

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY**  
**453rd MEETING OF THE**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**July 23, 2020**  
**Special Zoom Meeting**

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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 July 23, 2020 via Zoom, pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Bernard Buonanno, Peri Ann Aptaker, Catherine Parente, Paul MacDonald, George Nee, Dale Venturini, John Hooper, Patrick Butler, Tony Mendez, and Jeff Hirsh.

Also present were James P. McCarvill, Executive Director, Rhode Island Convention Center Authority; Dana Peltier, RICCA; Larry Lepore, Beth Johnson, Deb Polselli Cheryl Cohen and Chris Spolidoro, the Convention Center and DDC; Daniel Schwartz, Michael Gravison the VETS; Alan Chili, PFM; Kristen Adamo, John Gibbons and Tom Riel, PWCVB; Burnell Goldman, Omni Hotel; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Bob Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office; Bernard Lane, DOA; Mark Liff, UBS; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

**Mr. Buonanno** was delayed therefore **Mr. Nee** called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM and reported that the next meeting would take place on August 27<sup>th</sup>. **Mr. Nee** and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Aptaker** it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve the minutes of the June meeting as presented.

**Mr. Nee** invited Kristen Adamo and Tom Riel to present an update on the current state of the industry. Ms. Adamo stated that she has some sobering statistics. She stated that since March the State has \$52 million in direct spending losses. Ms. Adamo provided statistics that indicate the extent of our issues. She said that last year in May hotel occupancy was at 75.4% and this year it was 17.3%. Last June we were at 80.3% and this year 21.6%. Ms. Adamo reported that no one can predict when we can safely open the State to the outside world. She said that she has been in close contact with Commerce and no one is can provide a time frame for reopening the State. Ms. Adamo noted that the CVB is working closely with Cheryl Cohen to put together a marketing strategy for Downtown. Ms. Adamo stated that the Downtown is hurting.

Ms. Cohen reported that she is in the final stages of putting together a reopening and recovery plan that will be useful once we are given the word that we can unlock our doors. She stated that in the mean time she has met with Commerce to present our plan for social distancing. Ms. Cohen said that we could conceivably hold college lectures, general sessions and other classes in the Dunk. Ms. Cohen said that she has spoken to someone regarding holding the college boards

here in the Dunk. Ms. Cohen suggested that we could hold many meetings in the building and easily keep the attendees six feet apart.

**Mr. Buonanno** recognized Mr. Schwartz and asked that he update the Board on how things are at the Vets. Mr. Schwartz reported that the VETS continues to host the Governor's Press Conferences. He said that they are no longer taking place every day but three times a week for a couple of weeks and now down to once a week. Mr. Schwartz noted that this has been an opportunity for the theater to stay open and generate revenue when we would have been dark. Mr. Schwartz noted that any food and beverage activity was due to writing off expired concession products that were in inventory. Mr. Schwartz reported that with no events there was no parking revenue. Mr. Schwartz noted that when you look at other areas or look at the industry as a whole we are not in as bad a position as we could have been. We benefit from having a management fees that cover clerical and accounting personnel as well as other necessary costs.

Mr. Schwartz reported that the Philharmonic is moving forward with their plans to open their season in September. They will significantly reduce the orchestra and the number of patrons in the theater. Mr. Schwartz noted that the Philharmonic is seeking accreditation for a clean and healthy environment. **Mr. Butler** asked how many patrons are needed by the Philharmonic to be profitable. Mr. Schwartz stated that they may be able to break even with a limited number of patrons plus sponsorship revenue. **Mr. Hooper** commented that thought should be given to patrons leaving the theater. He suggested staggering the departure in an attempt at social distancing.

At this time General Callahan of the National Guard and several members of his group joined the meeting. General Callahan thanked the Board and Management of the Convention Center for their cooperation in making sure that Rhode Island was ready for COVID. General Callahan stated that the original indications were that we had the potential of 10,000 patients suffering from the virus and the need for hospital space was critical. Fortunately, we took lessons and learned from other areas and slowed the spread. General Callahan said that he is grateful that the lights remain out in the Convention Center and the facility hasn't been needed. General Callahan thanked the Board for allowing the South Garage to be used as a testing site. He said that we need the opportunity to test more in an effort to track and mitigate any upticks in the number of cases with the objective of getting schools open in the Fall. Mr. McCarvill said that the only thing that he would like to know is when can we get out building back but you cannot tell us. General Callahan stated that we can have it back as soon as it is safe, possibly six or seven months. **Mr. Hooper** thanked General Callahan and the National Guard for everything that they are doing. General Callahan said that the collaboration and cooperation with the Convention Center staff has been exceptional across the board. General Callahan and the contingent from the National Guard departed.

Mr. Lepore presented the financial statement for the Dunk. Mr. Lepore reported that there were no events therefore, direct event and food and beverage nets were worse than budget. Mr. Lepore stated that there were 7 scheduled Cirque events in June that were cancelled as well as the CVS Crave and Gala a concert and the UUA Conference. Mr. Lepore stated that indirect expenses were better than budget due to labor related costs. Mr. Lepore reported that the staff has been reduced to a minimum number. At this time, in the complex including the Clifford St. Garage,

we have 24 full-time 15 part-time mostly in labor, maintenance and security and 73 people on unemployment. Mr. Lepore said that a long term plan is being discussed and will be available for the August meeting. Mr. Lepore noted that with the National Guard securing the facility during the daytime we will adjust our staffing accordingly. Mr. Lepore stated that we are looking for every opportunity to keep our employees working. **Mr. Mendez** asked if there are any plans to train our staff in the procedures being done by outside labor at the Convention Center. Mr. Lepore said that our staff could build testing kits not perform tests.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Lepore to discuss the latest conversations that have taken place with PC. Mr. Lepore said that they want to play here but they also want a reduction in rent. Mohegan is no longer an option but if there are no fans they could play on campus. Mr. Lepore said that Mr. Driscoll is looking for approval from the Health Department and DBR.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. McCarvill to present the financial information for the Authority. Mr. McCarvill commented that the Authority does not change much. He did note that debt service for the Clifford Street Garage is included in the State appropriation because of the lack of parkers. Mr. McCarvill reported that right now we are trying to get paid for our expenditures from the proper sources.

Mr. McCarvill commented that we cannot predict if there will be NCAA Basketball, AHL Hockey or entertainers willing to tour. Ms. Adamo stated that Mr. Gibbons has informed her that March 2021 events, Varsity Spirit and the NCAA Tournament are in jeopardy. **Mr. Hooper** said that we should find a way to capitalize on the good job that the State and Governor has done to keep us safe. Mr. McCarvill noted that we were on track to have a very good year and now the future is unsure.

Mr. Crawley noted that the monthly review found no lack of oversight in any area. Mr. Crawley said that Blum Shapiro will begin audit fieldwork on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Crawley reported that the accounting staff is working on a revised budget. Mr. McCarvill said that as far as the revised budget is concerned we don't have any idea when we can reopen and what the business climate will be when this is over. He said he has asked for three versions of a budget, optimistic, moderate and poor. We expect to develop a "likely" case as facts emerge.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. McCarvill to update the Board on the Clifford Street Garage. Mr. McCarvill reported that we now had our Certificate of Occupancy. He said the elevators have been inspected and are operational. Mr. McCarvill reported that he participated in a walkthrough on July 22<sup>nd</sup> with the Chief Justice and Mr. Baxter that went very well. He stated that Mr. Baxter informed him that the courts would be ready the 1<sup>st</sup> week of August. Mr. McCarvill stated that the number of parkers will have to be adjusted for DCYF and other State agencies. A discussion ensued regarding debt service for the garage. Mr. McCarvill said that this is also going to be a guess. He said that at this time Wexford only needs about 20 spaces.

**Mr. Buonanno** thanked everyone for participating and asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by **Ms. Parente** and seconded by **Mr. Butler** it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to adjourn at 10:10 AM

