

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 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 May 27, 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, George Nee, Paul MacDonald, Jeffrey Hirsh, Dale Venturini, Peter Mancini, Jennifer Goodrich Coia, Esq., and Oscar Vargas.

Board members unable to attend were Carol Lombardi and Diony Garcia, Esq.

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy, Dana Peltier, and Melissa O'Connor Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz, Alan Chile, and Tara Edwards PFM/The VETS; Lawrence Lepore, Chris Spolidoro, Becca Ponder, Casey Hoover, Christina Montanaro, Robert Gemma, and Steven Simas, Convention Center and AMP; Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Michael Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Hank Abate and Charles Lawrence, Oak View Group; Debra Polselli, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, **Chairman Almonte** called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

2. Announcement of Next Board Meeting Date

Chairman Almonte stated that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

3. Consent Calendar Items

- a. Approval of the April Board Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of the Marketing Committee Report
- c. Approval of the Finance Committee Report
- d. Approval of the Facilities & Operations Report

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

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the April Board Meeting, the Marketing Committee Report, and the Finance Committee Report, and the Facilities & Operations Report.

4. Marketing Committee Report – Chair Dale Venturini

- a. New PWCVB Space in Rotunda

Ms. Venturini thanked Mr. McConaghy and Mr. Hirsh for covering the Marketing Committee meeting since she was unable to make it. She stated how excited she was to show the Board what is planned for the first floor of the Rotunda, and that it was like Christmas for the CVB. Mr. McConaghy did a slide presentation of the PWCVB space in the Rotunda and stated that they are creating more of a structure for the Go PVD space to display items, posters, etc. and digital down the road. He stated that it is a very welcoming area with a desk and a little sitting area for people to review materials, as well as iPads for people to look through. He stated that they have wanted to improve this visitor space for the CVB. Ms. Adamo thanked Mr. McConaghy for being so collaborative on this project and stated that it is a much more secure and welcoming space offering a spot for people to take pictures and post on Instagram at the PVD sign. **Chairman Almonte** commented that it was a great idea to improve this space for visitors. **Ms. Venturini** commented that it was always very cold and now with security and safety it is both beautiful and functional. **Chairman Almonte** questioned the safety, and Ms. Adamo replied that there was never a door and now there is one.

5. Finance Committee Report – Chair Jeff Hirsh

a. Deferring to the Executive Director's Report

Mr. Hirsh stated that he will be deferring the Finance Committee report to the Executive Director's Report in Executive Session.

6. Facilities & Operations Committee Report – Chair Paul MacDonald

a. Construction Projects Overview

Mr. MacDonald deferred to Dan McConaghy to review and update the Board on the construction projects (see attached Construction Projects Overview & Update). Mr. McConaghy stated that the Committee meeting was very productive, and committee members went through all of the building projects in detail. Mr. McConaghy first reviewed the Budget Summary with the Board, which showed a breakdown of all the funds marked for these projects. **Chairman Almonte** asked if the CVB project already had funds allocated to it, and Mr. McConaghy replied that the funds for the CVB project will come out of the remaining \$1.1 million. **Chairman Almonte** suggested that anything we can do to allocate funds to do it now because the State House is looking for additional funds. Mr. McConaghy further stated that there is a 4%-5% contingency plan allocation risk attached to all projects because something always happens. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the renovations to the Convention Center's 5th Floor noting that there is no longer a fixed wall and that there is an operable wall now. He commented that he believed there was a show where we needed additional space and Ms. Ponder commented that there was in fact a show and we could not make additional space but now with an operable wall we will be able to accommodate shows we otherwise might not have been able to in the past. **Chairman Almonte** commented on the importance of discussions taking place to make a space better. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the renovations to the 3rd Floor Rotunda noting that erecting the steel began on May 5 and that the artist had elected to walk away from his artwork, which saved us a lot of time and work. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed all the upcoming projects beginning with The VETS audio and lighting system upgrades. Mr. Schwartz commented that the sound system was the first thing they did back 2011 but they never had a concert quality sound system and always needed to rent equipment because they could not furnish shows with what they needed for their show. He stated that with a new sound system this will cut down on costs with no longer needing to rent equipment. He further stated that shows are looking for intelligent lighting and with the lighting upgrades it will bring them more current and ahead of their competitors. Mr. McConaghy asked if these projects will be done during the summer and Mr. Schwartz replied that the sound system has been delivered and the lighting bids are due soon. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the seating improvements and locker room renovations at the AMP. He stated that we will be keeping our trades busy this summer. **Ms. Venturini** asked if the trades doing the work are in-house, and Mr. McConaghy replied not all but some. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the improvements to the Omni Hotel corridor and that conversations need to be had because the Omni owns this corridor. He stated that it benefits us all to spruce up this space because it is tired and we need to do something because it is the first thing people see when coming in from the garage. **Chairman Almonte** asked if conversations have started yet. **Mr. MacDonald** noted that the one thing that was not discussed in the committee meeting was the issue of liability. Mr. McConaghy stated that if we are working on their property we would have some liability. **Ms. Venturini** agreed that this space is definitely a first impression. Mr. Lepore commented that we maintain and clean this space, and management probably is not aware that they own this space. **Chairman Almonte** agreed with **Mr. MacDonald** about liability and Mr. McConaghy stated that it is in their sights and something needs to be done. Mr. McConaghy then reviewed the Life Safety Evaluations taking place at the AMP and RICC. He noted that there have been some important ongoing issues with the State Fire Marshal and the Authority has engaged Jensen Hughes to conduct this study to clarify and dictate what we can do in both venues. He stated that the study kicked off a couple of weeks ago and should be completed this summer. Mr. McConaghy then discussed future planning at the RICC, AMP, and The VETS. He reported that we need to secure bond funding in FY2027 since the old one will be paid off. He stated that they always contemplate a myriad of projects that need to be done in the future, for example the 52 year old ice system at the AMP, and will report back to the Board. He noted that we need to make sure we capture everything and make sure things are fixed for the next 25 years. **Vice Chairman Nee** confirmed that once the debt is retired we would secure additional bonds, not RICAP, and Mr. McConaghy replied yes and that this year \$7 million was requested for RICAP funding. He stated that the façade alone would cost about \$13-\$14 million and we will need possibly \$50-\$60 million. **Ms. Venturini** commented that direct competition is more of a problem than ever before, and we need to constantly keep upgrading to keep our customer. **Mr. Hirsh** questioned Ms. Adamo her opinion if she picked our top five (5) competitors, how current they are, and Ms. Adamo replied that our biggest competitor is Savannah, Georgia. She stated that they have a huge budget, and their convention center is fairly new. Next, she stated that the Carolinas are another big one for us and they have a fairly new convention center as well. She stated that for the most part we are competing against newer buildings. **Mr. Hirsh** questioned so upgrades are important, and Ms. Adamo replied that **Ms. Venturini** is correct that even though our convention center is not new it needs to feel new. **Ms. Venturini** asked if she had a wish list would finding another building/more space be at the top, and Ms. Adamo replied yes. Mr. Lepore commented that there are many options for commercial property that are not being rented, and **Ms. Goodrich Coia** commented that it is a buyer's market right now.

7. Employee Highlight – Tara Edwards (Box Office Manager – The VETS)

Mr. Schwartz introduced Tara Edwards, Box Office Manager at The VETS. He stated that when he started it was only Tara, Doreen, and himself. He stated that there is so much going on with ticketing and Ms. Edwards always stays current. **Chairman Almonte** welcomed Ms. Edwards to the meeting. Ms. Edwards thanked the Board and stated that she got married in 2016, which was late in life, and had her son late in life as well and she could not be happier. She stated that she began working at PPAC back in 1998 and had always done real estate. She stated that when PPAC took over The VETS in 2008 she went to work there. She stated that every day is different for her, and she is used to the chaos. **Mr. MacDonald** commented that when Mr. Schwartz cannot get something done, Ms. Edwards gets it done. **Vice Chairman Nee** asked Ms. Edwards what her biggest challenge is, and Ms. Edwards replied third party ticket sellers. She elaborated by stating that when you have a sold out show and it is the night of the show and there are 100 people who spent a lot of money on a ticket only to find out that their tickets are invalid. Mr. McConaghy asked if we try to help people, and Ms. Edwards replied we always try to help the patron, but when the show is sold out it makes it that much more difficult to accommodate them. **Chairman Almonte** asked if this happens a lot, and Ms. Edwards replied yes more so at The VETS than at PPAC because The VETS has one nighters, so it happens more often. **Ms. Venturini** noted that a lot of PPAC tickets are subscription base, and Mr. Schwartz replied yes. **Chairman Almonte** asked if the ticket buyers are in state or out of state, and Ms. Edwards replied both. **Chairman Almonte** questioned if the invalid tickets get reported, and Ms. Edwards replied that they take the tickets, and they keep track. She also noted that they can tell when tickets purchased are intended for resale and the IP address will get shut off, so the sale does not go through. **Ms. Venturini** stated that she believes legislation was put in and Mr. Lepore replied that the legislation is put in every year, but the consumer has the right to buy from a secondary ticket seller. He stated that everyone thinks Ticketmaster is this big bad villain, but it is really the shows that dictate ticket pricing. **Chairman Almonte** stated that the Board is very grateful and knows that we are only successful because of everyone working in the background. He then asked Ms. Edwards to define success, and Ms. Edwards replied that in business it is not money to her but her relationships with her colleagues and in her personal life it is her son and her family.

8. Executive Director's Report – Daniel McConaghy

a. Oak View Group Overview – Hank Abate/Charles Lawrence

Chairman Almonte welcomed Mr. Abate and Mr. Lawrence to the meeting. Mr. Abate reported that they are working with Local 271 trying to reforge the labor force to bring in more people to make it more efficient and cut down on overtime. He further reported that OVG is working with Live Nation on a contract that will contain a static rebate and expects that an agreement will be finalized soon. He stated that he is working with Mr. McConaghy and Amy Latimer who is the CEO of Sportservice on their deal that is expiring at the AMP. He noted the Providence Bruins connection to the Boston Bruins. Mr. Abate then discussed the new bar at the Convention Center noting that Mr. Lepore is working on some policies for it and the possibility of selling it as a buyout for some events. Mr. McConaghy noted that some would be sensitive to that and that we certainly respect and want to service our convention and believes there is space for both. **Ms. Venturini** asked if the bar would be open when there are no events in the building. **Mr. MacDonald** asked if there will be TVs. Mr. Abate replied that there would be TVs and also beautiful views. Mr. McConaghy stated that there is already interest in this space and Ms. Ponder stated that they have already engaged clients. **Mr. MacDonald** asked how many seats, and Mr. Lepore replied that there will be 24 seats at the bar and 60 in the space. **Ms. Venturini** questioned the full capacity and Mr. McConaghy replied that they do not have it yet. **Mr. MacDonald** asked whose liquor license will be used in this new bar, and Mr. Lawrence replied that it would be theirs, which covers the entire venue. Mr. Lawrence stated how good it was to see everyone and how much he loves coming to Providence. He stated that he wanted to bring the Board up to date on the new bar and noted that they have engaged the VP of Beverage along with the team here to offer craft cocktails and make this space very special. **Ms. Venturini** asked if non-alcoholic craft beverages would be offered as well, and Mr. Lawrence replied yes. He stated that we want people to come here and know we have the best. He stated that people will wait longer for a craft cocktail and there is a market for that. He noted that these are the types of discussions they are having about this space. He commented on people stopping for a cocktail on their way into a show at the AMP. He stated that they would also offer a small plate menu. He noted that the Chef is working with a regional chef developing a menu and soon they will do a "tasting" with the Board members. He commented that they are treating it as if it were a new property. Ms. Montanaro commented that training will be different than what is done in banquets. Mr. Lawrence then reported on the concession stand in Hall B and he was happy to say that this stand continues to evolve. He stated that it is fully wrapped and has an additional hot holding. He further stated that sales show that it is successful and it is easy for people to get items. He reported on the new coffee system, which is a nice addition to that space. He reported that their banquet carts are all operational with the exception of the grill which should be ready for Anime Con. He stated the importance of increasing customer experiences and mentioned to a live Asian stir fry at Anime Con.

Mr. Lawrence then reported on Hall A noting that they used to have a kitchen there, but you lose quality when you are cooking in the kitchen and bringing it to the carts. He stated that this kitchen is not fully operational, and they are out to bid to get it more operational. He said that this kitchen will have positive guest experiences, profitability, and increased sales. He commented that they are always going to be honest noting they are refocusing on options from staff standpoint, and they are almost fully staffed now but are in the market for an Executive Sous Chef who they hope to have on site in July. Mr. Lawrence then provided a quick update on the sustainability program and reported that they are doing good things and as of March 1st, 15,000 pounds of trash did not go to the State landfill. **Mr. Hirsh** commented that making craft cocktails is a great idea and asked what their plans were with draft beer. Mr. Lawrence replied that they would be going special and not your normal Michelob Ultra, etc. He said they would still offer beer, but it would be in cans or bottles rather than on draft. He then questioned the staff and Mr. Lawrence replied that they will have “jazzy” uniforms which would make a big statement. Ms. Montanaro stated that they will stand out and be different than the catering staff uniforms. Mr. Lepore commented that we will be adding Warwick Creamery products to the menu which adds a local fare. Ms. Adamo asked if there will be specials or just core items and Mr. Lawrence replied that the menu will keep changing to keep it fresh. **Mr. MacDonald** asked if the bar will be open all the time, some of the time, or certain times, and Mr. Lawrence replied that they are still researching the times to be open noting that we are event driven and think it will be similar to portable bars for concerts at the AMP and will also be a gathering place for people to meet. **Mr. MacDonald** asked if the staff will be part time employees noting that it is hard to get a “just in time” work force. Mr. Lawrence stated that the bar should be open more times than not and that AMP programming will help determine the hours because it is a natural “through area” and having that permanent space creates a social space. He stated that he believes that the workforce will find they are working more, not less. **Mr. MacDonald** stressed the importance of workers getting a good paycheck. Mr. Abate commented that we are creating unique opportunities for workers to work, and the location is ideal. **Ms. Venturini** asked if there would be a difference in the glass alcoholic versus non-alcoholic and questioned if they would be able to walk around. Mr. Lepore replied that people will not be able to bring a drink from the Convention Center to the AMP. **Ms. Venturini** asked if she booked a convention would she be able to say she wanted the bar closed, and Mr. Lawrence replied that scenario needs to be discussed noting sensitivity to youth attendees. **Mr. MacDonald** commented that we have been dealing with competition forever recalling how they did not like us having a parking garage but yet we put up with the Providence Place Mall parking garage. He stated that he does not understand why we need to alter our operation for others. Mr. Lepore commented that our venues were built to generate economic impact. **Vice Chairman Nee** commented on the importance of keeping a balance. **Chairman Almonte** asked for a report back to the Board once decisions are made. Mr. Abate stated that he has been in this business for 40+ years and the AMP and Convention Center are one of the best kept buildings in the country and he has been involved in a lot of new buildings. He commented that the Board does a great job keeping up with it. He stated that some buildings are only 20 years old and our buildings continue to look beautiful. He stated that a lot of cities and municipalities do not do this, and it is a tribute to this Board that their venues look so good. **Chairman Almonte** replied that we always want to get better and better if there is anything he sees to let them know. Mr. Lepore commented that with Mr. McConaghy’s leadership, he has been engaged in keep the buildings current.

b. First Amendment to the OVG Agreement

Mr. McConaghy stated that Oak View Group created their own parking entity, which affects the current management contract. The Authority reviewed the First Amendment to the Management Contract (see attached). **Ms. Venturini** asked if all the language was brand new. Mr. Abate stated that the original contract language does not allow OVG to make any changes without Board approval, noting that it is more a matter of insuring the areas. Attorney Leach noted a clause related to contract services that does not allow them to bring in an affiliate and the best way is to have them be a subcontractor. He stated that it is not an assignment but a subcontractor and our relationship with OVG does not change. He stated that it is OVG’s responsibility to work with the subcontractor noting that we are protecting ourselves because they cannot subcontract. He stated that Section 10.6.2 would be deleted and replaced. **Mr. MacDonald** stated that he feels this should have been part of the Facilities & Parking Committee meeting. He stated that he does not like “subcontractor” because he feels it takes money away from our workers. **Vice-Chairman Nee** questioned if this amendment has any impact on our employees, and Mr. Abate and Mr. McConaghy both replied none whatsoever. **Vice-Chairman Nee** confirmed that there would be no change for our employees, and they would still do what they are doing, and Mr. McConaghy stated that there would be no change whatsoever. **Mr. MacDonald** asked why this was not discussed at the committee meeting. **Ms. Goodrich Coia** suggested a summary to explain this change and create an abstract with the contract. **Chairman Almonte** agreed that a red line of that section should be created, and **Vice Chairman Nee** agreed that it should show exactly what language is being replaced. Mr. Abate noted that it was his understanding that the Authority requires a certain type of insurance and this insurance could not be done with the current contract language. Mr. McConaghy stated that he will draw up an abstract. **Chairman Almonte** asked if this would go to the parking committee, and Mr. McConaghy stated he was not sure about parking committee. **Chairman Almonte** stated that the abstract be brought before the finance committee and then back to the Board.

c. Re-Appointment of RICCA members on the PWCVB Board – Kristen Adamo

Ms. Adamo stated that the Authority appoints three (3) members to the CVB's Board and noted that it was an oversight and the reappointments were not made sooner. She stated that there are two (2) renewals at this time: Mr. Hirsh as head of the Board and Chris Marcella as Secretary.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to reappoint Mr. Hirsh and Mr. Marcello to the CVB Board. Upon a motion from **Ms. Venturini**, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to reappoint Mr. Hirsh and Mr. Marcello to the CVB Board. **Ms. Venturini** asked who the third appointee was, and Ms. Adamo replied Sara Shipley, and her term does not expire for another year.

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d. Executive Session pursuant to RI General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(5) in connection with the leasing of real property of the retail space at the IDG.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to adjourn into Executive Session pursuant to RI General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(5) in connection with the leasing of real property of the retail space at the IDG. Upon a motion from **Mr. Vargas**, which was seconded by **Mr. Mancini**, a roll call vote was taken:

Chairman Almonte	Aye
Vice Chairman Nee	Aye
Mr. MacDonald	Aye
Mr. Hirsh	Aye
Ms. Venturini	Aye
Mr. Mancini	Aye
Ms. Goodrich Coia	Aye
Mr. Vargas	Aye

With the roll call vote being unanimous, the Authority adjourned into Executive Session at 10:28 a.m.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to return to Open Session. Upon a motion from **Mr. Hirsh**, which was seconded by **Vice Chairman Nee**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to return to Open Session at 10:45 a.m.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to close and seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Upon a motion from **Vice Chairman Nee**, which was seconded by **Mr. MacDonald**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to close and seal the minutes of the Executive Session.

Chairman Almonte requested a motion to allow Mr. McConaghy to negotiate with the prospective tenant on a tenant improvement allowance for the retail space at the IDG.. Upon a motion from **Mr. Mancini**, which was seconded by **Mr. Hirsh**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to allow Mr. McConaghy to negotiate with the prospective tenant on a tenant improvement allowance for the retail space at the IDG.

9. 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 **Vice Chairman Nee**, which was seconded by **Ms. Venturini**, it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn the May 27, 2025 meeting at 10:46 a.m.