

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 27, 2022

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 October 27, 2022, pursuant to notice which was posted at the Dunkin’ Donuts Center, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI and the RI Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, RI.

Board members in attendance were Bernie Buonanno, George Nee, Edward Feldstein, Peter Mancini, Paul MacDonald, Dale Venturini, Patrick Butler and Jeff Hirsh.

Board members not in attendance were Peri Ann Aptaker and Tony Mendez.

Others participating were Daniel McConaghy, Dana Peltier and Linda Maroun, Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz and Michael Gravison, VETS; Christine Antonio, PPAC/VETS; Larry Lepore, Veronica VanJura and Rebecca Ponder, Convention Center and AMP Pavilion; Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Robert Bromley, Senate Finance Office; and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.

Chairman Buonanno called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and asked for approval of the minutes of the September Board meeting. Upon a motion made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Nee** it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the September Board meeting.

Mr. Buonanno asked Kristen Adamo to address to board members. Ms. Adamo stated that the Tourism Improvement District has received 100% cooperation from hotels in Providence. She stated that she is working on getting the hotels as well as the Mayor and City Council in Warwick to sign on.

Ms. Adamo presented the monthly CVB report. She reported that RevPar and occupancy are through the roof. **Mr. Buonanno** asked why hotels are doing so well. Ms. Adamo stated that leisure travel has improved following Covid. Ms. Adamo stated that recent data by Tourism Economics indicates smaller convention centers are rebounding at a much faster pace than larger centers.

Ms. Adamo reported that plans are underway to grow a holiday event called Three Nights of Lights funded by grants from the City of Providence and RI Commerce.

Mr. Buonanno recognized Rebecca Ponder and asked that she present the marketing report for the Amica Mutual Pavilion and RICC for the month of October. Ms. Ponder reported on bookings, sales and upcoming events. Ms. Ponder stated that marketing plans are underway to commemorate our 50th anniversary. Ms. Ponder presented upcoming events at the AMP.

Ms. Ponder reported on RICC sales. Ms. Ponder said that the sales and events departments are now set up in teams to optimize client experience. Ms. Ponder stated that a calendar of events for both the AMP and the RICC are attached to the monthly report.

Mr. Gravison presented the marketing report for the VETS. (attached) Mr. Gravison reported on new marketing highlights. Mr. Gravison reported on sold out shows in November and the Holiday season at the VETS.

Mr. Hirsh asked how the Philharmonic is viewed in the Country. Mr. Schwartz stated that the Philharmonic has a great reputation. He said that they are struggling right now because they have lost their conductor.

Mr. Nee asked about the seat installation and Irwin Seating. Mr. Schwartz stated that the new seat installation has been complete and without issue. Mr. Schwartz said that the new seats increased the overall capacity from 1,933 to 2,011. Mr. Schwartz stated that new LED lighting in the aisles will increase visibility and safety. Audiences have liked the new seats and stated that the atmosphere has changed.

Mr. McConaghy introduced the newest member of the Authority's staff, Linda Maroun and Christina Antonio, the accountant for the VETS.

Mr. Schwartz reported on the financial statements for the VETS for August and September. (attached). Mr. Schwartz stated that there were no events at the VETS in August although there were indirect expenses. For the month of September, Mr. Schwartz said that event income had a negative variance to budget. Mr. Schwartz said that we work with strong promoters. He reported on the local competition. Mr. Schwartz noted that the DOT has been easy to work with and the construction has had no impact on Park Street during events.

Mr. Lepore presented the financial statements of the Convention Center, AMP and the Clifford Street Garage (attached). Mr. Lepore stated that many opportunities exist at the Clifford Street Garage.

Mr. Lepore said that August was slow at the Convention Center. Discussion ensued regarding parking, charging stations and the Superman building.

Mr. Lepore reported on the AMP for the month of August. Mr. Lepore stated that the sales staff worked with Barstool Sports who booked a Rough N'Rowdy event. Mr. Lepore stated that these events are grudge matches.

Mr. Lepore stated that Clifford Street Garage has little overhead. He said that there has been significant interest from the new construction in the area. **Ms. Venturini** asked about Dunkin' Donuts going in. Mr. McConaghy said that they should start construction soon. **Mr. MacDonald** asked why the Clifford Street Garage financial statements are not included with the Convention Center. Mr. McConaghy stated that there is a separate bond issuance for the CSG and is handled as a separate operating entity. Debt for that building is paid by proceeds from the operation of the building and remitted in total to the State."

Mr. Lepore stated that the Finance Committee had met and discussed seat replacement at the AMP. Mr. Lepore said that we require variable riser seats that are the same as those that were previously replaced. Mr. Lepore said that the new seats will increase capacity and provide VIP access. They will provide for more security for the student section. Mr. Lepore stated that Commissioner Butler had some concerns. He reported that he had contacted different companies. One company, Hussey, said that they do not have variable risers and Stage Right has variable risers but not seats. **Mr. Buonanno** asked for a motion to approve Irwin Seating to replace the telescopic seating platform system. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Nee** and seconded by **Mr. MacDonald** all but **Mr. Butler**

VOTED: to award the contract to replace the seats to Irwin Seating.

Mr. Butler declined to vote because the proposal had not gone out to bid.

Mr. McConaghy reported on the Authority and the Consolidated Financial Statements.

Mr. Crawley presented his report. (attached)

Mr. McConaghy reported that the Finance Committee had met to review the budget. He stated that the changes were made only to the VETS. Mr. McConaghy stated that some classification and structure have occurred. **Mr. Buonanno** asked for a motion to approve submittal of the FY 23 and FY 24 budget to the State. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Hirsh** it was unanimously

VOTED: to submit the FY 23 and FY 24 budget to the State

Discussion ensued regarding an upgrade to the web site. Our sites have not been upgraded since 2014. **Mr. Buonanno** asked for a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Peter Mancini** it was unanimously

VOTED: to upgrade our and enhance the website.

Discussion ensued regarding the 50th anniversary of the Civic Center (Dunkin' Donuts Center now AMP). Mr. Lepore suggested that we should consider honoring Frank J. Russo at the anniversary.

Mr. Buonanno asked if there was any new business. Hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Hirsh** it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 10:30 AM