

Mailing Date: July 25, 2007

PENNSYLVANIA LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD
HARRISBURG, PA 17124-0001

PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE, : Citation No. 06-2416
BUREAU OF LIQUOR CONTROL :
ENFORCEMENT :

vs. :

1102 LAM, INC. : License No. R-8230
1102-06 South 47th Street :
Philadelphia, PA 19143-3615 :
:

Counsel for Licensee: John J. McCreesh, III, Esquire
McCreesh, McCreesh, McCreesh & Cannon
7053 Terminal Square
Upper Darby, PA 19082

Counsel for Bureau: James E. Dailey, Esquire
PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE,
Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement
6901 Woodland Avenue, Third Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19142

OPINION

The Pennsylvania State Police, Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement
("Bureau") appealed from the Opinion and Order of Administrative Law

Judge David L. Shenkle (“ALJ”), wherein the ALJ dismissed the charges against 1102 Lam, Inc. (“Licensee”).

The citation charged that, on August 30 and September 19 2006, Licensee, by its servants, agents or employees, violated section 407 of the Liquor Code [47 P.S. § 4-407] by selling malt or brewed beverages for consumption off-premises.

Pursuant to section 471 of the Liquor Code [47 P.S. § 4-471], the appeal in this case must be based solely on the record before the ALJ. The Board shall only reverse the decision of the ALJ if that ALJ committed an error of law or abused his discretion, or if his decision was not based upon substantial evidence. The Commonwealth Court defined “substantial evidence” to be such relevant evidence as a reasonable person might accept as adequate to support a conclusion. Joy Global, Inc. v. Workers’ Compensation Appeal Bd. (Hogue), 876 A.2d 1098 (Pa. Cmwlth. 49, 484 A.2d 413 (1984).

A review of this record reveals that the ALJ’s Adjudication and Order was mailed to the parties on May 15, 2007. The Bureau’s appeal was filed with the Board on June 22, 2007, beyond thirty (30) days from the mailing

date of the ALJ's Adjudication and Order. Section 471 of the Liquor Code expressly provides that appeals to the Board from a decision of the ALJ must be filed within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of the ALJ's decision. [47 P.S. § 4-471]. The filing deadline for this appeal from the ALJ's Adjudication and Order, pursuant to section 471, was June 3, 2007. The Bureau has requested for this appeal to be allowed *nunc pro tunc*.

The appellate courts in Pennsylvania have held that the delay in filing an appeal is excusable if: (1) it was caused by extraordinary circumstances involving fraud or breakdown in the court's operation or non-negligent conduct of the appellant, appellant's attorney or his/her staff, (2) the appeal is filed within a short time after appellant or his counsel learns of and has the opportunity to address the untimeliness, (3) the time period which elapses is of very short duration, and (4) appellee is not prejudiced by the delay. Cook v. Unemployment Compensation Bd. of Review, 671 A.2d 1130, 1131 (Pa. 1996); J.C. v. Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, 720 A.2d 193 (Pa. Cmwlth. 1998).

Relative to the Cook criteria, the Bureau has not alleged that the appeal was late because of non-negligent conduct. In fact, Bureau's attorney provided no reason for its failure to file the appeal timely.

Relative to the second and third Cook factors, the appeal was filed within three (3) weeks of the time it was due; however, because no facts were provided relative to why the Bureau's appeal was untimely, the Board is unable to determine whether the appeal is filed within a short time after appellant or his counsel learned of and had the opportunity to address the untimeliness, or whether the time period was of very short duration.

Finally, should the Board grant this appeal *nunc pro tunc*, there is potential for Licensee to be prejudiced by the Bureau's untimely filing of its appeal. The Board historically reverses Office of Administrative Law Judge ("OALJ") decisions that dismiss citations for sales of malt or brewed beverages for off-premises consumption based upon the fact that Licensee did not hold a valid off-premises sales permit. In fact, the Board has done in at least four (4) other citations brought against Licensee.¹ Should the Board grant this appeal *nunc pro tunc*, and the facts underlying the citation warrant

¹ Citation Nos. 06-0296, 06-0523, 06-0808, 06-1299.

same, the citation would be reversed, thereby resulting in fines and penalties against Licensee that it would otherwise not have to pay. Therefore, Licensee would be prejudiced by the Board granting this appeal *nunc pro tunc*.

Under the circumstances, the Board is without authority to entertain the Bureau's appeal as it was untimely filed. Therefore, the appeal of the Bureau is dismissed.

ORDER

The decision of the ALJ is affirmed.

The appeal of the Bureau is dismissed.

The Bureau must adhere to all other conditions set forth in the ALJ's
Order dated May 4, 2007.

Board Secretary