

CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
APPROVED Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2023
4:00 p.m.

Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Committee Chair Andy Bessette, Andrew Diaz-Matos, Commissioner Alexandra Daum, Dave Jorgensen and David Robinson

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: Mike Freimuth, Anthony Lazzaro and Kim Hart

Guests Present via Microsoft Teams: Ben Weiss, OVG

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Chairman Bessette and the minutes of the October 7, 2022 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

I. Events

1. XL Center - Ben Weiss, General Manager of the XL Center, and Ms. Hart reported on upcoming events, including the Wolfpack qualifying for Round 3 of the Calder Cup championships. Mr. Weiss noted that attendance for playoff games has been “outstanding”, with “a great energy in the building”. The team’s next home game will be May 11th against the Hershey Bears.

The Lizzo concert cancelled on May 6th due to the singer’s illness will be rescheduled, but no date has been offered as of yet. Upcoming events include the Connecticut Cannabis and Hemp Convention on May 20-21, WWE Raw on June 5th and multiple graduation ceremonies.

2. Pratt & Whitney Stadium - Mr. Weiss noted that OVG is working to finalize two international soccer matches at the Stadium, one in June and the other in October.

II. Construction Updates

1. Pratt & Whitney Stadium – Mr. Freimuth noted that the Governor’s proposed two-year bond package includes \$12 million in each year for repairs and improvements at the Stadium. Replacement of the roofing membrane will be a top priority.
2. XL Center - Some improvement work is underway in the building, including in the new sports betting lounge. Other planned work is awaiting finalization of the public-private partnership arrangement between CRDA and OVG.

III. XL Center Sports Betting Lounge

Mr. Freimuth noted that CRDA is targeting September for the opening of the sports betting lounge. The facility is taking shape, with walls being put in place and furniture being selected. CT Lottery has issued an RFP for a sports betting operator following the departure of Rush Street and expects to have a firm under contract by June. CRDA will negotiate a financial deal with that new operator.

In response to a question from Mr. Diaz- Matos, Mr. Freimuth noted that the lounge will be open to the arena on event days, but access doors will be shut on non-event days.

IV. OPM / CRDA Stadium Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Lazzaro presented a resolution for the Committee's consideration. He explained that OPM is finalizing an amendment to extend UConn's lease agreement at the Stadium for another five years. Paralleling that, OPM and CRDA have proposed extending their MOU for operation of the Stadium for another five years. The amended agreement will also include new State contract boilerplate. Mr. Lazzaro noted that OPM and CRDA cannot sign this amended agreement until the UConn lease amendment has been executed.

Mr. Diaz-Matos questioned whether CRDA was extending a contract that imposes a financial burden on the agency as the Stadium operates at a deficit. Mr. Lazzaro explained that CRDA bears no financial responsibility for the building, with UConn required to cover the first \$250,000 of any deficit and OPM, as owner of the Stadium, covering anything above that.

The following motion was approved on a voice vote:

MOTION TO AMEND THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BY AND BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF POLICY & MANAGEMENT ("OPM") AND THE CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ("CRDA") RELATING TO PRATT WHITNEY STADIUM AT RENTSCHLER FIELD

- *On August 28, 2014, OPM and CRDA executed an Amended and Restated Memorandum of Understanding relating to the management and operation of Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field (the "Original MOU");*
- *On June 21, 2017, the parties amended the terms of the Original MOU to delegate certain additional responsibilities and obligations to CRDA in order to perform stadium operations in a more efficient and cost-effective manner (the "Existing MOU");*
- *The Existing MOU is scheduled to terminate on June 30, 2023. The parties desire to amend further the Existing MOU to extend the termination date to June 30, 2028; and*
- *All other substantive terms and conditions of the Existing MOU will remain unchanged.*

MOTION

THE CRDA VENUE COMMITTEE HEREBY RECOMMENDS THIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CRDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR APPROVAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS PROVIDED ABOVE.

V. CRDA / OVG Stadium Management Agreement

Mr. Lazzaro presented a second Stadium resolution for the Committee’s consideration. With the extension of the OPM /CRDA MOU, CRDA is looking to extend its management agreement with OVG for another year, giving the agency time to re-bid the contract. He noted that the current management contract was signed in 2013 and is set to expire on June 30th of this year.

The following motion was approved on a voice vote:

MOTION TO AMEND THE OVG MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT AS IT RELATES TO PRATT & WHITNEY STADIUM AT RENTSCHLER FIELD (the “STADIUM”)

- *On April 26, 2013, CRDA entered into a ten (10) year Management Agreement with OVG Facilities (f/k/a Global Spectrum L.P.) relating to the management of the Stadium, as amended (the “Existing Agreement”);*
- *The Existing Agreement is scheduled to terminate on June 30, 2023. The parties desire to amend the Existing Agreement to extend the termination date to June 30, 2024, in order to allow the CRDA/OPM staff to complete a competitive bid process for management services through a request for proposals; and*
- *All other substantive terms and conditions of the Existing Agreement will remain unchanged.*

MOTION

THE CRDA VENUE COMMITTEE HEREBY RECOMMENDS THIS PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CRDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR APPROVAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS PROVIDED ABOVE.

VI. Waterford Management Agreement

Mr. Lazzaro presented an additional resolution extending for one year Waterford’s agreement to manage the Convention Center, as well as its catering and concessions contract for the facility. As with the Stadium management resolution, this allows CRDA time to re-bid the contracts.

In response to a question from Chairman Bessette, Mr. Freimuth noted that attendance at Convention Center events is tracking up, with numbers exceeding 2021, but still not at pre-Covid levels.

The following resolution was approved on a voice vote:

MOTION TO AMEND 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 February 25, 2021, the parties extended the terms of the Agreements due to circumstances relating to the State of Connecticut’s declaration of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency as a result of the coronavirus disease outbreak in the State of Connecticut;*
- *The Agreements are scheduled to terminate on June 30, 2023. The parties desire to amend further the Agreements to extend the termination dates to June 30, 2024, in order to allow the CRDA staff to complete a competitive bid process for management services through a request for proposals; and*
- *All other substantive terms and conditions of the Agreements will remain unchanged.*

MOTION

THE CRDA VENUE COMMITTEE HEREBY RECOMMENDS THESE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CRDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR APPROVAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS PROVIDED ABOVE.

VII. Other Business

Mr. Freimuth noted that staff have been tracking various legislative proposals that might impact CRDA and/or our venues, including the 2024-2025 budget and bond package.

The next Venue Committee conference call is scheduled for **June 2, 2023**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:29 p.m.