**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY459th MEETING OF THE**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERSMarch 25, 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 March 25, 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, Peter Mancini, Paul MacDonald, Peri Ann Aptaker, Patrick Butler, Dale Venturini, George Nee, Tony Mendez and Jeff Hirsh.

Ms. Venturini and Mr. Hooper were unable to participate.

Others participating were Allen Chille, Judy Ferriera, Lyn Singleton, Dan Schwartz and Michael Gravison, The VETS and PFM; 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; Catherine Parente, Guest, Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Mark Liff, UBS; NBC; Daniel McConaghy, Executive Director, Dana Peltier, Authority Accountant and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

**Mr. Buonanno** called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM and asked for approval of the February 25th Board Meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Ms. Aptaker** it was

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

**Mr. Buonanno** asked for approval of the March 8th Special Meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Ms. Aptaker** it was

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

**Mr. Buonanno** announced that the next meeting would be held on April 29, 2021

**Mr. Buonanno** said that in the absence of **Ms. Venturini** we would proceed with the Vets and Dan Schwartz. Mr. Schwartz stated that we have been fortunate in that we have been able to provide the State with usable space for the Governor’s Press Conferences, the Courts and the House of Representatives while other venues in the area have had no events and no revenue. Mr. Schwartz noted that the Philharmonic has been streaming concerts and we have held some dance competitions. Mr. Schwartz stated that February was the best month so far and we hope that March will see us in the black because of more activity even though the crowds is limited. Mr. Schwartz reported that the Vets received a Champlin Grant that is being used to air condition the Green Room and add a fitness room. Mr. Schwartz noted that he looks for any available funding to keep the building up to par.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Adamo to update the Board on the CVB’s outlook for the near future. Ms. Adamo stated that this month there is better news. She said that we are starting to see more activity. **Mr. Buonanno** asked that the monthly activity report be sent to the Board. Ms. Adamo reported that the hybrid studio is not yet operational but is receiving much interest. Ms. Adamo stated that a new ad campaign “Meet in RI” will roll out in April. **Mr. MacDonald** thanked the CVB and Kristen saying that they have done a great job in keeping us out in front and ready to host an event as soon as allowed.

Mr. Lepore reported that we will have guests at the meeting at about 9:30. Lt Colonel Edwards and Emily Martuscello, FEMA Manager will be joining us for a short time.

Mr. Lepore stated that the financial are all positive. He said that Covid testing is still being done in the South Garage and most of the staff that was in the Convention Center has been repurposed.

Mr. Lepore reported that the Dunk projected a loss but is now projecting a profit. Mr. Lepore complemented Mr. Leach for his work in negotiating with the Health Department. Mr. Lepore said that we will transition it FEMA on Tuesday. The Dunk site has the capacity to do about 3,000 vaccinations per day. Mr. Lepore said that our focus right now is to assist the folks in charge of the site. He said we need to get the buildings open, give the Convention Center a good cleaning and bring the staff back slowly. Mr. Lepore said that we have a lot of work ahead of us. Mr. McConaghy stated that he will continue to work with DCAMM and the RFP process.

Mr. Lepore said that the Clifford Street Garage is an operation that we would like to duplicate. He said it has the best equipment and is operating efficiently. Mr. Lepore stated that we do not have the District Court yet.

Lt Colonel Edwards, the commanding officer at the facility and Emily were introduced to the Board. Lt. Colonel Edwards stated that this site is critical as we vaccinate three to four thousand people per day. He said that if the doses should become available, he is looking at 100,000 per week in the State. Lt. Colonel Edwards noted that we need 750,000 to 800,000 vaccinated Rhode Islanders to reach herd immunity. Lt. Colonel Edwards said that September seems realistic. Mr. Lepore reported that the Colonel played an important roll in getting the funding for this operation. Mr. Leach stated that it took the Colonel to explain the importance of this site.

Ms. Martuscello addressed the Board and thanked them for inviting her. She thanked the Dunk staff that has welcomed 130 FEMA representatives and helped with getting those that are unfamiliar with the area to feel that they are part of the family. Ms. Martuscello stated that part of ending this pandemic is the kindness that has been shown to our people. Mr. Lepore reported that these individuals are staying in hotels and eating in restaurants. They seek recommendations on places to eat and some have been seen heading to Federal Hill. **Mr. Mendez** stated that he has been informed that there is some confusion in getting from the garage to the Dunk. Mr. Lepore said that we will do anything that you think could make it less confusing. He said that it could be a matter of a language issue and if so, we will address it. **Mr. MacDonald** reported that he has only heard positive stuff and he thanked FEMA and the National Guard. **Mr. Nee** asked when the general population and those over 16 might become eligible. Colonel Edwards said that supplies are becoming more available, and we should be capable of vaccinating 80% of the population in June and July. Mr. Lepore noted that the ambassadors that are assisting the public come from our labor force. He said that the National Guard has set an example on how the public should be treated. Mr. Lepore continued that a representative from every Federal Agency is on site.

Mr. Crawley reported on the financial statements of the Authority and the Consolidated. He reported that the Authority had significant expense in insurance and technology fees. Mr. Crawley stated that great things are going on at the Convention Center and the Dunk and the rolling forecast indicates a positive $3,000,000.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked for a motion at 9:45 AM to convene in executive session pursuant to Section 42-46-5(a)(7) of the Rhode Island General laws to discuss a matter related to the question of the investment of public funds.

Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Ms. Aptaker** and by a roll call vote it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to Convene in Executive Closed Session pursuant to RI General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(7) to discuss a matter related to the question of the investment of public funds.

**Vote:**

Bernie Buonanno– yes

Tony Mendez – yes

Peter Mancini – yes

George Nee - yes

Paul MacDonald, yes

Jeff Hirsh, yes

Patrick Butler, yes

Peri Aptaker, yes

Open session resumed at 10:18 a.m. **Mr. Buonanno** announced that a vote was taken in Executive Session. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Hirsh** it was unanimously

**VOTED:**  to seal the minutes of Executive Session

Mr. Leach stated that we need to coordinate signatures for the Bond Closing. He suggested Tuesday, March 30th at the Dunkin’ Donuts Center.

Mr. Crawley reported that he had received the Performance Audit. He stated that are three suggestions for improvement. We will review the suggestions and provide a response in the next couple of weeks.

Discussion ensued regarding stimulus applications. The Vets will submit their application for SPOG on April 8th and will submit for PPP loan now that restrictions have been lifted.

Mr. McConaghy thanked everyone for making this a smooth landing. He said that his time with the State has given him some insight into the issues that we face. Mr. McConaghy stated that he had spoken with Director Thorsen regarding the American Rescue Plan. He said that he has been advised to submit two proposals requesting a minimum of $3,000,000 each. Mr. McConaghy stated that the State has $1.9 billion plus $1billion ($1.12 billion plus another $113 million in Capital funds. **Mr. Buonanno** stated that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity that could put us in a much better position. He said that we want to go large and come out on the other side in good shape. Mr. McConaghy said that it will take months before this is approved. **Mr. Hirsh** commented that because we have a good partner in this it will be smooth. **Ms. Aptaker** asked if there would be technology improvements in the package. Mr. McConaghy answered yes. **Mr. Mendez** said that $3 million is the minimum is there a maximum. Mr. McConaghy said that there is no maximum. Mr. McConaghy reported that he had a conversation with ASM and they are going through this in the rest of the country. **Mr. Buonanno** said that Dan jumped into this and knows what goes on in the State.

Mr. McConaghy reported that the Accounts Receivable for URI has seen some good traction and the money should be coming in the next 30 days.

**Mr. Hirsh** stated that he would like to get back to meeting in person. He said that he wants to get back as soon as possible.

Mr. McConaghy said that he would like these meetings recorded and would be looking at how that can be accomplished with the technology that we have. **Mr. Hirsh** and **Mr. MacDonald** agreed.

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

**VOTED:**  to adjourn at 10:44 a.m.