Blendy holds a law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law (2008) and is an

admitted member of the Maryland State Bar. He has served in various local governmental positions including as Assistant County Attorney for Baltimore County in early 2019, as the Chief Legislative Officer for former Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz from 2016 to 2018, and as Assistant Deputy Mayor to former Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings Blake from 2013 to 2016. As Deputy Executive Secretary, his role will include staff management, organizational direction and planning, and serving as the attorney to the Board, among many other roles.

Chairman Matricciani, in welcoming Mr. Blendy, remarked, "We are excited to bring Mr. Blendy to the agency. His depth of experience will be an excellent fit and we look forward to him joining and becoming part of our team."

Additionally, the Liquor Board welcomes Ms. April Bennett-Burman as a Liquor Board Inspector I. Ms. Bennett-Burman comes to the BLLC with a history in corrections, most recently in her role as Correctional Officer Captain at the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

Additional questions or concerns about this matter should be directed to Matt Achhammer, Community Liaison and Public Information Officer, at 410-241-6525 or matt.achhammer@baltimorecity.gov

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