

CRDA Venue Committee Meeting
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2025
2:00 p.m.

Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Committee Chair Andy Bessette and Board Chair David Robinson

Other Board Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Paul Hinsch

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: David Steuber, Mike Freimuth, Bob Houlihan, Joe Geremia, Anthony Lazzaro, Terryl Mitchell Smith, Sean Harrison and Kim Hart

Guests Present via Microsoft Teams:

Chairman Bessette called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. and the minutes of the November 1, 2024 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

I. PeoplesBank Arena

- a. Reopening / Events – Ms. Hart reported on the grand reopening of the arena that was held on Friday, October 25th. The Wolfpack played their first home game on October 17th in front of 5,600 fans. The team has played six home games to date, with an average attendance of 2,440. OVG reports that Wolfpack ticket revenue is up 14% compared to this time last year.

Ms. Hart also noted that Stevie Nicks played the first concert in the refurbished arena on October 25th with over 11,000 fans in attendance. Feedback on the renovations, particularly the new premium seating options, was extremely positive. Playboi Carti will perform on November 8th and around 5,000 fans are expected.

UConn hockey played their PBA home opener on October 18th in front of 3,800 fans. UConn women's and men's basketball have each played one exhibition game in the arena, with 5,400 fans in attendance for the women and 9,900 for the men. The men will play their first regular season game on November 7th and the women will play theirs on November 16th.

Upcoming events include a Bert Kreischer comedy show on November 13th, a Pentatonix Holiday show on December 6th and Andrea Bocelli on December 13th.

- b. Construction Update – Mr. Houlihan updated Committee members on the status of remaining construction work at the Arena, highlighting the bunker suites, dressing rooms, artists’ lounge, show power and new signage. He also reported that the full-service kitchen is awaiting an easement from Northland. In response to a question from Mr. Robinson, Mr. Houlihan noted that the remaining work is ahead of schedule.

II. Connecticut Convention Center

- a. Event Update – Ms. Hart reported that the Glow Holiday Light Show and Market will return to the Convention Center on November 23rd and will run through December 23rd. Other upcoming events include the CT Children’s Foundation Gala this weekend.
- b. Construction Update – Mr. Houlihan noted that repair work is underway in the Convention Center garage, including work on the shear connectors, expansion joints and waterproofing.

III. Pratt & Whitney Stadium at Rentschler Field

- a. Events – Ms. Hart noted that UConn football has won all four of its home games at the Stadium, with an average of 16,000 attendees. Their next home game is this Saturday, November 8th against Duke and ticket sales have been promising.

On October 26th, the Stadium hosted a doubleheader match between the U.S. Men’s Deaf team and Germany, followed by U.S. Women’s National Soccer team against Portugal. Some 23,000 fans were in attendance.

The Magic of Lights drive-through holiday light show begins its run in the parking lots on November 26th and will run through January 3rd.

- b. Construction Updates – Mr. Houlihan reported that repair work continues on the Stadium’s lower roofs, as well the painting and installation of new flooring in the restrooms. Invitations to Bid are out for security system design, bowl speaker upgrades and waterproofing, while a scope is being developed for the distributed television system.
- c. Status of OVG Management Contract - Mr. Freimuth indicated that staff are working on a six-month extension to the OVG contract that will carry the Stadium over until a longer-term contract can be negotiated.
- d. Potential Capital Improvements to Support Future Concert Bookings – Ms. Hart noted that following the success of the Chris Brown concert, representatives of CRDA, OPM, OVG and Live Nation met to talk about the potential for future shows. As part of that

discussion, Live Nation raised the question of whether CRDA and OPM might be willing to undertake certain capital improvements that would reduce the promoter's expenses, thereby making the Stadium more attractive for future shows.

Ms. Hart noted that some of these suggested capital improvements (including the purchase of a field cover and folding chairs) were concert-specific, while others would benefit the Stadium regardless of the event. She explained that the installation of a synthetic turf apron around the field was part of Populous' larger field improvement recommendations and thus is currently in the Stadium's capital budget. The timing of the field work, however, has not yet been established and no funds have been requested from Bond Commission.

Ms. Hart noted that staff will continue to price out the list of requested capital improvements and offer a recommendation to the Board at a future meeting. Mr. Freimuth also suggested that a potential June concert would provide the Stadium and promoters with additional feedback on expenses and capital needs.

As part of the Stadium concert discussion, Ms. Hart reported that Live Nation was also looking at certain dates next fall for an additional show. As these dates fall within UConn football season, Committee members discussed whether the Stadium needed to set a policy limiting concert dates within seven days of a UConn game in order to preserve the playing field. Members acknowledged the need to balance new revenue opportunities with maintaining the field for UConn. Mr. Bessette argued that the Board should rely on OVG for guidance on this question.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.