

## ALCOHOL CONTROL COMMISSION

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

The Alcohol Control Commission met at 5:00 p.m. on this date in the City Commission Chambers of City Hall, 601 Broad Street. Billy Cooper, Doug Phipps, Courtney Shepard, Chris Carey, and Commissioner Robinson were present. Taylor McMichael was absent. Also present were Rome Police Major Rusty Blair and Assistant City Attorney Sam Lucas.

### **Oath of Office**

Assistant City Attorney Sam Lucas administered the oath of office to new ACC member Chris Carey. Mr. Carey was appointed to Alcohol Control Commission by the City Commission in December 2025.

### **Minutes – December 17, 2025**

The minutes of the December 17, 2025, meeting, as submitted in writing by the Secretary, were approved by unanimous consent.

### **Shop N Save – 1303 Shorter Ave.**

The application of Mr. Mohammed Fuzil Shaud Rafi, the new owner and manager of Shop N Save, 1303 Shorter Ave., was presented. Mr. Rafi has requested that a new beer and wine package license be issued to him at this location. This business is one of many that were cited by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation in 2025 due to illegal cash payouts associated with COAMs.

Secretary Smith recapped the action from the December 2025 ACC meeting when a License Hearing was held for this establishment due to customers being allowed to smoke inside. As a result of that Hearing, a \$2,000 monetary penalty was recommended to the City Commission. On January 17, 2026, the City Commission approved the \$2,000 monetary penalty. At the City Commission meeting, the current (previous) owner of this establishment was present and did not dispute the validity of the smoking violation. Also at the December 2025 ACC meeting, Mr. Rafi's (new) license application was tabled due to incomplete answers regarding the status of the coin operated amusement machines.

At today's meeting, Mr. Rafi clarified information regarding his business, stating that alcohol sales are continuing at this location as the previous owner has renewed her City Alcohol license for 2026. The hours of operation at this establishment are from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. seven days per week. Mr. Rafi stated that they will have approximately three employees and that there are about twenty cameras covering the inside and outside of this establishment. He plans to install six coin operated amusement machines when his license is approved. Mr. Rafi also commented on the online training that is used for his employees and that he will make sure that there is no smoking or vaping inside this establishment.

There was general discussion by the ACC concerning this location and its close proximity to other locations and Mr. Rafi's experience regarding alcohol sales. This is his first attempt at business ownership.

Mr. Phipps moved to approve the license request as submitted subject to the \$2,000 monetary penalty being paid before this new license is issued, and evidence of the GBI “Clearance Letter” for the 2025 violations. Ms. Shepard seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

*The \$2,000 monetary penalty was paid to the City Clerk’s Office on January 14, 2026.*

**Food Mart – 1324 Martha Berry Blvd.**

Mr. Devin Desai, owner and manager of “Food Mart”, 1324 Martha Berry Blvd., was presented. Mr. Desai requested that a new beer and wine package license be issued to him at this location. Secretary Smith reported that this convenience store is located near the John Davenport Drive/Martha Berry Blvd intersection and has operated for many years. This establishment was charged by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation earlier in 2025 with illegal cash payouts from the COAM machines. Mr. Desai is the new owner of this establishment and is requesting that he be granted an alcohol license. Mr. Desai has extensive business ownership experience in our community, including convenience stores.

Mr. Desai explained that this business will be open from approximately 5:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. seven days a week. There will be a scanner system used and if a license is not scanned for alcohol sales, a date of birth must be entered before the sale can occur. There will be three employees who are experienced and properly trained. Later this year, Mr. Desai plans to install six coin operated amusement machines, and these machines will be in plain view and Rome’s COAM Ordinance will be followed.

Mr. Desai made comments regarding new procedures that are being required by the Georgia Lottery Commission, in which new COAMs will be linked to an ATM, and winners will be issued their “debit card” through this ATM. Mr. Desai is hopeful this new procedure will reduce the illegal cash payouts that have been occurring at some COAM stores. Mr. Desai also stated that he will not be allowing persons from the nearby Fairbridge Hotel to “hang out” at his establishment.

Ms. Shepard moved to approve the license request as submitted. Mr. Carey seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**Lake Mini Mart – 2413 Garden Lakes Blvd. Ste. B**

The applications of Mr. Saleem Badruddin Vadsariya, owner and manager of Lake Mini Mart, 2413 Garden Lakes Blvd. Ste. B, was presented. Mr. Vadsariya requested that a new beer package license be issued to him at this location. It was noted that this application was originally filed several months previously in the City Clerk’s Office and Mr. Vadsariya is now ready to move forward with opening this business. This is a very small establishment comprising approximately 300 square feet and there were questions from the ACC members about whether this establishment would have enough room for COAMs and other products that would be required in order to meet the COAM to sales ratio.

The owner and another gentleman were present and discussed the operating plan for this establishment, including stating that employees will be properly trained and there will be six cameras which will monitor this site. During the camera discussion, it was noted that

the City of Rome ordinance requires thirty days of video storage kept by stores that are required to have cameras. Establishments having only one employee on duty are required to have an operating camera system.

With further discussion regarding general questions concerning the operation of the business being complete, Mr. Carey moved to approve the request for the beer license at this location. Mr. Phipps seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**Rome Mini Mart – 1714 Turner McCall Blvd.**

The application of Mr. Nilesh Khetia, owner and manager of Rome Mini Mart, 1714 Turner McCall Blvd., was presented. Mr. Khetia requested that a new beer and wine package license be issued to him at this location. Secretary Smith noted that this was yet another location that had been charged earlier in 2025 by the Georgia Bureau of Investigations for illegal cash payouts of the COAMs. Mr. Khetia represents a new corporation owning this business. Smith also noted this establishment has been in existence for many years and located at the intersection of Turner McCall Blvd. and E 8<sup>th</sup> St. Since Mr. Khetia is not a Floyd County resident, he has established Mr. William Jones as his local registered agent. Mr. Jones was present at tonight’s meeting and participated in the discussion.

Mr. Khetia lives in Bogart, GA and owns a convenience store and a liquor store in Clarke County. There was general discussion regarding this business concerning COAMs, employee training, and hours of operation. There was considerable discussion regarding Mr. Jones’s role as registered agent. During the discussion, it was unclear what experience Mr. Jones had previously had in convenience store operations and most of the answers provided were not reassuring to the ACC members. As the discussion continued, it was noted that Mr. Jones will be actively involved with the business and will hold keys to the store.

After continued discussions and warnings issued by the ACC, Mr. Phipps moved to approve the beer and wine package license as requested. Mr. Carey seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

**Miles Legacy (Marathon), 1901 N Broad St. – License Hearing**

Secretary Smith noted that this License Hearing has been called for Miles Legacy, 1901 N Broad St., due to two citations that were issued to an employee of this establishment for allowing smoking inside this store. The citations were issued by Rome Police Officer Zach Colvin on November 16, 2025, and November 24, 2025. A License Hearing was held at the December 17, 2025, Alcohol Control Commission meeting for a similar offense. At the December ACC Hearing, there was no one present representing this establishment and at the end of the Hearing, it was recommended to the City Commission that a \$2,000 monetary penalty be enforced. On January 12, 2026, the Rome City Commission approved this \$2,000 monetary penalty. There was no one present representing this establishment at the Rome City Commission meeting.

Assistant City Attorney Sam Lucas administered the oath to those persons who will be testifying in this Hearing. Representing Miles Legacy was business owner and registered agent Ms. Smita Pahari and her attorney Jeremy Salter. When asked regarding the two alleged infractions, Mr. Salter reported that the establishment admitted these two offenses

had occurred. Mr. Salter then proceeded to make an opening statement to the ACC stating that the business owner was not aware of the violations initially, and when Ms. Pahari became aware, this employee, who was responsible for all three violations, was terminated. Since that time, this store has been improved and there have been no further infractions.

Rome Police Officer Zach Colvin testified concerning the circumstances of these two violations. Both citations were issued to the same employee (Christopher Curry). Ofc. Colvin commented on the obvious smoking infractions that resulted in the citations, and he also commented on the less than professional behavior by Mr. Curry. Ofc. Colvin further stated that since these two violations he has revisited this store and during those visits the store appears to be in a much better condition inside and there has been no evidence of smoking during these follow up visits. He stated that four of the COAMs were now located in the main part of the store and remaining two COAMs were in a room that was clearly visible through a newly installed window.

The ACC questioned Mr. Salter and Ms. Pahari regarding the current licensee, Ms. Joanna Miles. Ms. Miles was not present at the December Hearing, and she is not present at today's meeting. Ms. Pahari stated that Ms. Miles was out of town and unable to attend. Ms. Pahari also reiterated that she was not aware of the previous violations, and even though the City Clerk's Office had personally delivered a Hearing notice regarding the December ACC Hearing, that notice was not forwarded to her. Mr. Salter encouraged the ACC to consider action that has been taken regarding the employee responsible for the violations, the improvements that have been made to the store, and the \$2,000 monetary penalty that was imposed by the ACC and the City Commission. Mr. Salter asked that no further penalties be imposed at this establishment due to these issues that have now been addressed.

With the Hearing comments concluded, the Hearing was closed and the ACC members continued to discuss this matter. Ms. Shepard made a motion to have Ms. Phari find a new licensee for this establishment who would be at this location on a regular basis. This new licensee should make an application in the City Clerk's Office and Ms. Pahari and the new licensee should be at the March 16, 2026, Alcohol Control Commission meeting for the ACC to approve a new licensee. Mr. Carey seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Secretary Smith was instructed to summarize this motion in a letter and forward it to attorney Jeremy Salter at 100 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Ste. 301. This letter will also outline the \$2,000 monetary penalty that is required to be paid.

### **Police Report**

Rome Police Major Rusty Blair was present and had no incidences to report to the ACC.

**Adjourn**

With there being no further business, Mr. Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Joseph F. Smith  
City Clerk