

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY**  
**454th MEETING OF THE**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**September 24, 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 September 24, 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 Peri Ann Aptaker, Bernie Buonanno, Catherine Parente, Patrick Butler, Paul MacDonald, George Nee, Dale Venturini, John Hooper and Jeff Hirsh.

Others participating were Jim McCarvill and Dana Peltier, Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz, VETS; Cheryl Cohen, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Larry Lepore, Deb Polselli and Chris Spoladoro, Convention Center; Kristen Adamo and Tom Riel, PWCVB; Nikoletta McTigue and Alexis Clemence, Blum Shapiro; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

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

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the August 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 the Omni and the Graduate hotels are not open. **Mr. Nee** asked what the occupancy rate is at this time. Mr. Riel responded that it is 28%. Ms. Adamo noted that in order to separate students he colleges are using hotel rooms tand they do not pay the room tax. **Ms. Venturini** reported that if someone stays more than 30 days they too do not pay room taxes. Mr. Lepore asked Ms. Adamo if she was aware that PC took over the Hilton.

Ms. Adamo reported that the CVB has been working closely with Larry and John McGinn. She said that they are combining the event guides and including safety protocols which have been added to the Health and Safety Plan tab. Mr. McCarvill stated that our biggest issue is not knowing when we will be allowed to open and how many people can we safely have in the buildings. Ms. Adamo said that she has been talking and planning with the Department of Health to let them know of all the steps that have been taken to make these buildings safe. **Ms. Venturini** stated that because the Convention Center has only one sales person on staff the CVB has a plan to assist. **Mr. Hirsh** said that it was discussed and the consensus was that we need to fund and find some money from the State.

**Ms. Venturini** reported on the success of the BYOB initiative for restaurants. She said that the Bring Your Own Blanket will allow restaurants to remain open longer. **Ms. Venturini** stated that money has been made available for establishments to purchase heaters to extend the season.

Mr. Crawley addressed the Board and reported that the Audit was complete and reviewed by the State Controller and the Office of Accounts and Controls. He noted that the Auditor General requested one change. Mr. Crawley stated that he has been involved with the audit for 16 years and this has been the most difficult due to the current situation and additional disclosures because of Covid. Mr. Crawley asked Ms. McTigue to address the Board. Ms. McTigue reported that Blum Shapiro had issued a clean opinion on internal control and compliance and the audit has been reviewed and approved by the state. Ms. McTigue stated that she and her team had no difficulties with completing everything on time. She stated that the finance team had worked very hard and their efforts were appreciated. Ms. McTigue thanked Mr. Crawley. Ms. McTigue stated that there were no audit adjustments thanks to Mr. Crawley. The Management Letter includes areas that continue to be worthy of mention. Record retention has been noted in the past but considering the staff shortage and the fact that ASM and the State regulations differ in some instances it can be addressed in the future. The Authority did not solicit bids for their health insurance and the reason has not been properly documented. Information technology is being addressed. **Mr. Buonanno** asked for a motion to accept the FY 2020 Audit prepared by Blum Shapiro and submit it to the Auditor General and State as required. A motion was duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Ms. Parente** it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the FY 2020 Audit as prepared by Blum Shapiro and submit it to the Auditor General and State as required.

Mr. Schwartz was asked to update the Board on Schwartz stated that in August Net Income was \$68,935 to budget and \$60,936 to the prior year. Year to date Net Income was \$130,504 to budget and \$89,550 to last year. Mr. Schwartz noted that the Governor's Press Conferences have been a great resource and they should continue through November. Mr. Schwartz stated that the Superior Court will move in next week and will be paying a daily rental rate. Mr. Schwartz was pleased to report that the Philharmonic streamed live from the VETS. He said the 1<sup>st</sup> performance had 24 orchestra members and 125 people have been approved for future concerts. Mr. Schwartz stated that testing was done yesterday. **Mr. Hooper** informed Mr. Schwartz that we appreciate everything that he is doing. **Mr. Butler** and **Ms. Parente** asked how Mr. Schwartz is funding the loss at the VETS. Mr. Schwartz answered that PFM has lent them some money to cover payroll. **Mr. Butler** asked about the balance. Mr. Schwartz stated that at this time he was unsure of the balance. He said that he was fortunate that PFM was able to help and that the alternative would be to shut the door. Mr. Schwartz said that he would update the Board on the balance owed. **Ms. Parente** suggested putting something on the financial statement. Mr. Crawley stated that he will monitor the loan. Mr. Schwartz reported that they are keeping expenses at a minimum and it is an interest free loan to help meet payroll and other necessary expenses. **Mr. Hooper** asked what the savings in health insurance is for furloughed employees. Mr. Schwartz said that it is about \$900 per month per employee and there are 2 employees. **Mr. Hooper** said that \$900 per month is a problem for him and we should have a conversation at a later date to address the issue. **Mr. Hooper** asked Mr. Lepore the same question and Mr. Lepore replied that it approximately \$50,000 per month. Questions were asked of Mr. McCarvill concerning centralized services. He was asked if we are paying the management fee at 100%. Mr. Schwartz answered that we are and explained what services are being performed.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Lepore to update the Board on the Convention Center and the Dunk. Mr. Lepore stated that in July and August more labor was allocated to capital projects and the hospital. Mr. Lepore reported that monthly parking is down significantly due to the fact that most employees in the City are working from home. The Omni has not reopened and there are no events at the Convention Center or the Dunk. Enterprise Car Rental is not operating out of the Convention Center and South Garage because of Covid Testing. Mr. Lepore stated that we are waiting for the State to decide what we can be used for. He continued that it looks like in October the medical equipment will be moved out of the building. Mr. Lepore stated that CVS has the contract for testing until March 31<sup>st</sup> and at some time the National Guard will be leaving. Mr. Lepore said that we have raised our hand to let them know that we could take on some administrative duties.

At the Dunk a smoke evac system was installed during renovations and we have met with the Health Department to assure them of our capability to bring in outside air and eliminate possible contaminated air. Mr. Lepore noted that Dr. Scott and Brown University have videos for the testing of air handling. We are looking at ways to tweak the system at the Convention Center. Mr. Lepore stated that he thinks we will have the 2 safest buildings in the State.

Mr. McCarvill reported that bids for decommissioning the hospital were received by the State. **Mr. Buonanno** reported that he was given assurance that the \$660,000 per month will be paid through December and all money promised that was slated to get the building back to operating condition will be available. **Mr. Hooper** asked if there is any way that furloughed employees could be used to disassemble the hospital. Mr. Lepore reported that he is speaking with Aramark to determine if we could loan 20 laborers to perform custodial duties at schools. He said that the prospect is in the hands of ASM and Bruce Leach. **Mr. Hooper** recommended that as part of the bid award some of our employees should be used in the decommissioning. **Mr. Butler** said that they will need trades people. **Mr. Hooper** said that any work being done in the building should include our people. **Mr. Nee** said that the State has been cooperative. Mr. McCarvill noted that our trades people and laborers will need to participate because of their familiarity with the building.

Discussion ensued regarding opportunities and expectations for the near future. Ms. Cohen stated that no one wants to tour and they will not put one together until they are sure that it will not be shut down again. She said that we are looking at next August or September. Mr. Lepore stated that basketball is unknown. At the NCAA nobody knows. Hockey looking at December start but Canadiens can't come into the states. We are looking at an unusual business and trying to be the best stepchild that we can be.

**Mr. Butler** noted that as he drove by he noticed that the garage was lit up like a Christmas tree. Mr. Lepore stated that we have a major problem with homeless and there is oxygen on the loading dock. He said that we don't want the facilities in the dark.

**Mr. Butler** suggested an in person facilities committee meeting on Tuesday of next week at 10:00 AM to discuss projects that are being considered for the Dunk. **Mr. Buonanno** said Tuesday at 10:00 is not good for him. Mr. McCarvill reminded **Mr. Butler** that the building is

locked. **Mr. Butler** asked if someone could be stationed at the door to let people in. Mr. McCarvill said that he doesn't disagree that a meeting is appropriate but is unsure of how to do it right. **Mr. Nee** also reported that Tuesday is not good for him and we need more information. **Ms. Venturini** said that she would work with **Mr. Butler** but Tuesday is not good for her either. **Mr. Hooper** asked when are our management fees due. Mr. McCarvill said they are monthly. **Mr. Hooper** asked about a bonus. Mr. McCarvill said there are no bonuses because there are no numbers. **Mr. Hooper** asked how they are getting along. **Mr. Buonanno** said they have assured us that they are OK. Mr. McCarvill reported that they do have the opportunity for the qualitative bonus. He informed the Board that a weekly phone meeting takes place and that has not been brought up or addressed. **Mr. Buonanno** said that he will address it during the next phone meeting with ASM.

Mr. McCarvill reported on the Authority and Consolidated Financial Statements. He reminded the Board that the Authority has no income and will end the year with a \$1.9 million loss. Mr. McCarvill stated that we can't project activity and the buildings can't operate with 125 people. He said that the State needs to know what they will be required to contribute.

Mr. McCarvill reported that he has been contacted by Mr. Alviti of DOT who presented a plan to use the Clifford Street Garage as a bus hub for that section of the City. Mr. McCarvill said the plan calls for 4 bus berths inside the garage and they would need to penetrate a structural wall. Mr. McCarvill reported that he has spoken with the Court and they are not in favor. Mr. McCarvill asked the Board for permission to tell DOT that this is something that we are not interested in. The Board was in total agreement that they were not interested in having the garage serve as a bus hub. Mr. McCarvill noted that the court people would be moving in next week. Mr. McCarvill stated that Wexford will most likely not meet their ramp up numbers. Mr. McCarvill reported that we have agreements with Exeter and Waldorf.

**Ms. Venturini** brought to the Board attention the recent violence in the City. She said that we need to think about ways to eliminate the problem. **Mr. Buonanno** agreed saying that we are the engine of this City and cannot allow this violence to continue.

Discussion turned to the Budget. The combined budgets for FY 21 revised and FY 22 proposed budgets were available. Mr. Schwartz stated that the near future is unknown and that every effort is being made to keep spending down. He said that anything that must be done is being done in house. Mr. Schwartz said that some things may not survive. Mr. Lepore reported that we were expecting a profit at the Convention Center for FY 21 that has now disappeared. For FY 22 the Convention Center is projecting a profit of \$1,599,648. Mr. Lepore said that the Dunk's original budget indicated a profit of \$198,000 and has now been revised to a loss of \$2,567,000. He said that the Dunk is budgeting a loss of \$102,865 for FY 22 after a vaccine. Mr. McCarvill stated that at this point for FY 22 he sees a \$600,000 loss for the complex. He said that this doesn't take into consideration crowd size. **Mr. Buonanno** said that he is concerned.

**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 10:54 AM

