

**CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
Conference Call Minutes
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, 5th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
March 6, 2020
2:00 PM**

Members Present via Phone: Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, David Jorgensen and David Robinson

Staff: Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro and Kim Hart

Guests Present: Ben Weiss (Spectra Venue Management)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bessette at 2:03 p.m. The minutes of the February 7, 2020 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

1. XL

- a. UConn Season Wrap-up – Members reviewed the current and historical attendance numbers for UConn and the Wolfpack that were included in the agenda packet. Ms. Hart noted that attendance has increased slightly this season in all sports, but overall the numbers fall short of what is necessary to cover building expenses. Per caps, however, remain healthy. Hockey East playoffs begin this evening and Mr. Weiss noted that the building may benefit financially from the extra games.

2. Coronavirus

Members expressed concerns about what impact the coronavirus outbreak will have on attendance at all of the CRDA venues. Mr. Lazzaro noted that attendance at the recent home show at the Convention Center was lower than last year, but it is impossible to tell if this is related to coronavirus fears.

Mr. Freimuth noted that we know of one event cancelled specifically because of the outbreak. Cox Communications has cancelled all of its large corporate meetings, including one scheduled at Pratt & Whitney Stadium. Mr. Weiss noted the revenue loss was less than \$1,000.

Mr. Freimuth noted that Spectra and Waterford Management are closely monitoring the situation in terms of large upcoming events, including a potential U.S. Women's soccer match in June. CRDA staff are working with both management companies to explore insurance reimbursement options should an event be cancelled. Venue managers are also being extra diligent in terms of cleaning and staff hygiene.

Committee Chair Bessette questioned whether Spectra and Waterford were confirming safety procedures of subcontractors, particularly those related to food preparation. Staff will pursue this with both management companies.

3. **Pratt & Whitney Stadium** - No additional issues to report.

4. **CT Convention Center** - No additional issues to report.

5. **Dillon Stadium**

CRDA staff continue to work with the City of Hartford and Hartford Athletic to complete the few remaining construction punch list items. The team will play its first home game of the 2020 season on March 21st.

6. **Legislation**

Mr. Freimuth noted that staff are watching three pieces of legislation in particular this session:

- a. **CVB Authorization** – Legislation authorizing CRDA to establish a Hartford-centric convention and visitors bureau (CVB) has been introduced. CRDA requested the bill, as this was a key recommendation of the Johnson Consulting report on the Convention Center.
- b. **State Properties Review Board** – This legislation subjects all of CRDA's property related purchases, leases and contracts to approval by the State Properties Review Board. CRDA opposes the bill, particularly Section 4.
- c. **XL Center Funding** – The Governor's proposed budget included \$27.5 million in each of the next two fiscal years for renovation of the XL Center, however the State Capital Plan remains uncertain.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

The next Venue Committee meeting / conference call is scheduled for **April 3, 2020**.