

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY  
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025 AT 12:00 PM

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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 June 26, 2025. 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 and the Amica Mutual Pavilion, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI.

Board members in attendance were Ernest Almonte, Jeffrey Hirsh, Dale Venturini, Peter Mancini, and Carol Lombardi

Board members unable to attend included George Nee, Paul MacDonald, Oscar Vargas, Diony Garcia, Esq., and Jennifer Goodrich Coia, Esq.

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz and Mike Gravison The VETS; Christina Montanaro, Lawrence Lepore, Cheryl Cohen, Rebecca Ponder, Casey Hoover, and Samantha Bottoni, RI Convention Center and AMP; Tom Riel, PWCVB; Samantha Salvatore, City of Providence Waste Reduction Consultant; and Debra Polselli, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

**Ms. Venturini** called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. and apologized for the late start due to the Finance Committee running late.

2. Announcement of Next Meeting Date

**Ms. Venturini** stated that the next meeting will take place on Thursday, July 31, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

3. Approval of May 2025 Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes

**Ms. Venturini** requested a motion to approve the May 2025 Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes. Upon a motion from **Chairman Almonte**, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to approve the minutes of the May Marketing Committee meeting.

4. Marketing Updates

a. PWCVB –Tom Riel

Mr. Riel reviewed the CVB's Monthly Marketing Report for June (see attached). He reported that the CVB exceeded their sales goal and the renovation project at the Convention Center was so well managed they have not taken a hit at all. He expressed his appreciation for all those involved in this project. Ms. Venturini commented that we also had clients that were willing to work with us, which helped greatly as we underwent these renovations. Mr. Riel reported that there were 13 new definite bookings in the month of May with year to date coming in at 54 versus 67 last year. He stated that the number of room nights is substantially higher year to date this year versus last year which means increased revenue but decreased labor costs which is a good thing. He then noted that June bookings are mostly all repeat business. He then reviewed new prospects noting Turfgrass, and Pri-Med which is business that was taken from the Hines Center in Boston. He noted that the CVB is working on establishing a long term relationship with them. Mr. Riel then reported that occupancy increased to 71% in May, which was driven by both Providence College and Brown University graduation weekends. **Ms. Venturini** questioned that since they are not copying the reports for members any longer if they could do 3 slides side by side since it is difficult to read and Mr. Riel agreed. Mr. Riel then reviewed the sales and convention services highlights. He noted that the TID committee approved the CVB to offer the shuttle promotion and credit to potential clients who meet a certain criteria. He then reviewed the marketing and communications updates. He stated that their monthly email campaign saw 9200 people had opted in to receive it. He reported that USA Gymnastics had a great experience while in Providence and loved the connectivity of the two (2) facilities. **Mr. Hirsh** mentioned that it was discussed at the CVB Board meeting that there were good comments and feedback, and Mr. Riel stated that they loved the look and feel of the venues.

b. AMP/RICC – Cheryl Cohen/Becca Ponder

Ms. Cohen took a moment to introduce Samantha Salvatore, Waste Reduction Consultant for the City of Providence. Ms. Cohen then reviewed the AMP's Monthly Marketing Report for June (see attached). She stated that this time of year most agents take time off and close down for 2 weeks during the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, so we expect radio silence for most of July. She reported that there is a lot of activity going on with WWE Raw in July when Netflix will be live from Providence. She noted that the CVB provided her with aerial footage that WWE requested. She further reported that Creed is doing well, and it has been reported that they kill it with food and beverage. She stated that we are heading into the new fiscal year looking good. She then reviewed the "in process" events noting local promoter, Frank Manfredi of the Rosendale Group, who promotes about four (4) shows a year at the AMP and is very successful at other venues as well, giving him the opportunity to offer an act three (3) different nights. She stated that he has been promoting R&B acts and is looking at other genres, possibly a Latin show in the Fall. **Mr. Hirsh** asked if he would be willing to come to a Board meeting giving them the opportunity to let him know that they are happy to be doing business with him. **Chairman Almonte** agreed that would be a great idea, and Ms. Cohen stated that he is a great asset to us and felt confident he would be happy to come to a Board meeting. Ms. Cohen then reviewed the data from Placer AI and Ticketmaster on the recent Barry Manilow concert stating 59% of the attendees were female with a healthy income. She stated that this data helps package things and how they plan to market an event. **Mr. Hirsh** commented that he was aware that Barry Manilow was coming but forgot and happened to be in the City that night and was surprised that a lot of women were dressed in jazzy outfits. Mr. Lepore commented that there were 47 requests for wheelchair assistance, which is unheard of. Ms. Cohen stated that this was Mr. Manilow's last performance in Providence. She then reported on the R&B show that had 6k people in attendance and the food and beverage per cap was about \$26 with the top selling item being the "light up cup" cocktail. She noted that the top selling item for Katt Williams was Dasani water, which was surprising. She stated that the per cap was \$5 more than anticipated for this show, which did not have an intermission. Ms. Cohen then reported on Barry Manilow noting that there were some last minute changes to the door time and the elimination of an intermission, which impacted our overall food and beverage sales. She further reported on the Manilow Music Foundation, which recognizes a local music teacher, presented a check to Classical High School teacher, Emerson Brown, who received \$5,000 cash prize and \$5,000 Manilow bucks' credit that can be used to purchase instruments for his classroom. She then reported on the artist's venue gift, which was a custom tour jacket that even noted all the dates Mr. Manilow played Providence since the building opened. Finally, she reported that the Speaker of the House, Joseph Shekarchi, presented Mr. Manilow with a Citation from the State.

Ms. Ponder then reviewed the RICC's Monthly Marketing Report for June (see attached). Ms. Ponder reviewed the contracted events since the last meeting, as well as the pending list, noting that she has been working with Attorney Leach on contract negotiations and although some events are on the pending list, most are confirmed with a signed contract but awaiting a deposit. She then reviewed June events and highlights noting the FlightSim Expo which is an exciting event that is looking to return in 2027. She commented on the CNU33 Event that typically does not meet in Convention Centers and was reluctant to come to Providence but in the end they were happy they did. She further noted the ASCE PORTS Conference that generated \$315k in catering and also the RI Bar Association, which is a regular client and a short term piece of business that generated over \$100k in food and beverage. Ms. Ponder then reported on USA Gymnastics, which was a complex wide event and was very successful.

c. The VETS – Dan Schwartz/Mike Gravison

Mr. Gravison reviewed The VETS Monthly Marketing Report before the Committee (see attached). Mr. Gravison stated that the report is all programming related. He reported that they are announcing David Byrne who is launching his tour in Providence for a date in September that sold out. He reported that Sutton Foster will perform with the RI Philharmonic Orchestra in February 2026 which also sold out. He reviewed upcoming events noting Colin Jost of Saturday Night Live and a Motown show both in August. He reported that they have confirmed 19 shows and 7 that are yet to be announced and there were 12 offers being submitted for the upcoming year, which is expected to be busy. He then reported that there were 16-20 offers submitted for the Lil Rhody Laugh Riot next year since they want to announce it as soon as possible. He further reported that this comedy festival won a Best of RI award. **Mr. MacDonald** asked if the other theaters around us (Stadium Theater, Park Theater, Zeiterion Theater) are competition for The Vets, and Mr. Schwartz replied yes. He stated that most of the shows they have are shows The Vets declined because it was too soon since their last play, noting that they are willing to do every other year. He commented that the Zeiterion Theater is undergoing major renovations, and they will be back online in another year and will be competitive for them. He commented that it was important that The Vets did the seating renovations to get them over a 2000 seat capacity because the agents now look at them as a 2000 seat venue, which makes them a more viable option.

5. Executive Director's Report – Daniel McConaghy

a. Update on Sustainability Efforts – Cheryl Cohen & Samantha Salvatore

Mr. McConaghy reported to the Committee members that there is an update relative to the Sustainability Program (see attached) and that Samantha Salvatore is here at the meeting to discuss this program in more detail. He stated that our goal is to have 100% of our food waste compostable at the Convention Center to either energy recovery or farm composting streams. He reviewed the key objectives and then Ms. Salvatore addressed the Committee members. She provided an overview of who CET is and how the RI Convention Center fits in. She stated that she works across New England with the City to reduce food waste and she is able to provide this service at no cost to the Convention Center. Ms. Cohen reported on what the food and beverage team has already accomplished noting plates, utensils, and food waste. Ms. Salvatore reported that 9.1 tons of organic material has been diverted from the landfill, which is very impressive, and she projects that number will reach 36 tons. She stated that the landfill is reaching capacity and anything we can do to divert from the landfill helps everyone. Mr. McConaghy asked if any other facility is engaged in a sustainability program, and Ms. Salvatore replied that many restaurants she is working with are already doing this on their own. Ms. Cohen commented that the Authority are leaders in the state for doing this and is something they should be proud of accomplishing. She stated that in a short period of time, we have already made a significant impact. Ms. Cohen then reported on the client testimonial we received from NERCOMP. Mr. Riel commented that engaging in a sustainability program will help the CVB attract more business since some companies are very sensitive to this important endeavor. He expressed his appreciation for this data and stated that the CVB is looking for things like this to market the destination. Ms. Cohen then reviewed "Next Steps" noting that an important part to bring it to fruition is to help the CVB and the Sales Team to sell it to future business and work together to create a Sustainability collateral piece. She then mentioned working with OVG for some kind of identifiability branding on sustainability. Mr. Riel asked Ms. Salvatore if she had any materials that they could use to show potential clients, and Ms. Salvatore replied yes. The Committee then thanked Ms. Salvatore for coming in and providing an update.

b. Strategic Plan Efforts

Mr. McConaghy updated the Committee members on the Authority's Strategic Plan. He stated that they met this week and they are planning a social event. Ms. Venturini commented that the RI Foundation has committed to the Authority using their space and Chris Marsella of Track 15 has committed to getting behind it as well. **Ms. Venturini** stated the importance of providing a better understanding of who we are, what we are doing, where do we need to go, how are we going to get there, where our money comes from and how we spend it. She stated that the event should be run by someone else and that they were thinking of a September time frame and that it would possibly replace a board meeting. She stated that the first step is brainstorming an agenda. She expressed her excitement to get together and noting that the Authority covers a lot on this Board. Mr. Lepore commented on the importance of identifying businesses that profit the most from us, and **Ms. Venturini** agreed that it was something that the facilitator can help us with. Mr. Lepore stated that we typically always response to negative comments rather than positive statements, and **Ms. Venturini** agreed and stated the importance of getting this done before the end of the calendar year. Mr. Riel commented that our newest ally is Mr. Macera, and he now sees what we offer up, and he is a good partner. Ms. Venturini welcomed any ideas from anyone and that they need to lock in a date.

6. Adjournment

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

**VOTED:** to adjourn at 1:35 p.m.