

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY**  
**442nd MEETING OF THE**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**May 23, 2019**

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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 May 23, 2019, pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Bernard Buonanno, Dale Venturini, Tony Mendez, John Hooper, Patrick Butler, Paul MacDonald and Stan Israel.

Catherine Parente, Peri Ann Aptaker, Jeff Hirsh and George Nee were unable to attend.

Also present were James P. McCarvill, Executive Director, Rhode Island Convention Center Authority; Larry Lepore, Beth Johnson, Amanda Wilmouth, Cheryl Cohen and Kristin Murphy the Convention Center and DDC; Tom Riel, John Gibbons and Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Dan Schwartz and Michael Gravison, the VETS; Rick Hall, Keough Construction; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

**Mr. Buonanno** called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM. **Mr. Buonanno** asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April Board Meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. MacDonald** and seconded by **Mr. Hooper** it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve the minutes of the April meeting.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Hall to update the Board on the construction of the Courthouse Garage. Mr. Hall presented pictures of the construction site showing progress with the concrete. Mr. Hall reported that the design team and contractor are 98% complete with all submittal reviews. He said that security and PARCS system remain. A mockup of the exterior materials will be assembled at the marshaling yard in May. Mr. Hall reported that site work is moving along. Mr. Hall reported that coordination with security and pedestrian flow is going smoothly and the Arts Council met on May 17<sup>th</sup> to interview three finalists for the art element. Mr. Hall reported that precast will continue for the next 16 weeks at 25 pieces per day. Mr. Hall noted that he could arrange for a site visit for the Board. Mr. MacDonald asked if Mr. Hall knew what the 3 options for the art project consist of. Mr. Hall said that he did not but thinks that they are all paint projects. A discussion ensued regarding RISD and/or Rhode Island artists' participation in the process. Mr. McCarvill reminded the Board that this is the responsibility of the Arts Council and they make to final decision. Mr. McCarvill stated that Ray Keough is our voice in the process. **Mr. Hooper** asked how many workers are on the job. Mr. Hall answered that there approximately 100 workers. **Mr. Hooper** then asked the percentage of the workers are union. Mr. Hall replied that 100% are union men and women and that we are meeting the goal of 10%

minority businesses. **Mr. MacDonald** wondered when we could plan on a ribbon cutting. Mr. Hall responded that we could plan something for early next year.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Kristen Adamo to address the Board. Ms. Adamo reported on sales activity for the month of April. She stated that there were 26 definite bookings for a definite room night total of 104,917. Last April there were 18 bookings that accounted for 94,993 room nights. Ms. Adamo noted that tentative bookings and room nights are down from last year. Ms. Adamo said that both definite and tentative bookings related to the Convention Center are up from last year. Booking highlights for the Convention Center include Commercial Marine Expo, JVC Tournaments Wicked Volleyball Tournament, the National Society of Black Physicists, the Southern NE Ministry Network of the Assembly of God and the Academy of Paediatric Physical Therapy. Ms. Adamo stated that the direct spend for the Convention Center bookings was \$3,959,557. Ms. Adamo presented the Smith Travel Research Data and stated that with new properties coming on line the most important graphic is the demand column. Ms. Adamo reported on April's market performance that indicate that April's occupancy, rate and RevPar were down but demand was up. Ms. Adamo stated that as the new CEO she had appeared on Executive Suite on WPRI12. She noted that articles regarding the area and the Convention Center appeared in several publications including the Providence Business News, USAE, Meetings Today and Smarter Travel. **Mr. Butler** asked where volleyball was played. Mr. Gibbons responded that volleyball is played in the Convention Center and that several groups use the facility.

Discussion ensued regarding an idea that has been suggested for a sports complex. A slide presentation, prepared by Mr. Gibbons, highlighted facilities that have been built to house the growing sports market. Mr. Gibbons reported that he was asked to come up with a wish list of what he would like in a facility. Attached is the presentation that indicates Mr. Gibbons ideas and views from similar venues. Mr. Gibbons noted that he looked at Longplex in Tiverton as well as the Myrtle Beach Sports Center and Rocky Top in Gatlinburg, TN. **Ms. Venturini** reported that she, Mr. Gibbons, Larry Lepore and Jim McCarvill had met with Kelly Coats of Carpionato Properties to look at land adjacent to the Crowne Plaza that has enough space and has utilities already in place to accommodate an indoor facility. **Ms. Venturini** noted that a second meeting would take place on Friday. **Mr. Hooper** asked who would pay, how would it be funded and who would manage the complex. **Ms. Venturini** responded that this is only an initial discussion and those details have not been addressed. Mr. McCarvill stated that the demand is high for this type of facility but more investigation need to be done. He said that the Authority, if we chose to move forward, would go to the Legislature. He stated that we have the bonding authority. Mr. McCarvill noted that there are still many things that need to be thought through. **Mr. Hooper** said that we would have to study the effect on this facility plus or minus as well as other facilities in Rhode Island. Mr. Gibbons noted that the City of Warwick and CCRI would be positively impacted. **Mr. Mendez** asked what would the percentage be for out of state compared to in state. Mr. Gibbons answered that 90% of the users would be out of state. **Mr. Mendez** asked if the Sports Council is a state agency. Ms. Adamo answered that the Sports Council is part the CVB. Mr. McCarvill said that we need to decide what we want. This is all just a concept that looks good on the surface. **Mr. MacDonald** stated that he thinks the Governor needs to be informed. Mr. McCarvill noted that he would be meeting with Mike Prescott of the Governor's Office, following this meeting and would inform him of this idea.

Mr. McCarvill stated that we will take into consideration other facilities. **Mr. Mendez** cautioned that we should be aware of private businesses that this could impact. **Mr. Hooper** asked what Mr. McCarvill was looking for. Mr. McCarvill stated that he wanted the sense of the Board if we should continue to investigate this opportunity. The Board unanimously agreed that we should proceed but with caution.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Schwartz to give an update the Board on activity at the VETS. Mr. Schwartz stated that April was a good month. Mr. Schwartz stated that Net Income for April was \$26,676 to budget and (\$1,107) to the prior year. Year to date Net Income was (\$16,962) to budget and \$8,486 to the prior year. Mr. Schwartz said that he is confident that the VETS will be profitable by the end of the year. Mr. Schwartz stated that Blue Cross held a corporate event at the theater that included a speaking program. He also said that Planned Parenthood has rented space for an event. would be using the building for a was Mr. Schwartz also announced that 14,000 elementary school children would descend on the facility this week. Mr. Schwartz reported on coming events. Mr. Schwartz reported that the metal detectors are installed and operational. **Mr. Butler** asked who is responsible for security for events such as Planned Parenthood in the off chance that there are protestors. Mr. Schwartz stated that the Vets would arrange for security but the charge would go to the event.

**Mr. Buonanno** asked Mr. Lepore to address the Committee. Mr. Lepore presented the financial statements for the Convention Center and the Dunkin' Donuts Center. Mr. Lepore reported that Net Income for the Convention Center for the month of April was \$137,307 to budget and (\$138,067) to the prior year. Year to date Net Income was \$73,519 to budget and (\$724,170) to the prior year. Mr. Lepore commented that he thinks that the Convention Center will do a little better than budget. Mr. Lepore reported that an event, Home Brew, was good enough to move their event from the Dunk to the Convention Center to accommodate the Andrade vs Sulecki fight. **Mr. Butler** asked how well tickets were selling. Mr. Lepore stated that so far we have approximately 4,000 sold. **Mr. Mendez** wanted to know how the ticket prices compared to past fights. Mr. Lepore said that they are higher. **Mr. Mendez** asked what we are doing to market the fact that it is Rhode Island fighter. Mr. Lepore stated that it will be branded local kid local fight. Mr. Lepore also noted that there will be two other local boxers on the card. He said that the fighter will make an appearance at the PVD Fest. **Mr. Hooper** asked if there is any risk for us with the fight. Mr. Lepore responded that there is not because it is rent plus expenses.

Mr. Lepore reported that Net Income for the Dunk for the month of April was \$58,320 to budget and (\$25,005) to the prior year. Year to date Net Income was \$479,752 to budget and \$1,191,005 to the prior year. Mr. Lepore said that Cheryl and Debbie have done a spectacular job reaching out to promoters. He said that the artists and promoters are having a good experience here and that is extremely important. Mr. Lepore said that we have made a great deal of headway this year. Mr. Lepore reported that PC is looking to get a major artist to appear at their late night madness. Mr. Lepore stated that WWE provides us with a lot of exposure. He noted that it is one event where food outsells beer.

Mr. McCarvill reported on the Authority and the Consolidated Financial Statements. He stated that the Authority's net income for the month of April was \$15,791 to budget and \$5,174 to the prior year. Year to date net income was \$86,671 to budget and (\$225,876) to last year. **Mr.**

**Hooper** had some questions on the Authority's financials. Mr. McCarvill explained that the Authority is responsible for PWCVB monthly contribution plus insurance coverage and Authority salary and wages. Mr. McCarvill stated that the negative variance to the prior period is due to the fact that we have little revenue absent any legal settlement and nothing is pending.

The Consolidated net income results for the month of April were \$238,094 to budget and (\$159,005) to the prior year. Year to date consolidated net income was \$622,980 to budget and \$249,445 to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill stated that he thinks with the changes that have been made to our utility package and the increase in parking rates will get us close to a profit.

Mr. McCarvill reported that the 2019 Capital Projects are nearing completion and we are getting ready for the 2020 projects. He also noted that we are beginning to see some credits from our turbines and improvements in energy consumption.

Mr. McCarvill reported that the Hilton is interested in expansion of their ballroom. He indicted a picture of the planned expansion that was included in the package that was distributed earlier. Mr. McCarvill stated that the expansion would be built over Aborn St. and almost abut our suites. Mr. McCarvill indicated that the street belongs to the PRA who said that they would give it to us if there was development. **Mr. Hooper** said that this was only a picture and did not provide any information on the proposed structure. Mr. McCarvill noted that he was attempting to keep the Board informed. Mr. Leach stated that the Hilton is asking us for easements that will be a benefit to us. He noted that we would like the hotel to stay a Hilton and this would clarify our position with the street. Mr. Lepore noted that he has some concerns about the use of the street. Mr. Leach explained the history. **Mr. Mendez** asked why have we been maintaining the street. Mr. McCarvill said that the City did not want it.

**Mr. Butler** moved that pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws Section 42-46-5(a) (2) that the Board convene in Executive Session in connection with discussion of potential litigation as to contract matters at 10:50 AM. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Israel** and seconded by **Mr. Hooper** and by a roll call vote it was

**VOTED:** to convene in executive closed session pursuant to Section 42-46-5(a)(2) of the Rhode Island General laws to discuss potential litigation.

**Vote:**

John Hooper, yes

Stan Israel, yes

Dale Venturini, yes

Bernie Buonanno, yes

Tony Mendez, yes

George Nee, not in attendance

Paul MacDonald, yes

Ms. Venturini, yes

Jeff Hirsh, not in attendance

Catherine Parente, not in attendance

Peri Ann Aptaker, not in attendance

Open session resumed at 11:10 AM. **Mr. Buonanno** announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Israel** and seconded by **Mr. MacDonald** it was unanimously

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

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

**VOTED:** to adjourn at 11:12 AM