

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY 381st  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS February 27, 2014**

**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 February 27, 2014, pursuant to notice, at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One LaSalle Square, Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Board members present were Jim Bennett, George Nee, Jeffrey Hirsh, Paul MacDonald, Scott Gunn, Stan Israel, Tony Mendez, Letitia Carter, Joe DeLorenzo and Patrick Butler.**

**Also present were James P. McCarvill, Executive Director, Kim Keough and Betty Sullivan, Rhode Island Convention Center Authority; Larry Lepore, John McGinn, Kathy Masino, Nancy Beauchamp, Arlene Oliva, Cheryl Cohen, John Ciolfi, Robert Cappalli, Jim Madden and Kerri Dailey, Complex; Dan Schwartz and Michael Gravison, The VETS; Paul Grimaldi, Projo; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Robert Bromley, Senate Fiscal Office and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary.**

**Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January Board Meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. MacDonald and seconded by Mr. Nee it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to approve the minutes of the January Board Meeting.**

**Mr. Bennett asked Mr. McCarvill to present the financial information. Mr. McCarvill reported that for the month of January the Convention Center's net income variance was (\$721,831) to budget and \$180,055 to the prior year. Year to date net income for the Convention Center was (\$1,723) to budget and \$430,028 to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill stated that higher than anticipated labor, repairs and maintenance and utilities impacted net income for January. Mr. McCarvill stated that lower revenue for parking is negatively effecting net income. Mr. McCarvill reported that the VETS net income for the month of January was (\$9,390) to budget and (\$28,538) to the prior year. Year to date net income was (\$25,817) to budget and (\$63,150) to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill reminded the Commissioners that the VETS accounting has changed and they are now showing indirect expenses on their books. Mr. McCarvill said that the VETS is headed in the right direction and has managed to contract with a diverse selection of artists. Mr. McCarvill reported that for the month of January the Dunkin' Donuts Center's net income variance was (\$191,654) to budget and (\$21,220) to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill noted that year to date net income for the Dunkin' Donuts Center was (\$306,669) to budget and (\$98,863) to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill reported that it has become extremely difficult to book concerts for the facility due to competition from the casinos. He stated that every effort is being made to secure touring artists but our competition will match or raise our offer. Mr. McCarvill reported that the Convention Center Authority's net income variance for the month of January was \$51,848**

to budget and \$13,509 to the prior year. Year to date net income for the Authority was \$149,494 to budget and (\$41,314) to the prior year. The Authority experienced reduced room tax revenue that may be a timing issue. Mr. McCarvill stated that consolidated net income variance for the month of January was (\$171,027) to budget and \$143,806 to the prior year. Year to date consolidated net income was (\$184,714) to budget and \$226,694 to the prior year. Mr. McCarvill said that the trend is good for the Complex. Mr. Bennett asked if the weather has had any effect on the facility. Mr. McCarvill said that there has been additional expense for snow removal but those bills have not yet been submitted. He also said that the weather has impacted attendance at events.

Mr. Bennett asked for a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Nee and seconded by Mr. Mendez it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to accept the financial report as presented.

Ms. Keough addressed the Board and reported the RFP for an Economic Impact Study was posted to the State web-site on Monday. Ms. Keough said that she will send the RFP to the Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis and CSL and hopes to get a good number of responses. Mr. MacDonald asked why we would solicit bids from a company in Connecticut. Ms. Keough said that she had reviewed a study that they had completed and it appeared that the analysis was

what we were looking to accomplish. Mr. McCarvill said that the study was done to assess the impact of renovating the civic center. Mr. Bennett said that he doubts that we will be able to find anyone locally with the expertise to complete the task. Ms. Keough reported that Exit 22 from I-95 South will be closing for a few days for construction. She said that the closing could impact the Hasbro Gala on March 8th and the P. Bruins game on March 9th as well as rush hour traffic on Monday.

Mr. Lepore reported that we have a great family market here but we need more performers with name recognition to help sell suites and to increase ticket sales to take advantage of the ticket surcharge. Mr. Lepore noted that it is very difficult to sell the suites when there is no incentive. Mr. Lepore reported that he had recently returned from Nashville where he had attended the 2014 Pollstar event. Mr. Lepore stated that he was very discouraged with the outlook for bringing concerts here in the near future. Mr. Lepore said that if we self promote we will be direct competition with Mohegan Sun and we cannot take that kind of risk. Mr. Lepore said that we need to explore other opportunities and look outside of our footprint. He noted that we have to stop waiting for promoters and create opportunities for ourselves. Mr. Lepore stated that we have the staff and the expertise to be creative. He continued that perhaps we should look at Station Park for concerts or maybe a Winter Carnival. Mr. DeLorenzo cautioned that there are weight restrictions on that land it does not belong to us. He said that we would need State approval use that

piece of property. Discussions ensued regarding possible events that could be held at Station Park or other areas in the City. Mr. Mendez noted that more ethnic festivals would take place in the park. Mr. Bennett asked for a motion to authorize Mr. Lepore with the assistance of Mr. DeLorenzo to investigate possibilities of holding events at other locations within the City. Mr. MacDonald made the motion which was seconded by Mr. Butler and it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to authorize Mr. Lepore with the assistance of Mr. DeLorenzo to investigate possibilities of holding events at other locations within the City.

Mr. Bennett reported that some facilities in the area will be losing their hockey teams. He said that they have decided to move the franchises to the West Coast. Mr. Bennett noted that our deal is solid because last year we extended the contract.

Mr. Lepore announced that this month's employees of the month are Kerry Dailey, Assistant Box Office Manager and Jim Madden, Parking Facility Supervisor. Congratulations to both Jim and Kerry. Mr. Lepore distributed a copy of a letter sent by Randy Lathrop, Director of Operations, East Coast Decorating, expressing his appreciation to the entire staff and crew of the Rhode Island Convention Center on the job done with the Northeast Int. Auto Show. Mr. Nee took the opportunity to compliment Mr. Lepore and Ms. Cohen on the addition of the handout created by the marketing staff. He said that the

information provided, event highlights, facility news, upcoming events and employee appreciation are helpful.

Mr. Lepore reported that an RFP has been issued for office renovations at the Convention Center and another for new banquet chairs. He also noted that an RFP was issued and then withdrawn to install new doors from the Convention Center to the garage connector. Mr. Lepore said that our staff is confident that the job can be done in-house.

Mr. Schwartz distributed the latest report for the Vets. He noted that Twin River has closed its comedy club leaving a void in that type of entertainment that could be filled in the renovated VETS. He stated that the 6th floor would be ideal venue. Mr. Schwartz reported that construction is on schedule and everything is going well. He said that the addition of kitchens will open opportunities for more food and beverage events. Mr. Schwartz noted that a customer survey has been created and will be sent to attendees as a way to gauge their enjoyment of the facility and any areas that they feel need improvement. Ms. Carter asked if Mr. Schwartz continues to work with Brown University. Mr. Schwartz answered that he is always looking for opportunities to work with the University. Mr. Bennett suggested that Mr. Schwartz touch base with Marisa Quinn.

Mr. Bennett inquired about Oscar Night at the Vets. Mr. Schwartz suggested more information was available on the RI Film Festival's

web-site. He continued that there will be a red carpet, a reception on stage and a silent auction.

Mr. Bennett asked Mr. McCarvill to bring the Commissioners up to date on the Wayfinding project proposed by the Downtown Improvement District. Mr. McCarvill explained that DID has a plan to have signs manufactured and installed in the downtown area and they are looking for a substantial contribution from the Convention Center Authority. Mr. MacDonald said that new updated signage in the City is needed. Mr. McCarvill stated that the original request was \$50,000. Mr. Gunn asked if that item was in our budget. Mr. McCarvill stated that it is not but we could include it in the budget for 2015 and contribute \$36,000 at \$1,000 per month for 36 months. Mr. Israel asked if other facilities have committed to funding the project. Mr. McCarvill noted that others have been asked but have not yet responded. Mr. Gunn, Mr. Hirsh and Mr. MacDonald voiced their support of the project while Mr. Nee, Mr. Israel and Mr. Butler expressed their doubts that funding should come from the Authority. Mr. Bennett suggested that the proposal be tabled until more information is available. Mr. McCarvill noted that the project has not gone out for bid and the estimate was given by the engineers. Mr. McCarvill said that one major point in favor of the project is that obsolete or incorrect signage would be removed.

Mr. Bennett asked if there was any other business. Hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Gunn

**and seconded by Mr. Nee it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to adjourn at 10:20 AM**