

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 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 March 31, 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 and the Amica Mutual Pavilion, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI.

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

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

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz and Mike Gravison, The VETS; Cheryl Cohen, Becca Ponder, and Samantha Bottoni, RI Convention Center and AMP; Kristen Adamo, Tom Riel, Alyssa Bateman, and Mary Kate Talbot, PWCVB; and Debra Polselli, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

2. Announcement of Next Meeting Date

Ms. Venturini stated that the next meeting will take place on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.

3. Approval of February 2026 Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes

Ms. Venturini requested a motion to approve the February 2026 Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes. Upon a motion from **Mr. Hirsh**, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the February Marketing Committee meeting.

4. Marketing Updates (RICC & PWCVB)

a. RICC – Becca Ponder

Ms. Ponder reviewed RICC's Monthly Marketing Report for the month of March (see attached). She reviewed contracted business, noting that the Association of State Democratic Committees in June has confirmed, signed contracts through 2027 noting that back-to-back contracts were signed for Consigli. She then reported that the US Conference of Mayors meeting has been approved and they are awaiting a signed contract and they have until 5pm to sign the hotel contract. Ms. Ponder then reviewed the event calendar for the month of March, which is always busy and has only two (2) dark days and tight turnarounds. She stated there was a mixture of trade shows, galas, public shows, sporting shows, and conventions. She then discussed the Saltwater Anglers Show and the Turfgrass event, which are back to back. She stated that the Saltwater Anglers show wanted another timeframe, but they are unable to provide them with it. She stated that they work with the same decorator and if Saltwater changes decorators it will complicate matters and what has been done in the past will no longer be possible. She stated that they are actively working with Saltwater Anglers, who may stay where they are and just change their start time. Ms. Ponder then reviewed the event stats for select shows in the month of March. Mr. Riel asked if a JLC subcontractor's catering ties into the show's catering discount, and Ms. Ponder replied yes. Ms. Ponder further reported that the Exchange Bar is now open for all public shows. She stated that she spoke with Sue Catanzaro about stamping attendees allowing for re-entry, so attendees are able to go to the Bar. She then stated that SpiritFest has over \$200k between concessions and catering. She stated that they are still waiting on numbers for Irish Dance and JLC Live.

Mr. Hirsh then commented that he has spent a lot of time at the CVB recently and wanted to mention what a wonderful job they do at the CVB. He stated that they are always helpful and have a great operation. He stated that they are working on a conference series with Brown University, which they hope will turn into 4-5 conferences per year and bring a lot of people into the City.

b. PWCVB –Kristen Adamo/Alyssa Bateman

Mr. Riel reviewed the CVB's Monthly Marketing Report for March (see attached). He stated that YTD there are currently 168 bookings, which is three (3) more than the previous year. He stated that the total number of room nights on the handout notes 83,606 but that number is really 104,342 because they had a Closing day on Friday and the entire sales team worked hard to close as much business as possible and they closed about \$23 million that day. **Ms. Venturini** asked if the winner received a prize, and Mr. Riel replied yes, the winner got to wear a crown. He then stated that definite attendees is something they are playing with where they are starting to look at the attendee number at events as a metric and as they started to use it, he can see why it is not working because in some years they have built multi years into the number. He stated that last year at this time they had 246,000 versus 185,000 this year. He stated that it looks like they have the numbers, but it is because last year they built in multi-year events like cheer events, which have enormous numbers to them, so it skews the numbers. He stated they are trying to figure it out and the difficulty is that the world has changed so the metrics are going to change as well as the reporting. He stated that room nights are also really difficult because meeting planners are very conservative in how they are blocking rooms across the city. He stated that we should know where everyone is staying but for a citywide convention, 68% of the attendee base is staying outside of the hotel's contracting room block. He stated that an audit takes place that anyone staying at a hotel around a convention's room block are asked about their stay. He stated that it does not change the fact that attendees are coming to the destination and spending money, they are just staying where they want to stay, which is their right. He stated that they will work to figure this out. He then noted that prospective bookings are down 11% and room nights are down 26%. He stated that the convention center is flat to the same time last year with 41 bookings, but we are at capacity. He stated that they have a TEAMS call everyday and discuss opportunities that they cannot find a place to put them, so it is a challenge. He noted that 53% of what the CVB does is convention center related and it will probably end up being 65%. He stated that they are working towards moving out less profitable to more profitable events. He stated that all repeat business is good business. He then talked about hotel performance and **Mr. Hirsh** asked if the average daily rate is Providence only, and Mr. Riel replied yes Providence hotels only. Mr. Riel then discussed the GoProvidence Executive Exchange, which is a new TID funded initiative that will serve as a customer advisory board that will be made up of the most influential planners in the industry. He then reported that they are currently planning their annual Ambassador Luncheon which will take place in the Rotunda of the Convention Center on May 19 and members of the GoProvidence Executive Exchange will be invited to this luncheon. He then reported that there are three (3) promotions in the market, which are doing well. He stated that they are trying to get closer to the customer to find out what is most important to them. He stated they do not need new promotions; they just need the right promotions for the right customer. He stated that they are trying to figure out how to make the sales call. They want to spend advertising dollars that are working using CVET, which has a new functionality. Mr. Lepore asked if they would talk to JLC about expanding to the AMP, because PC is no longer in season. Mr. Riel replied that they will be in town in May and they can discuss it at that time. Ms. Ponder stated that they very much want to go to the AMP. Mr. Riel asked if multiple years would be possible, and Mr. Lepore replied that the problem is going up against the NCAA and any potential tournament bids. Ms. Bateman then updated the committee on current promotions, specifically the "Providence Gets Me" campaign where the sales team asked tradeshow attendees what makes their event a success and they provided their feedback which included walkability, customer service, family friendly location, among others. She then stated that Ms. Talbot would update the committee on the World Cup. Before Ms. Talbot addressed the committee, Ms. Adamo stated that she expected to have the numbers next month for the Culinary Collective, and congratulated the Lil Rhody Laugh Riot on all their successful events. She then stated that Ms. Talbot would talk about the World Cup and what they have been doing and where they are at this time. She stated that they are very fortunate to have Ms. Talbot working with them on the World Cup and it is the only thing she is working on. Ms. Talbot provided an overview of the World Cup. She stated that this year's World Cup is different than before and for the first time there are 48 teams with matches taking place in three (3) countries – US, Canada, and Mexico. She stated that all events typically take place in one (1) location. She stated that the Boston Stadium a/k/a Gillette Stadium will host five (5) matches June 11-June 19. She stated that everyone is expecting a spinoff economy. She stated that Boston 26 owns the licensing rights and they have a contract with FIFA. She stated that she is working with Liz Tanner and Jonathan Walker who in turn are working with Bryant University and FIFA to be the team base camp. She stated that Ghana is staying at the Graduate Hotel and using Bryant and using Bryant as a practice facility. She stated that the CVB is doing event planning with the City of Providence and also helping with some diplomacy with the teams. She stated that they are trying to do things with them to bring them to Providence. She stated that they applied for a Fan Zone. Mr. McConaghy asked if you have to pay money to get it done, and Ms. Adamo stated yes and that an application was submitted and they are waiting to hear back. Ms. Talbot stated that there are unknown deadlines that are consistently moving and there are a lot of unknowns.

Ms. Talbot stated that they are working with the Providence G for events, as well as the British Consulate and Germany Consulate for events. She then talked about creating a "RI Summer of Soccer" and have a welcome packet when people arrive at hotels, restaurants, etc. She stated that the United Way submitted a bid to recruit and train volunteers at hotels and fan zones. She stated that they are spreading seeds of soccer in the community and working on identifying retail space, cultural events, hosting watch parties, etc. Ms. Adamo then discussed the challenges of transporting attendees from Providence to Boston. She stated that Boston26 wanted \$300k and we had to sell a certain number by April 22 and if you did not sell, they keep your money, which is unacceptable. She stated that it is a huge challenge and they are trying to work through it. Ms. Adamo stated that they are going to continue to do what they do best and that is hospitality and taking care of people. Ms. Talbot commended Ms. Adamo on taking things on because it affects the visitors' experience which is important to the entire state.

5. Other or New Business

There was no Other or New Business to be discussed by the Committee.

6. Adjournment

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

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:08 p.m.