**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY457th MEETING OF THE**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERSJanuary 28, 2021**

**Zoom Meeting**

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 January 28, 2021 via Zoom, pursuant to notice, at the Dunkin” Donuts Center, One LaSalle Square, Providence, Rhode Island.

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

Others participating were Allen Chille, Judy Ferriera, Dan Schwartz and Michael Gravison, The VETS; Cheryl Cohen, Dunkin’ Donuts Center; Larry Lepore, Deb Polselli, Beth Johnson and Chris Spoladoro, Convention Center; Kristen Adamo and Tom Riel, PWCVB; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Bernie Lane, Budget Office; Libby Kimzey DOA; Steve Maceroni, PFM; Gene Bernardo, Partridge, Snow & Hahn; Mark Liff, UBS; Paul Parker, PROJO; Unknown Guests, Robert Dulski, EGB, Derek Gomes and MA; Dana Peltier, Authority Accountant and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

**Mr. Buonanno** called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and asked for approval of the November Board meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Ms. Parente** it was

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the November meeting as presented.

**Mr. Buonanno** announced that the first item on the agenda was the election of officers intended to take place in June but postponed due to the in person meeting obstacles. Since they still exist we will move forward with the election. **Mr. Buonanno** asked Ms. Smith to indicate the current slate of officers. Ms. Smith complied

Bernard Buonanno – Chairman

George Nee – Vice Chairman

Paul MacDonald – Secretary

Jeffrey Hirsh – Treasurer

**Mr. Buonanno** asked if there were any new nominations. Hearing none **Mr. Buonanno** requested a vote on keeping the current slate. Upon a motion duly made by **Ms. Parente** and seconded by **Ms. Aptaker** it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to re-elect the past slate of officers for another term.

**Ms. Venturini** asked Ms. Adamo to update the Commissioners on the affects that the virus is having on the City. Ms. Adamo reported that the hotel numbers are horrible and the Omni and the Graduate are not even open. She did note that some leads are coming in. Ms. Adamo announced that the CVB received a grant which is being used for training. Some things that are being discussed in an effort to get back to normal gatherings might be rapid testing for meetings or weddings, etc. Ms. Adamo noted that video equipment was given to set up a space for virtual meetings in the Convention Center when the building is available. Ms. Adamo said that the CVB is asking our corporate partners to consider booking meetings in the Rhode Island area.

**Mr. Hooper** asked what percentage of business loss we can anticipate in years 22 through 24. Mr. Riel responded that the funnel is down about 54% but there is buzz about pent up demand. **Ms. Venturini** cautioned that consumer confidence is our challenge. **Mr. Mendez** asked what you see as permanent changes. Ms. Adamo said she thinks that virtual meetings are here to stay. Mr. Riel said hybrid meetings will be important. He said that meeting planners love them because you can hold a meeting with fewer attendees and still present seminars and introduce new products to virtual attendees.

**Ms. Venturini** reported that we are seeing much more collaboration in the industry. She stated that she has been working with Frog and Toad and the RI Foundation. **Ms. Venturini** noted that a limited edition T-shirt has been created and sold with the Buy Local RI Logo that will help to support the unemployed tourism and hospitality community.

**Mr. Buonanno** recognized Mr. Maceroni who will update us on the refunding of our 2015 non taxable bonds to a taxable situation. Mr. Maceroni noted that having the bonds taxable allows for more options and fewer restrictions. Mr. Maceroni stated that he will approach banks in an effort to sell these bonds. Mr. Maceroni said that he is seeking approval to issue an RFP for the sale. **Mr. Nee** inquired if Mr. Maceroni had any idea on the savings. Mr. Maceroni stated that in the beginning there would be a $4,000,000 savings but at the end we will see a $500,00 loss because of the low interest rate. **Ms. Parente** asked if they would all be sold to banks. Mr. Maceroni said that they would, but that banks could team up. **Mr. Mendez** asked if this would be at a fixed rate. **Ms. Parente** asked if this is the only one. Mr. Maceroni answered yes to both. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Nee** and seconded by **Ms. Parente** is was unanimously

**VOTED:** To issue an RFP for the direct purchase of our 2015 non taxable bonds by a financial institution of a federally taxable bond.

Mr. Crawley took the opportunity to thank the Governor for approving this sale and Dan McConaghy and Jeff Hirsh or their efforts in presenting this for her approval.

**Mr. Buonanno** recognized Mr. Schwartz who updated the Board on the VETS. Mr. Schwartz noted that the House is using the theater for financials indicate that the month’s net income was slightly less than budget because of the activity of the Philharmonic, the Governor’s Press Conferences and the Superior Court are contributing to the VETS revenue. Mr. Schwartz stated the team is working on a re-opening video highlighting efforts and steps taken to keep patrons safe. Mr. Schwartz reported that no RICAP funds were budgeted in the revised budget but a $75,000 grant was received from the Champlin Foundation. Mr. Schwartz stated that the grant will be used to air condition the green room. Mr. Schwartz said that the phone system at the VETS is the State system and they are moving from Verizon to Cox.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Lepore to update the Board on the Convention Center and the Dunk. Mr. Lepore said that the numbers that are being presented today will change drastically. Mr. Lepore presented the financial statements stating that Net Income for December was $805,751to budget and $777,486 to the prior year. Year to date Net Income was $2,156,975 to budget and $2,604,842 to last year. Mr. Lepore reported that the numbers change drastically because our role keeps changing. **Ms. Parente** noted a discrepancy in the rolling forecast and noted the absence of a balance sheet. Ms. Johnson responded and said that she will look into the rolling forecast issue and get back to **Ms. Parente**. Mike Crawley responded to the missing balance sheet. Mr. Crawley stated that it was his impression that a balance sheet would be presented to the finance committee. Because the finance committee did not meet in December a balance sheet was not produced. **Mr. Hirsh** asked what the effect the closed businesses and lack of parkers had had. Mr. Lepore answered that we are down about 60 – 70%.

Discussion ensued regarding the Alternative Care Facility. Mr. Crawley noted that our cash position is still not good. **Mr. Butler** asked who pays for staff. Mr. Lepore stated that the second and third shift are billable but the day shift is included in the rent. **Mr. Butler** wanted to know how much is owed. Mr. Crawley said that rent is up to date but $800,000 is owed for test kit assembly. **Mr. Mendez** asked how busy we are on third shift. Mr. Lepore said that we are not busy in the hot zone but an engineer and electrician are there to support the hospital. Mr. Lepore reported that we are building test kits for the entire state. He said that we have 350,000 kits available and are assembling 30,000 per day on peak. He noted that kits are being picked up at all hours. This task has allowed us to bring back a number of employees that were not needed while the buildings were closed. Mr. Lepore reported that classrooms are being held daily in the restaurant to teach individuals how to administer the tests. **Mr. Hooper** commented that this is very impressive. **Mr. Hirsh** said that he had no idea and involved the process is. **Mr. Buonanno** said that stepping up and using the facilities to help during this crises makes me proud. He continued that Larry has done a great job in working with the State and the Department of Health.

The next item to be discussed was the P. Bruins locker room. Mr. Crawley noted that the team will be very happy with the transformation. **Mr. Butler** questioned the latest contract amendment and how the $250,000 would be accounted for. Mr. Crawley said that he is working with Bruce on the wording of the next proposed amendment that would account for the payment as a contribution or pre-paid rent.

Mr. Crawley reported that the Authority staff that consists of Dana and Eileen have been handling the transition very well but an Executive Director is needed. Mr. Crawley stated that **Mr. Buonanno, Mr. Nee, Mr. Hirsh** and myself began a search. A candidate was brought to our attention and we have spent several weeks vetting this person. Daniel McConaghy has been interviewed and his background in construction and government makes him an ideal candidate. **Mr. Hooper** stated that he had spoken with Billy Gilbane who could not have given a better recommendation. **Mr. Hooper** said that he strongly supports Dan. **Mr. Buonanno** noted that Paul Choquette also gave a very positive recommendation. **Mr. Hirsh** reported that we have been working with dan over the last few months in his capacity at the State. He stated that he is extremely impressed. **Mr. Nee** reported that Mr. McConaghy has a working knowledge of the Authority and he supports this hire. **Mr. Hooper and Mr. Butler** spoke with others and agree that Dan would be a good match for the Authority. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Buonanno** and seconded by **Mr. Hirsh** and by roll call vote it was

**VOTED:** To approve Daniel McConaghy as the Executive Director of the Convention Center Authority.

Vote:

Bernie Buonanno- Yes

George Nee – Yes

Paul MacDonald – Yes

John Hooper - Yes

Dale Venturini – Yes

Jeff Hirsh – Yes

Tony Mendez – Yes

Peri Ann Aptaker

Catherine Parente – Yes

Mr. Leach reminded the Board that as part of the transparency act the salary of the Executive Director must be included on the web-site. **Ms. Parente** asked if there is any concern that we did not establish a search committee. Mr. Leach noted that the Board has a fiduciary responsibility. He said that we have been working with this individual for months and as long as you are comfortable that he can perform the duties of the Executive Director a search committee is not necessary. **Ms. Parente** commented that Mr. McConaghy has an impressive resume. **Mr. Hooper** noted that he is supportive and pleased that Dan is willing to except the position at Jim McCarvill’s salary and that he will be an at will employee for several months.

**Mr. Hirsh** reported that Mike Crawley has done a fantastic job. He continued that it has been very difficult for the staff to go into the office every day and not see a light on it the boss’s office.

Mr. Crawley stated that revising the budget is like a magic act. We have no answers as to when we will reopen and how many patrons will be allowed into the buildings.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked if there was any new business. Hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by **Ms. Aptaker** and seconded by **Ms. Parente** it was unanimously

**VOTED:**  to adjourn at 10:50 a.m.