

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2023

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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 July 27, 2023, 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, Oscar Vargas, Stephen Iannazzi, Jennifer Goodrich Coia, and Diony Garcia

Board member, George Nee, was not in attendance.

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy, Dana Peltier, and Linda Maroun, Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz and Mike Gravison, The VETS; Alan Chile, PFM/The VETS; Lawrence Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Veronica VanJura, Rebecca Ponder, Convention Center and AMP; Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Michael Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Bob Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office; and Debra Polselli, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

**Chairman Almonte** called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

2. Announcement of Next Board Meeting Date

**Chairman Almonte** stated that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 9:00 AM and stated that there will not be a meeting held in the month of August. He reported that the Finance Committee has a lot going on between now and the next meeting. Mr. McConaghy noted that the meeting will take place on a Wednesday rather than the normal Thursday.

**Chairman Almonte** welcomed one of the two newest board members, Jennifer Goodrich Coia. **Ms. Coia** addressed the Authority and stated that she is General Counsel for Paolino Properties and is happy to be part of the Board of Commissioners. All those present welcomed **Ms. Coia**.

3. Consent Calendar Items

- a. Approval of minutes of the June Board Meeting
- b. Approval of Finance Committee Report

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

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

#### 4. Marketing – Dale Venturini/Dan McConaghy

##### a. Clifford Street Garage Discussion

**Ms. Venturini** stated that the Marketing Committee did not meet this month due to scheduling conflicts but expressed that the naming of the Clifford Street Garage to Innovative District Garage is an important discussion. She thanked Ms. Cohen and her team for creating the marketing piece, which is part of the community. **Mr. McConaghy** stated that there are a few steps to help brand and improve the garage, and part of it is engaging the mobile app. He stated that we are getting inquiries about the garage, and we need to do something to brand it. He stated that no one knows the RI Convention Center Authority owns the garage, and we need to call it something other than Clifford Street Garage and brand it accordingly. **Mr. McConaghy** stated that **Ms. VanJura** has been working on a logo. He stated that he and **Ms. Cohen** stumbled across some things from 6 years ago and they are going to move forward on this. **Mr. McConaghy** questioned if a vote was needed on the naming of the garage, and **Mr. Leach** replied yes even though its current name was never voted on. Upon a motion from **Mr. Mancini**, which was seconded by **Mr. Iannazzi**, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to change the garage's name from Clifford Street Garage to Innovative District Garage.

**Chairman Almonte** asked if there was any further discussion. **Mr. Hirsh** questioned if the logo would include a line component with the RICCA name, and **Mr. McConaghy** replied yes there would be a line on signage. **Ms. Venturini** questioned if there would be a tag line on signage, and **Mr. McConaghy** replied yes. **Chairman Almonte** noted this as forward thinking and thanked everyone for their input.

#### 5. Finance/Operations

##### a. Year-end Financial Highlights FY23

**Mr. McConaghy** stated that he has had conversations with **Mr. Hirsh** and with it being year-end and books being closed, he wanted to spend some time summarizing information on our various venues. **Mr. McConaghy** stated that there has been interesting growth across the board and began his review of the Year-end Financial Highlights Report (see attached). **Mr. McConaghy** stated that **The Vets** realized an increase in food and beverage. **Mr. Schwartz** commented that more locations were added at the venue and adjustments were made to menu items. **Mr. McConaghy** reported that the numbers associated with the Convention Center being turned into an Alternative Care Facility were not included in this report because it would skew the numbers. He stated that the Event Gross Margin difference in 2 years was due to one single event, which was the Beyond Van Gogh Immersive Exhibit. He commented on the importance of these types of events. **Mr. McConaghy** also reported that while the gross margin increased over \$1 million, the total event gross margin is less than the pre-Covid number so while there was growth in general, those numbers are down. **Mr. McConaghy** then reported on the AMP, which experienced great increases across all categories. He commented that 2 successful shows at the AMP, namely Sebastian Maniscalco and Pitbull, attributed to a 108% increase in the Event Gross Margin category. **Ms. Venturini** questioned about much of the increase in food and beverage was attributable to price increases. **Mr. Schwartz** replied they did increase menu prices and **Mr. Lepore** replied that it had little impact at the AMP. **Mr. McConaghy** also noted that there is a monetary incentive tied to the Amica naming rights contract. **Ms. Venturini** commented that the relationship with Amica is the best ever to which **Ms. Cohen** agreed and stated that they are very vested in everything we do, and she is in constant contact with them. **Mr. McConaghy** stated that we are working with very thoughtful and smart people, and they always try to be part of a solution. **Ms. Venturini** questioned whether it would be a good idea to invite them to a board meeting to acknowledge the work they have done so far.

## 5. Finance/Operations – Continued

**Chairman Almonte** expressed his support of **Ms. Venturini's** idea and suggested we ask them to attend a future Board meeting. **Mr. Hirsh** commented that over the last 2 years the projections have been awful, but we proved them wrong. He complimented the CVB and stated that they “knocked it out of the park.” **Chairman Almonte** agreed that all departments and staff have been involved in this year’s successes. Ms. Cohen reported that Amica just hired an individual who starts this month to oversee their branding and they will oversee all three (3) agreements: Providence Bruins, Providence College, and Learfield. Mr. McConaghy stated that our deal extended to Learfield, which oversees our hockey and basketball teams.

Ms. Venturini asked that the marketing teams present their competitive set at the September Marketing meeting.

## 6. Discussion Items

### a. Upcoming Critical RFP’s

Mr. McConaghy stated that he is taking a deeper dive into overall operations at the Complex. He reported that he has had several conversation with ASM over the last few months and there has been a change in personnel, and he is now dealing with Doug Thornton at ASM Corporate whose office is down in New Orleans at the Superdome. He stated that Mr. Thornton has asked how they can improve their position here. Mr. McConaghy reminded the Authority that ASM’s contract expires in June 2024. Mr. McConaghy requested that ASM bring a team in to find ways to bring value. He stated that a follow-up report to their meeting was to be provided but has not been received yet. Mr. McConaghy asked Corporate to focus on one thing and that was to bring shows and content to Providence. He stated that they did a walk through, ideas were discussed, and many of these ideas the staff had already looked into.. Mr. McConaghy stated that he had a discussion with Mr. Thornton on ASM pulling out earlier than the contract expiration. He stated that they have started to draft an RFP and since his conversation with Mr. Thornton an article came out that ASM is in serious discussions to be sold again. When asked, Mr. Lepore stated that he believed it might be the third time in 10 years. Mr. McConaghy stated that we will continue working on the RFP. **Ms. Venturini** posed the question if the Authority should consider taking over the management of the Complex, and Mr. McConaghy replied that it had previously been discussed and there are pros and cons associated with it with current labor agreements being a major issue, as well as many other issues. He stated that he wanted to update the Authority on his discussions with ASM and reminded everyone that there are not many companies out there to choose from who manage venues. **Chairman Almonte** stated we will have a meeting where there will be some strategic planning and welcomed any member to bring ideas to the table since everyone’s input will be needed through this process. Mr. McConaghy reported that the Authority’s agreement with ASM allows us to pull food and beverage and parking out from under the management contract, and we can look to formulate a food and beverage RFP, which would be separate from the management contract which will provide us with more options to choose from in this area.

**Ms. Venturini** then questioned when we will be kicking off the mobile app for parking, and Mr. McConaghy replied he is hopeful that the app will be launched by September. **Chairman Almonte** then asked Mr. Bromley if he had any questions or comments. Mr. Bromley replied he was present at the meeting doing due diligence on oversight.

6. Discussion Items – Continued

**Chairman Almonte** welcomed new member, Diony Garcia, and asked if Mr. Garcia had any questions or comments. Mr. Garcia addressed the Authority and stated that he is an attorney and is happy to be part of the Board of Commissioners. All those present welcomed **Mr. Garcia**. **Mr. Garcia** then questioned if the Authority needed consent before sending out an RFP for its management contract. Mr. McConaghy stated that ASM was concerned about the term of its contract and that there are performance rating items which extend the contract term. He stated there was discussion related to ASM's incentive fee when the Convention Center became an alternative care facility during the pandemic, and he did not believe this should be included when calculating ASM's incentive fee. **Mr. Garcia** questioned if there was a provision in the agreement to terminate the agreement early, and Mr. McConaghy stated that the Authority must provide them with an opportunity to remedy a situation. He further stated that the term of the contract is now a fixed date. Attorney Leach stated that there is a provision in the contract that if ASM were in default, we would need to give them the opportunity to cure, and there is now an official cutoff date. Attorney Leach stated that this process still takes 6 months once an RFP is complete, so June 2024 is a practical timeframe.

7. Adjournment

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

**VOTED**: to adjourn the July 27, 2023 meeting at 9:42 AM.