

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023

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A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority (hereinafter referred to as “Authority” “the CCA” or the “Board” was held on April 27, 2023, pursuant to notice which was posted at the Amica Mutual Pavilion, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI and the RI Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, RI.

Board members in attendance were Ernest Almonte, George Nee, Paul MacDonald, Dale Venturini, Peter Mancini, Patrick Butler, Edward Feldstein, and Steven Iannazzi.

Board members not in attendance were Jeff Hirsh and Tony Mendez.

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy, Dana Peltier, Linda Maroun and Melissa Lasko O’Connor, Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz, Mike Gravison, Sheamus Fitzgerald, The VETS; Lynn Singleton, PFM/The VETS; Larry Lepore, Rebecca Ponder, Chris Spolidoro and Cheryl Cohen, Convention Center and AMP; Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; and Debra Polselli, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

**Vice Chairman Nee** called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

2. Announcement of Next Board Meeting Date

**Vice Chairman Nee** noted that next month’s meeting date has changed and will take place on Friday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM.

3. Approval of Minutes – March Board Meeting

**Vice Chairman Nee** deferred the approval of the March Board Meeting minutes until next month’s meeting.

4. Election of the Authority’s Chairperson

**Vice Chairman Nee** asked for Chairperson nominations. **Mr. MacDonald** made a motion to nominate Ernie Almonte as Chairman of the RI Convention Center Authority. **Mr. Butler** and **Mr. Mancini** seconded the motion. **Vice Chairman Nee** asked if there were any other nominations and with hearing none, **Ms. Venturini** made a motion, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, and it was unanimously

**VOTED:** that Ernie Almonte become the new Chairman of the RI Convention Center Authority.

**Chairman Almonte** thanked the members present for the opportunity to serve as the Authority’s Chairman and thanked those present for everything they do for the betterment of the State’s facilities.

5. Marketing – Dale Venturini

**Ms. Venturini** requested that Mr. McConaghy report on the first topic on the Marketing agenda.

(a) Results of Parking Brainstorming

Mr. McConaghy reviewed the RICC North & South Garage Action Plan (see attached). He discussed the vast technology available for parking which will allow us to do a lot more with patrons, tenants, conventions, etc. He reported that Enterprise Rental Car is coming back to the South Garage. He mentioned the selection of a parking engineering entity to handle structural and maintenance concerns in the garages. He stated there is a lot going on to position our services better financially. **Ms. Venturini** commented that lighting is very important. Mr. McConaghy further stated that it is a major effort to keep parking patron data safe. Discussion then ensued about ticket scams and fraud. Mr. Singleton commented that third party ticketing has now become the venues' problem.

(b) PWCVB

Ms. Adamo reviewed the CVB's marketing report (see attached). **Vice Chairman Nee** questioned how much the new tax would generate and Ms. Adamo replied between \$1.6-\$2.1 million per year and that there is no consensus with the Warwick hotels on TID at this time.

(c) ASM Global

Ms. Cohen reviewed the marketing report for both the AMP and the RICC (see attached). **Mr. MacDonald** questioned the number of sporting event bookings. Ms. Adamo stated that sometimes utilizing the Convention Center for a convention is more lucrative than a sporting event and it's necessary to place sporting events around convention business. Ms. Cohen commented that we try to maximize our space and utilize sporting events during a "need" time.

(d) PFM

Mr. Gravison reviewed the marketing report for The VETS. **Mr. Butler** commented on the ease of attending a recent event at The VETS. **Ms. Venturini** questioned if the signs on the building are being addressed, and Mr. Gravison replied that new banners are currently in production and the next step is scheduling an installation date. **Mr. Butler** questioned if federal highway approval is needed, and Mr. Gravison replied no, and the artwork was already preapproved. **Mr. MacDonald** questioned the life of the banners and Mr. Gravison replied that the banners are made of high quality vinyl and UV protected ink to extend the life of each banner. **Ms. Venturini** commented that there is new technology since the original banners were purchased in 2014.

6. Finance/Operations

(a) The VETS

Mr. Schwartz reviewed the financial report for The VETS. Mr. McConaghy noted that this month's financial reflects the one-time SFRF award of \$150k, which was taken off the Authority's books and placed on The Vets to match the State's records. He commented that the same will hold true for the Convention Center's award of \$350k and the AMP's award of \$500k. Mr. Schwartz commented that The VETS is currently using metal detectors on loan from PPAC until the ones they ordered arrive. He further reported that they have made some upgrades to the HVAC system, and they currently have 9 sold out shows on the calendar. **Ms. Venturini** questioned The VETS use of the State's surface parking lot. Mr. Schwartz reported the State

workers utilize the lot Monday through Friday and they are able to use this surface lot after 5pm on weekdays and weekends. **Mr. Butler** questioned hacking into the company's servers to get into the credit card system through the HVAC system and Mr. Schwartz confirmed that yes this is possible which is why they are moving forward with upgrades to their system. **Mr. MacDonald** commented on the success of the Matt Rife show and asked if they were trying to rebook it. Mr. Schwartz replied that they helped out filling an empty date at the time and this artist now has a \$15 million guarantee deal with LiveNation. He explained that he will probably come back into the market but in all likelihood will play PPAC or the AMP because of his increasing popularity. Mr. Schwartz then introduced Sheamus Fitzgerald who recently joined the team at The VETS as Director of Operations & Events. He stated that he is a JWU graduate and worked at PPAC before coming to The VETS. Everyone welcomed Sheamus.

(b) Convention Center

Mr. Lepore reported on the Convention Center's financials. **Mr. Butler** questioned if we are still considering a facility for cheerleading events. Mr. Lepore replied that we had spoken about this idea at length, and it would require a sports complex with a minimum of 150k square feet. He noted that he thought Warwick would be the best option since hotel rooms are in the area. He further noted that the companies who bring in tournaments should be the ones to manage the facility. He stated that other cities like Savannah and Milwaukee have both increased their convention space to accommodate more events. His final comment was that 20k square feet of space can be earmarked for long term bookings like Beyond Van Gogh and other long-term events that the Convention Center cannot host because space is not available for long periods of time.

(c) The AMP

Mr. Lepore reported on the AMP's financials and discussed this past weekend's events with New Edition and Kevin Hart. Mr. Butler asked how the staff handled the phone situation during Kevin Hart. Mr. Lepore replied that it went very well considering it was a sold out show.

(d) Clifford Street Garage

Mr. Lepore reported on the Clifford Street Garage's financials. **Mr. Butler** questioned how full the garage is on a daily basis and Mr. Lepore replied that it is about 60% full.

Mr. Lepore then showed the members a slide show of the new Amica signage. Following this presentation, Mr. Lepore made Board members aware that they may or may not hear about a date that we needed to take back from Providence College to book a big show headlining a very popular comedian. He stated that he is trying to work through logistics to possibly have PC play and still host the show at night. **Chairman Almonte** stated that he did not think it was something the Board needed to take action on, and that Mr. Lepore could handle the situation the best way possible. **Ms. Venturini** stated that she appreciated being informed of the situation. **Ms. Venturini** then questioned the status of the damaged seats, and Mr. Lepore replied that we expect to be paid for the seats that were damaged during one of their games. Mr. Lepore then informed the Board that we would be getting new hockey dashers at the end of this year's Providence Bruins season and recommended that we donate them. He stated that he spoke with some State Representatives to donate the dashers to West Warwick. **Ms. Venturini** commented that this is a fantastic idea and should have media coverage of this donation. **Mr. Butler** questioned if we were also replacing the hockey glass and Mr. Lepore replied only the end zone glass and that we were keeping the other glass.

(e) Authority and Consolidated – Dan McConaghy

Mr. McConaghy reviewed his report and restated that the \$1 million in SFRF funds was coming off the Authority's books and being placed in the respective facility's books.

7. Consultant's Report – Mike Crawley

Mr. Crawley reviewed the financial statements. **Chairman Almonte** stated that while it is great we are cash rich, he questioned if we are investing. Mr. Crawley replied that while we invest some funds, money needs to be readily available for capital projects, show payments, etc. **Chairman Almonte** questioned whether or not we should look into short term investments – 60 days or 90 days.

8. Executive Director's Report

(a) Review and Consideration of the RICC Parking Garage Repair Study

Mr. McConaghy reviewed the Consideration for Award of the RICC Parking Study Selection (see attached). He recommends that the Authority hire Walker to conduct the study. **Vice Chairman Nee** made a motion, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini** and unanimously

**VOTED:** to choose Walker to conduct the RICC parking garage study.

(b) Review and Consideration of the Authority ERP Provider

Mr. McConaghy reviewed the Consideration for Award of the RICCA ERP Selection. He stated that it was a complex process, and it was an 'all hands-on deck' approach since there are so many departments and people affected by this change. **Ms. Venturini** questioned the length of the contract, and Mr. McConaghy replied three (3) years. **Mr. Butler** questioned if this is something we pay ASM Global for any way and Mr. McConaghy replied yes. He stated that we have SFRF funds to cover the cost of this expense. **Vice Chairman Nee** stated that he is glad everyone was included in the process that would be impacted by this change. Mr. McConaghy thanked everyone involved for the role they played in choosing a new company. Mr. McConaghy stated that it is recommended that the Authority choose Oracle NetSuite. **Chairman Almonte** requested a motion. **Mr. Butler** motioned, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini** and unanimously

**VOTED:** that the RI Convention Center Authority hereby approves entering into a contract with Oracle NetSuite.

(c) Revised Commissioner's Handbook

Mr. McConaghy stated the Commissioner's Handbook has been revised and is available as a hard copy or electronically. He stated that this handbook provides a good sense of a Commissioner's role and is a good resource with a lot of information including current contracts. Mr. Leach commented that the Transparency Act is always talked about and is addressed in Section D of the Handbook. He stated that it sets forth a Commissioner's fiduciary responsibility to abide by this Act.

**Chairman Almonte** asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Iannazzi requested that **Mr. MacDonald** be provided with a parking update because he was not present at the Marketing Committee Meeting. Mr. McConaghy stated that we need to bring consistency to the parking rate and the rate has not increased in quite some time. He stated that it makes sense to make the rate in the North and South Garages the same as the Clifford Street Garage. **Ms. Venturini** questioned if we have the ability to flex the rate depending on the group parking in the garages and Mr. McConaghy replied that we have the technology to adjust the rate accordingly, especially using the app we are able to set the rate for each event. **Mr. MacDonald** voiced his concerns that the Authority focus on the community, especially for family shows, and keep rates affordable. He stated the importance of being sensitive to families who cannot afford to attend an event because they cannot afford parking. Mr. McConaghy agreed and stated we did not have a system before that would allow us flexibility. **Vice Chairman Nee** asked what the current rate is and Mr. McConaghy \$15-\$20 per car. Mr. Lepore commented that we cannot distinguish what events people are here for. Mr. McConaghy stated that we will come up with a way to keep the parking rate low for family shows and adjust the rate accordingly for specific events. **Chairman Almonte** appreciated hearing from members on this topic and thanked the members for continuing to raise this important issue. **Chairman Almonte** once again thanked Mr. McConaghy and his staff for all their hard work and thanked the Board for electing him Chairman.

9. Adjournment

With there being no further business to be discussed by the Authority, **Chairman Almonte** asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by **Vice Chairman Nee** and seconded by **Mr. MacDonald**, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to adjourn the April 27, 2023 meeting at 10:35 AM.