

**CRDA Venue Committee Meeting**  
**APPROVED Meeting Minutes**  
**May 7, 2021**  
**2:00 PM**

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

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

**Guests Present via GoToMeeting:** Mike Costelli (Waterford)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bessette at 2:03 p.m. The minutes of the April 9, 2021 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

I. Venue Updates -- Mr. Freimuth offered updates on venue re-openings:

- a. XL Center – The arena is not expected to fully open until August, although a number of graduation ceremonies will be held this spring.
- b. Pratt & Whitney Stadium – UConn graduation ceremonies will be held at the Stadium over the next five days. The first major event, the NCAA Lacrosse Championships, will be held May 29<sup>th</sup> – May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- c. CT Convention Center – The CTCC is not expected to open until Labor Day, with the first major event being the annual ConnectiCon pop culture convention. Staff will begin coming back in late August,
- d. Dillon Stadium – Hartford Athletic will play its first regular season match on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

II. Construction Updates – Mr. Freimuth reported on the following activities:

- a. XL Center – SCI continues to refine renovation plans for the building, focusing on new premium seating in the lower bowl. They are also having conversations with Northland on the structure of the Trumbull block. The RFP for a construction manager for the project will be re-issued and will include a project labor agreement requirement. Mr. Freimuth noted that this requirement may reduce the number of bidders from those responding to the original RFP.
- b. Pratt & Whitney Stadium – An RFP for a full structural and mechanical assessment of the Stadium will be issued shortly. Mr. Freimuth noted that the facility is nearly twenty years

old and is in need of major repairs and upgrades. With the expiration of the UConn lease and the CRDA/OPM MOU in 2023, the State will likely reevaluate the current oversight structure of the facility and it should have a work plan and estimated budget on hand to address such repairs and upgrades.

- c. CT Convention Center – Repair work to address water issues on the plaza between the Convention Center and Marriott Hotel is underway. Mr. Costelli noted that the project will be funded with \$3.5 million in bonding authorized for this purpose.

### III. Review of Draft FY22 Budget Assumptions

Mr. Freimuth noted that cashflow issues at XL, the Stadium and the Convention Center are currently being covered by the Office of Policy and Management while CRDA awaits passage of the 2021 deficiency bill. In its current form, the bill includes \$5.6 million for the venues, but CRDA is hopeful that number will be increased to \$10.4 million, which was the agency's original ask.

Mr. Freimuth also noted that Governor Lamont's spending plan for the estimated \$6 billion allocated to Connecticut under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) includes \$7.5 million to help CRDA venues recover from COVID-related shutdowns. Some \$5 million of the funds will be available in FY22, with the balance available in FY23.

Mr. Geremia walked the Committee through assumptions regarding events and attendance used to draft FY22 budgets for the three largest venues. He noted that some of the ARPA funds would be put toward the Convention Center's subsidy program to bring more events to the building. Despite the funding assistance, he reported that the three buildings are expected to end FY22 with higher-than-normal budget deficits: XL at \$3.6 million, the Stadium at \$900k and the Convention Center at \$4.033 million.

- IV. Other Business – Mr. Freimuth reported that conversations continue between CRDA and Northland regarding the atrium space as part of the XL Center renovation project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **June 4, 2021.**