

THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026, AT 12:00 PM

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority (hereinafter referred to as "Authority", the "CCA" or the "Board") was held on February 26, 2026. The meeting was held in the McCarvill Boardroom, second floor, Rhode Island Convention Center, pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, RI 02903 and the AMP, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI 02903.

Board members in attendance were Chairman Ernest Almonte, Jeff Hirsh, Peter Mancini and Dale Venturini, Board members unable to attend were Vice Chair George Nee, Paul MacDonald, Oscar Vargas, Jennifer Goodrich Coia, Esq., Carol Lombardi, Diony Garcia, Esq. and Sarah Bratko, Esq.

Others attending were Daniel McConaghy and Patricia Verrecchia, RI Convention Center Authority; Lawrence Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Becca Ponder, Casey Hoover, Samantha Bottoni, RI Convention Center and AMP; Tom Riel, PWCVB; Dan Schwartz, The Vets; John Valez, Delaware North; Alissa Bateman, Go Providence.

1. Call to Order – Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM
2. Next Board Meeting – Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 12:00 PM
3. Approval of January 2026 Marketing committee Meeting Minutes
 - a. No meeting held
4. Marketing updates (All Venues) – Chair Dale Venturini
 - a. The Vets – Dan Schwartz
 - b. AMP – Cheryl Cohen
 - c. RICC – Becca Ponder
 - d. PWCVB – Tom Riel

Ms. Venturini noted that last month's meeting was cancelled therefore this meeting will be covering all four reports beginning with The Vets. Mr. Schwartz began by mentioning the success they have had by moving non-profit events to weekdays instead of prime-time weekends. Non-profit events have lower rent, expenses and less profit. Some upcoming events in April include Crowder, The Naked Magicians, John Legend, and Alton Brown. Just announced yesterday that Husan Minhaj with Ronny Chieng will be performing on April 24th. Ani DiFranco with Valerie June will be coming May 8th. Planet K-Pop was announced today. Brit Floyd will be coming this Sunday with the highest sales since coming here. 1st time sales have reached over \$100k. Keltic women is coming next Wednesday opening their US. Some other shows coming up are the Princess Concert, Stavros Halkias, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, and Elmo live. Mr. Schwartz showed a calendar listing the events for March and April showing how busy they are. We have 15-16 graduations this year. To maximize the graduations, we are doubling them up. A new poster was announced last week for Lil Rhody Laugh Riot. Local artist, Savonnara Sok was hired to do the poster. Over 300 submissions were received for the show. The team chose 20 comics out of the 300 to join the festival line-up. Full line-up was announced with over 60 comics and many events listed throughout the city. There was no help with funding from the state this year. We do have some good sponsorships. We also have an exclusive with Aloft hotel for rooms.

Ms. Cohen reviewed some upcoming events at the AMP. Stars on Ice was just announced. It should be a great show with many Olympians joining. Just getting ready to announce WWE Smackdown coming in June. Hoping to announce a Mexican band called Los Tigres Del Norte. They are a very popular band, and their promoter is Zamora Live, one of the largest independent Latin promoters in the country. They are scheduled for Aug. 29 and

will hopefully go on sale next week. It is a good sign that the Latin promoters are back in play. There are lots of potential bookings in the works. Gillette Stadium has 4 major acts at 2 nights each and more coming up. Between Gillette and Fenway, they are depleting what is out there. Monster Jam 2026 had a record high for the market. Tickets sold were 27,688 with a gross revenue of \$882k. Attendance was increased by 6,000 and F&B was increased by \$102,519. We also distributed 200 tickets through Vet Tix for military, active & retired members. Ms. Cohen introduced John Valez from Delaware North to review F&B. Ms. Cohen noted that attendance was down, but revenue went up. Although attendance was down it did not negatively impact F&B revenue performance. Growth was due to faster transaction times and premium offerings. Please see attached. Mr. Valez noted that when he first started here, 17 years ago, they only offered 3 beers. We now have 18 varieties to choose from along with 4 seltzers and 12 ready-to-drink cocktails. Every year items are added. We added local vendors for our food selections including Sal's pizza and someone local for saugies. There has been a large increase in food sales during Providence Bruins games and PC fans drink more. Per cap spending has increased significantly each year. The Exchange bar and Exchange Market are open during PBruins and PC games. Ms. Cohen mentioned that we have a short period of time to sell products. The changes that have been made in F&B such as grab n' go, faster terminal time and better food selections have really helped. Investing in new POS equipment is another positive.

Ms. Ponder reported on RICC beginning with the highlight reel. Starting with Nike Snowbrawl, Ms. Ponder noted that the event closed early due to the storm. Another highlighted event was Athletic Championships Grand Nationals which had \$95k in concessions in 2025 and this year \$133k in concessions. This is the smallest of 2 events we do with Varsity Spirit. Volleyfest Providence made \$62k in concessions in 2025 and this year \$96k. The exchange bar and grill have made a difference with these numbers. Ms. Venturini asked Ms. Ponder if she would show % increases on these amounts. Ms. Ponder spoke about how the layering of sports business has helped optimize the event calendar. We will be layering events every weekend in April. There are so many dance groups that want to come in. Layering has helped. Ms. Ponder reviewed upcoming events in 2026 that have either booked or moved their reception to The Exchange Bar. Please see attached. Ms. Ponder reviewed some sales & marketing initiatives and updates. Mr. Lepore noted that Casey Hoover has been working with a tattoo group that has previously held a successful event at the convention center. He explained that the group's success could increase significantly if they are able to obtain a license to perform tattoos. While they encountered challenges with the health department during their last event, they have since been granted a one-day license. This development is expected to create a new type of event opportunity for the organization. Ms. Ponder mentioned how team member, Peyton Oliver was highlighted in Women in Sports. Peyton is an event manager and resident volleyball star who played on the hospitality team. The team hosted multiple in person planning meetings & site tours in February.

Mr. Riel began by noting how difficult January was. It was a good year end though. Mr. Riel reviewed booking comparisons from Jan. 2025 to Jan. 2026. Please see attached. One of the challenges right now is Airbnb. Their short-term rentals don't go over \$200. People are looking for alternatives and don't want to spend over \$200 a night. There are 3,031 rooms available every day in Providence area. Mr. Riel noted that they plan to join a working group across several destinations to begin evaluating and developing approaches for tracking attendee metrics. Mr. Riel noted that January was down with 43.1% occupancy, down 4.8 from same time last year. Transient travel was down 14.4%. Group was up 7.2% ahead of last year. We do have some great business on the books. We just need to start thinking ahead. The industry has taken a huge shift. We are not alone with this struggle. Mr. Lepore noted that Airbnb is taking long term housing off the market. On a positive note, we are getting 60% of repeat business and we got rid of customers that we didn't want. To help with this we are pushing for a customer advisory board. This will be in May, and a consultant has been hired to help. Alissa Bateman from Go Providence reviewed marketing & communications highlights. She stated they are doing some cross promotions with Lil Rhody Laugh Riot for the Providence Culinary Festival - March 26 through 29. Worked with AMP to promote Globetrotters on social media. We are also getting material ready for the visitor center. Open

rate for the website and email marketing is down but click through rate is higher than average benchmark. Same goes for social media with engagement rate being high. Ms. Venturini stated that AI is taking that away. Ms. Bateman agreed that AI is taking it away. They are currently looking at other platforms so we can see how much information they are getting from us. Trying to figure out the best way to get our information out there so they are not asking ChatGPT. The new web site is our biggest asset, and we need it to work. We hired two new companies to assist with this. One is from the UK and the other is from Utah. We will have two separate home pages; one will be similar to what we have now and the other will be more of a media hub. It will be like Netflix where you click on something, and it gives you suggestions. This new company is also helping us get into AI. The new hope is to get people to stay, inspire and engage using the website. We will be using our own media, video and blog posts etc. It will generate custom itineraries by group type & interests and give recommendations based on browsing behavior. The new web team is stating this should be ready by August 2026, but we are feeling like it will be closer to October of 2026. Ms. Bateman also reviewed some other public relations and media highlights. Please see attached.

5. Adjournment

With there being no further business to be discussed by the Marketing Committee, Ms. Venturini asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Almonte, which was seconded by Mr. Hirsh, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the meeting at 1:25 PM