

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2025

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 August 5, 2025, pursuant to notice which was posted at the Amica Mutual Pavilion, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI and the RI Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, RI.

Board members in attendance were Ernest Almonte, Paul MacDonald, Jeffrey Hirsh, Dale Venturini, Peter Mancini, Carol Lombardi, Jennifer Goodrich Coia, Esq., and Oscar Vargas.

Board members unable to attend were George Nee, Sarah Bratko, and Diony Garcia, Esq.

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy, Dana Peltier, Linda Maroun, Melissa O'Connor, and Christine Crabtree, Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz, Mike Gravison, and Alan Chile, PFM/The VETS; Lawrence Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Chris Spolidoro, Becca Ponder, Tim Sullivan, Al Fera, and Robert Gemma, Convention Center and AMP; Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Michael Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Hank Abate, Oak View Group; Debra Polselli, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, **Chairman Almonte** called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Announcement of Next Board Meeting Date

Chairman Almonte stated that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

3. Consent Calendar Items

- a. Approval of the June Board Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of the Marketing Committee Report
- c. Approval of the Finance Committee Report

Chairman Almonte requested a motion for the Consent Calendar Items. Upon a motion from **Mr. Hirsh**, which was seconded by **Mr. MacDonald**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the June Board Meeting, the Marketing Committee Report, and the Finance Committee Report.

4. Marketing Committee Report – Chair Dale Venturini

- a. Update – Strategic Planning Session

Ms. Venturini stated that the Marketing Committee met and received a great report from Ms. Adamo at the CVB that they overwhelmingly exceeded their goals. She then congratulated Dan Schwartz on receiving the 40 under 40 Award. The entire Board then congratulated Mr. Schwartz on this great accomplishment. **Ms. Venturini** then reported that the Strategic Planning Session is scheduled for September 16 from 2:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. with a reception taking place afterwards at Track15. She stated that an agenda is being put together by Chairman Almonte and Mr. McConaghy, which will include the Board's purpose and where the Board is heading for the future. She noted that the Board has had so many accomplishments, and it will be exciting to discuss where they are going next. She stated that time will be spent at this session discussing this topic. She then stated that Mr. McConaghy will be sending out a calendar invite to all members.

b. Rotunda Bar Branding

Ms. Venturini noted that she has talked to Mr. Lepore over the last several years to build a bar at the Convention Center and it is now happening and bigger than they thought possible. She stated that a group got together, specifically Mr. McConaghy, Mr. Lepore, Ms. Cohen, Ms. Adamo, and herself to come up with a name for this bar. She stated that the outcome of their meeting resulted in the bar being called "The Exchange." Ms. Adamo commented that they could have some fun with its nickname, "The Ex." **Ms. Venturini** stated that more important than coming up with a logo is the need for signage, etc. She stated that this is very special, and this has been worked on for a long time and she thinks it will be fun, and they are all super excited about it. **Mr. MacDonald** stated that a recommendation should have come from the Marketing Committee to vote to approve the name. **Mr. Hirsh** congratulated Ms. Venturini and the group for putting their heads together. Mr. McConaghy stated that they are out to RFP on signage. **Chairman Almonte** noted that timing is an issue.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to approve the name of the Rotunda Bar as "The Exchange." Upon a motion from **Mr. Hirsh**, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the name of the Rotunda Bar as "The Exchange."

5. Finance Committee Report – Chair Jeff Hirsh

a. Authority-Wide Fiscal Results FY25

Mr. Hirsh deferred to Mr. McConaghy to review the Authority-Wide Highlights from FY 25 (see attached). Mr. McConaghy reported that overall gross revenue was up 5.4%, the gross margin was up 4.5%, parking revenue was up 11.5%, which continues to grow, food and beverage revenue was up 11%, driven by the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, which had a major influence on results, economic impact was up 4.8%, and direct spend was up 4%. He reported that both event days and event attendance were both down. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the highlights for the RICC over six (6) categories. He noted that there were fewer days but bigger events since attendance remained about the same. He further noted that sporting events have had great success at the RICC. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the highlights for the AMP over six (6) categories as well. He noted that it was a positive year for the AMP with good attendance figures. He stated that the Providence Bruins bring in over 170k people into the City every season. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the highlights for The Vets over eight (8) categories. He noted that the comedy category saw an increase of 15 events due to the Comedy Festival. He further noted that the RI Philharmonic Orchestra, who is considered a main tenant there, had an increase in attendance even with two (2) less event days. Mr. Schwartz commented that they will be bringing in a new music director for the first time in many years.

Chairman Almonte then reported that the WNBA team in CT chose Boston over Rhode Island. He stated that he hoped they still might play games here. He stated that at the time, they were hesitant to say who they met with, but information was leaked that there was someone interested in buying the WNBA team from Mohegan Sun. He noted that the WNBA still needs to approve the purchase. He stated that if the purchase is approved, we still might be able to host some games here. He commented that there was great effort by the staff to present our facility to the potential buyer, noting that the Governor and Commerce were both part of the site visit. He stated that it was a first-class presentation. Mr. McConaghy commented that we received a lot of accolades about the condition of the building. Mr. Lepore commented on the complexities of a booking calendar with three (3) major tenants and hoped that we could possibly get a game or even a concert due to the lack of availability at the Garden. **Chairman Almonte** thanked everyone for all their hard work.

6. Employee Highlight – Al Fera (General Manager of F&B – RICC)

Mr. Lepore introduced Al Fera as the new General Manager of OVG Food & Beverage at the Convention Center. He stated that Al started in Providence as John Velez's assistant with Delaware North and has been aggressively sought after since. Mr. Fera addressed the Authority and thanked them for the opportunity to come before them. He stated that he was born and raised in Providence, attending LaSalle Academy and Sacred Heart University. He stated that he has always been in the food & beverage industry working at many, if not all, restaurants on Federal Hill. He stated that he was at the AMP for five (5) years and then went to work for ASM Global at the DCU Center as the Food & Beverage Manager. He then left the DCU Center and went back to work for Delaware North at the Xfinity Center. He stated that Delaware North's contract came to an end, and he relocated to the new soccer stadium in Miami as the General Manager when he got the call to possibly come back home. He stated he is happy to be here and looks forward to working with everyone.

Chairman Almonte and **Mr. MacDonald** both stated that they were happy to have him back, and Mr. Fera replied that it felt good to be back. **Ms. Lombardi** asked if he still has family here, and Mr. Fera replied that he has a large family living in Rhode Island. Mr. McConaghy noted that in Mr. Fera's first week he already contributed to increasing production with his input to make adjustments to the new bar. **Chairman Almonte** expressed how grateful they were to have him back and the importance of having an employee highlight every month. He then asked Mr. Fera how he defines success, and Mr. Fera replied that he feels they are intertwined a bit and feels that you always need to be moving to be successful and if you wake up every day and you love what you do and do what you love. He feels complacency is the enemy of success and there is a reason the windshield is bigger looking forward than the rearview mirror looking backwards. He stated the importance of continuing to better yourself every day.

7. Executive Director's Report – Daniel McConaghy

a. Review and Consideration of OVG Amendment #1 Related to F&B Finances

Mr. McConaghy reviewed the first amendment to the OVG contract, as it relates to the financial management of food and beverage (see attached.). He stated that the Memorandum was drafted by Attorney Leach and sent to OVG's Food & Beverage team who signed it and sent it back unchanged. He stated that the Finance Committee voted to approve this amendment and the Amendment will be executed upon the Board's approval.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to approve the First Amendment to the OVG Management Agreement. Upon a motion from **Mr. MacDonald**, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the First Amendment of the OVG Management Agreement.

b. Update on RICC Construction Projects

Mr. McConaghy stated that the next Facilities Committee meeting will take place in October, at which time the 5th Floor renovations will be completed. He stated that the Strategy Meeting will take place in September. He then updated the Board on the Construction Projects at the RICC (see attached) beginning with the Budget Summary. He stated that we received almost \$55 million in RICAP funding FY 21-25. He stated that there is a balance of a little over \$1 million that will be used for various projects. He stated that they are at the final push on the 5th floor renovations with lighting, doors, windows, etc. He also mentioned that there will be a signage upgrade in this area, along with the Fire Alarm Replacement at the RICC which had additional requirements including alarming the walk in freezer. He reported that the Third Floor Rotunda infill should be completed by October 17 and once it is done, it will certainly look incredible. He reported on the road renovations at the RICC South Garage, which should be completed by Labor Day. He mentioned a lot of effort from the teams here to minimize any parking problems. He said the road has been in disrepair and they are installing speed bumps at the south end of the road. He reported on the ongoing projects mentioning the audio and lighting system upgrades at The Vets, as well as seating improvements at the AMP and renovations to Locker Rooms 2 and 3, which are deferred until next Summer. Mr. McConaghy then reported that he met with the Omni to discuss improvements to the Omni Hotel corridor. **Chairman Almonte** asked if they have any interest in fixing it up, and Mr. McConaghy replied no. He stated that the area looks tired and despite them owning this area, we continue to maintain it to make it presentable. **Mr. MacDonald** stated that they discussed this situation at the Finance Committee meeting and the possibility of putting signage up that you are entering the Omni Hotel rather than the Convention Center. Mr. McConaghy stated that if we do not maintain this area it will fall into total disrepair. He stated that more discussion will take place on this issue. He then reported that the Life Safety Evaluation at the AMP is complete, and they expect the RICC's evaluation to be completed by the end of September. He stated that a lot is happening and a lot of hard work with results proving to be worthwhile. **Mr. Hirsh** asked Ms. Ponder if Brown Health had seen the renovations, and Ms. Ponder replied not yet but mentioned that Hasbro had seen some of it, but it was not complete. **Mr. MacDonald** stated that he does not like that we are spending money on Omni Corridor and questioned if we sent them a letter. Mr. McConaghy replied no, and **Mr. MacDonald** stated that we need to fix it up and we all thought we owned that area. **Chairman Almonte** agreed with Mr. MacDonald that we should send a letter. **Mr. Hirsh** asked Ms. Adamo if we could talk to Kevin Hurley about this situation, and Ms. Adamo stated that he is coming to meeting. Mr. Lepore stated that many convention centers experience the same problems with hotels not wanting to spend money. **Mr. Vargas** asked how much foot traffic walks through the corridor and Mr. McConaghy replied that he felt about 80% of people coming to the convention center utilize this area from the parking garage.

Ms. Venturini suggested sending a letter to work together and fix the corridor, and Mr. McConaghy agreed. **Mr. Hirsh** suggested getting some guidance from Mr. Hurley. **Mr. Mancini** agreed that they should cooperate with us. **Mr. MacDonald** asked when we sign off on the alarm system or do we accept as they are, and Mr. McConaghy stated that the State Fire Marshal has requirements and we need their approval and also the engineers need to sign off on it and then after that we would accept that. He stated that there is an enormous amount of checking and testing and retesting. He stated that it was supposed to be done a few months ago but things needed to be fixed and changed.

c. Oak View Group Report – Hank Abate

Mr. Abate reported that he, Larry, and Dan met with Amy Latimer, EVP & COO of Delaware North, a couple of weeks ago to start the process of potential negotiations on a contract extension. He also stated the interest in talking to the Providence Bruins and working with them to tweak their deal. He stated that it was in process, and he hoped that it would be wrapped up in the next couple of months. **Chairman Almonte** asked if they would wrap up both Providence College and the Providence Bruins, and Mr. Abate replied yes. He stated that the contract with Delaware North does not expire for another couple of years. He stated that anything they propose would be brought back before the Board. He further reported on the successful sale of tickets for the band Goose, which has a following like the Grateful Dead. He stated that they are a jam band and do not have a rough crowd. He reported that they will have two (2) rehearsal days and two (2) show days that are nearly sold out. He stated he hoped it would be an annuity and they would return based on their success. Ms. Adamo stated that the hotels are thrilled about this concert booking because most downtown hotels are sold out while they are in town. Mr. Abate did mention that we had the opportunity to book Andrea Bocelli, but it was the same date/timeframe as Goose. He said he hoped we will be able to get Bocelli next year. Mr. Abate then mentioned that he and Mr. Lepore will be travelling to the IEBA Conference in Nashville in October, which is the second biggest conference for promoters and agents.

8. Adjournment

With there being no further business to be discussed by the Board of Commissioners, **Chairman Almonte** asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Hirsh**, which was seconded by **Mr. MacDonald**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the August 5, 2025 meeting at 9:53 a.m.