

THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
455th MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 29, 2020
Special 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 October 29, 2020 via Zoom, pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island and the Dunkin' Donuts Center.

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

Others participating were Dan Schwartz, VETS; Cheryl Cohen, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Larry Lepore, Deb Polselli and Chris Spoladoro, Convention Center; Kristen Adamo, John Gibbons and Tom Riel, PWCVB; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Steve Laxton, Media and WJAR; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Bernier Lane, Budget Office; Bob Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

Mr. Buonanno called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and asked for approval of the August Board meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Hooper** it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the September meeting as presented.

Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Adamo to update the Commissioners on the affects that the virus is having on the City. Ms. Adamo stated that hotel occupancy is down about 41%. She noted that if someone stays more than 30 days they do not pay room taxes. Ms. Adamo reported that the Omni and the Graduate hotels remain closed.

Mr. Riel reported that cross training is taking place between the Convention Center staff and the CVB. Mr. Riel said that John McGinn is monitoring the training closely to assure proper pricing for the incidentals that the group requires.

Ms. Venturini said that BYOB (bring your own blanket) is a fun idea that seems to be working well. She noted that several states have picked up on the idea. **Mr. Buonanno** said that this is a very difficult time for the hospitality industry and Dale.

Mr. Hirsh informed the Commissioners that Jim McCarvill has not been feeling well for a long time. He said that Jim will be out of service for a few months. **Mr. Buonanno** thanked **Mr. Nee, Mr. Hirsh** and **Mr. MacDonald** for their efforts in getting him to the hospital.

Mr. Buonanno recognized Mr. Schwartz who updated the Board on the VETS. Mr. Schwartz stated that the Philharmonic, the Governor's Press Conferences and the Superior Court are contributing to the VETS revenue. Mr. Schwartz reported that September Net Income was

\$69,689 to budget and \$(8,373) to the prior year. Year to date Net Income was \$200,193 to budget and \$81,177 to last year.

Mr. Crawley addressed the Board and reported that he had a working session with Bernie Lane to discuss the FY 21 Budget. Mr. Crawley stated that he expressed his opinion that refinancing would be the best option for both the State and the Authority at this time. Mr. Crawley reported that the control reviews have not had any issues. **Ms. Parente** asked about SMG presents and Mr. Crawley answered that said that SMG presents in on hold because of Covid.

Mr. Buonanno asked Mr. Lepore to update the Board on the Convention Center and the Dunk. Mr. Lepore said that he has become aware of some opportunities. He said that decommissioning of the hospital will begin next week although we will be paid through December 31st. Mr. Lepore reported that he has been working with Bruce on an agreement to continue Covid Testing in the garage and other additional space from January 1 through March 31. Mr. Lepore also noted that he has been in contact with Mike Trangese regarding basketball in a bubble. He said that we could use the Dunk for a few weeks. He said there has been conversation regarding moving the tournaments to smaller spaces and there is some interest in using the Dunk, Convention Center and the Omni Hotel. Mr. Lepore stated that because we have testing capability already onsite we would be a great choice. Mr. Lepore continued that meals would have to be prepared or brought in and served. We could get some of our people back to work. Mr. Lepore stated that the NCAA tournament will happen but might be realigned. Mr. Trangese will help us through this. Mr. Lepore stated that the AHL is thinking about a February start.

Mr. Lepore reported that we will be working with a new person at the State. He said that Dan McConaghy will tour the facility and a discussion on options for using the building will take place.

Mr. Lepore noted that we have provided the National Guard with ticket booths with heaters to get them out of the weather. He said that we should be very proud of these young men and women that are out there in all weather without complaint.

Mr. Lepore stated that we have had a slight problem with Covid. A couple of staff members have had positive tests. He reported that others worked from home for a few days and were tested prior to returning to work.

Mr. Buonanno asked about NCAA and fans. Mr. Lepore stated that if there are no fans the NCAA might use smaller arenas rather than facilities that hold 18,000 or more. Mr. Lepore said that the landscape changes every day. **Mr. Mendez** inquired about a time line. Mr. Lepore noted that after the 1st semester. Conference Championships will be at the end of February into March. Mr. Gibbons stated that we will not know the number of fans allowed because it depends on the percentage of cases.

Mr. Hooper asked if there are any thoughts about not decommissioning the hospital. Mr. Lepore stated that he is meeting with Dan McConaghy after this meeting. He said that they will open Cranston and they don't feel that we will be necessary because hospital stays are not as long as in the beginning.

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 9:55 AM