

**CRDA Venue Committee Meeting  
Conference Call Minutes  
January 5, 2021  
4:00 PM**

**Members Present via GoToMeeting:** Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Board Chair Suzanne Hopgood, DECD Commissioner David Lehman, David Jorgensen and David Robinson

**Staff Present via GoToMeeting:** Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro, Joe Geremia and Kim Hart

**Guests Present via GoToMeeting:** Ben Weiss (Spectra Venue Management)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bessette at 4:00 p.m. The minutes of the November 6, 2020 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

Chairman Bessette reminded members of the public on the call that the Venue Committee public hearing on the XL Center that had been scheduled in conjunction with this meeting had been postponed.

1. Spectra Management Agreement Amendment
2. Waterford Management Agreement Amendment

Mr. Freimuth reported that with all venues essentially shuttered, OPM had advised CRDA to look at the potential for costs savings in the management contracts under which the buildings are operated. To get a sense of what was being done in other venues around the country, CRDA engaged Johnson Consulting, who had undertaken a Strategic Plan Study of the Convention Center for the Authority in 2019. Johnson advised that fee savings in exchange for additional years on the contract term was the most common arrangement struck in other venues.

Mr. Freimuth reported that CRDA was able to negotiate similar deals with both Waterford Management and Spectra Venue Management, as well as with their food and beverage affiliates. The resultant savings totals \$400,000 -- \$125,000 at the Convention Center and \$275,000 at the XL Center.

After a brief discussion, the following XL motion was approved on a voice vote:

**MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE AMENDMENT OF THE SPECTRA VENUE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE XL CENTER**

- *On April 26, 2013, CRDA entered into a ten (10) year Management Agreement with Spectra Venue Management (“Spectra”) relating to the management, food & beverage sales, and marketing of the of the XL Center and Rentschler Field (the “Agreement”).*
- *On March 10, 2020, the Governor of the State of Connecticut issued declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency as a result of the coronavirus disease outbreak in State of Connecticut.*
- *As a result of such declarations, Spectra ceased holding and booking events at the XL Center for the immediate future.*
- *As a result, CRDA has incurred significantly larger deficits than originally forecasted at the XL Center.*
- *The parties desire to amend the Agreement to provide for certain financial relief to CRDA in return for a two (2) year extension of the Agreement with respect to the XL Center, only.*
- *In exchange for the two-year extension, Spectra will agree to forego its management fee for a six (6) month period during FYE 2021 and FYE 2022.*
- *All other terms and conditions of the Agreements will remain unchanged.*

*The CRDA Venue Committee hereby recommends to its Board of Directors that it authorize the Executive Director to amend the Agreement on the terms provided above.*

A similar CTCC motion was discussed. Mr. Lazzaro noted that a change had been made to the terms and conditions since the original resolution was drafted and he suggested that the motion be amended to approve the terms “as presented” rather than as “provided above”. The motion was approved on a voice vote.

The following is a corrected copy of the resolution and motion:

**MOTION TO RECOMMEND THE AMENDMENT OF THE WATERFORD VENUE SERVICES HARTFORD L.L.C. AGREEMENTS RELATING TO CONNECTICUT CONVENTION CENTER**

- *On July 1, 2017, CRDA entered into a five (5) year Management Agreement and a coterminous Catering & Concessions Agreement with Waterford Venue Service Hartford, LLC (“Waterford”) relating to the management, sales, and marketing of the of the Convention Center as well as its catering & concession services (collectively, the “Agreements”).*
- *On March 10, 2020, the Governor of the State of Connecticut issued declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency as a result of the coronavirus disease outbreak in State of Connecticut.*

- *As a result of such declarations, Waterford ceased holding and booking events at the Convention Center for the immediate future.*
- *As a result, CRDA has incurred significantly larger deficits than originally forecasted.*
- *The parties desire to amend the Agreements to provide for certain financial relief to CRDA in return for a one (1) year extension of the Agreements.*
- *In exchange for the one-year extension of the Agreements, Waterford will agree to forego its Catering & Concessions management fee for a four (4) month period during FYE 2021.*
- *All other terms and conditions of the Agreements will remain unchanged.*

*The CRDA Venue Committee hereby recommends to its Board of Directors that it authorizes the Executive Director to amend the Agreements on the terms provided above.*

3. Rentschler Budget Issues

4. Rentschler MOU/Management Issues

Mr. Freimuth noted that Pratt & Whitney Stadium ended FY20 with a deficit of approximately \$700,000. No funding was made available at that time by the OPM (the Stadium's owner) and the deficit was carried over into the current fiscal year. The cancellation of the UConn football season, as well as staff and utility costs during the COVID shutdown have increased that deficit, though Toronto FC's use of the Stadium last fall did provide some income.

Per Mr. Freimuth. OPM is expected to provide some \$1.5 million of relief when the State's Finance Advisory Committee ("FAC") meets later this week. (An additional \$1.5 million of FAC funding is expected to be allocated to the XL Center). Mr. Freimuth and Mr. Geremia noted that these funds should allow the Stadium to operate through the spring.

Mr. Freimuth advised that the larger issue of how the Stadium should be operated and funded moving forward will need to be addressed by OPM, UConn and the CRDA Board in the coming months.

5. MSG/Spectra Affiliation Agreement 2020-2021

Mr. Freimuth reported that Spectra Venue Management has struck a deal with MSG to allow the Wolfpack to play at XL when the AHL season convenes in early February. Specifically, the deal waives the affiliation fee paid by XL for the 2020-2021 season and obligates MSG to cover any expenses related to Wolf Pack games and practices. In light of current COVID restrictions, games will be fanless for the foreseeable future. Should fans be allowed later in the season, the agreement stipulates that any net revenues will be allocated to offset expenses.

Mr. Weiss raised a question as to what State metrics would need to change before fans might be allowed. Commissioner Lehman indicated that the administration would be willing to work with the team to allow fans (perhaps up to 30% capacity) starting in March or April of this year, depending on the COVID numbers. He noted that hospitalization numbers would be the key indicator, rather than vaccination rates.

After a brief discussion, Committee members expressed their support for Spectra moving forward with the MSG deal.

#### 6. Other Business

Mr. Freimuth informed Committee members that CRDA staff would be meeting with Northland, owner of the so-called “Trumbull Block”, to discuss the additional space required for the planned XL renovation. A public hearing on the new renovation plan will be scheduled at some point in the near future.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **February 5, 2021.**