



AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING

Date/Time: Wednesday, January 28, 2026; 12:00 P.M.

Location: BMO Center Board Room—Lower Level
300 Elm Street, Rockford, IL 61101

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Craig Thomas Kevin Schwitters Rudy Valez
John Phelps Miles Nielsen Bobbie Holzwarth
Megan McCoy

Board Members Absent: Tom Walsh Staci Brown

Others Present: Tim Rollins, Attorney
Alderman Chad Tuneberg
Jerry Funk, Senior Manager, Wipfli Advisory LLC
Julie Thomas, Executive Director, Rockford Symphony Orchestra
Kayla Acton, Executive Director, Rockford Dance Company

Staff Present: Gretchen Gilmore, General Manager, Legends Global
Doug Johnson, Assistant General Manager, Legends Global
Jackie Powers, Finance Coordinator/RAVE Board Secretary, Legends Global

Chairman Craig Thomas calls the meeting to order at 12:01 pm.

MINUTES – The minutes from the December 3, 2025, meeting are approved.

MOTION: To approve the December 3, 2025, minutes made by John Phelps, second by Megan McCoy. Motion passes unanimously.

The minutes from the December 3, 2025, closed session meeting are approved.

MOTION: To approve the December 3, 2025, closed session minutes made by John Phelps, second by Megan McCoy. Motion passes unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Finance Mr. Tom Walsh, Chair
John Phelps defers to the Treasurer’s Report.
- Executive Mr. Craig Thomas, Chair

No report at this time.

- **DEIB Advisory Committee** **Mr. Rudy Valdez, Chair**

Rudy Valdez and Gretchen Gilmore review the DEIB scorecard, highlighting the committee's proposed name change and recent staff volunteer events.

- **Program Advisory Committee**

No report at this time.

- **Marketing and Social Media Committee** **Ms. Megan McCoy, Chair**

Megan McCoy reviews the Marketing handout and discusses the web migration to the new Rockford Live site and the launch of Annual Memberships at the Coronado Theatre. Gretchen Gilmore further explains the Annual Membership program and its components. More information regarding the program will be shared.

- **Capital Planning Working Group** **Mr. John Phelps, Chair**

No report at this time.

- **Hockey Advisory Committee** **Mr. Craig Thomas, Chair**

No report at this time.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Mr. Tom Walsh, Treasurer

Gretchen Gilmore introduces Mr. Jerry Funk, Senior Manager, Wipfli Advisory LLC, to discuss the FY2025 Audited Financial Statements and their submission to the State of Illinois. Mr. Funk informs the board that a clean opinion was issued on the financial statements and briefly discusses components of the audit.

MOTION: To approve the FY2025 Audited Financial statements as presented made by Rudy Valdez, second by Bobbie Holzwarth. Motion passes unanimously.

Gretchen Gilmore reviews the November financials, comparing event income to budgeted events and highlighting the decrease in some expenses.

MOTION: To approve the November 2025, financials as presented made by Bobbie Holzwarth, second by Rudy Valdez. Motion passes unanimously.

Gretchen Gilmore reviews the December financial statements and highlights the debut of the new electronic dashboards at the sold-out December 27th Rockford IceHogs game. Gretchen Gilmore refers to the financial forecast sheet and emphasizes private event sales for the venues. Craig Thomas suggests that performance vs budget be reviewed after the All-Star event in order to evaluate any changes to the budget.

MOTION: To approve the December 2025, financials as presented made by Bobbie Holzwarth, second by Rudy Valdez. Motion passes unanimously.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT – Ms. Gretchen Gilmore, GM

Gretchen Gilmore updates the Board on the planned 250th Celebration headed by the Mayor of Rockford at Davis Park on July 3, 2026. Gretchen Gilmore informs the board that a festival consultant has been hired and a two-day festival at Davis Park is being planned for October 2026, with possible concert dates also being held at the venue for the summer.

Gretchen Gilmore reviews preparations for the upcoming AHL All-Star events, including block parties, a public skating event, and after-parties at Hard Rock Casino. There is a discussion regarding ensuring that downtown businesses are aware of the expected influx of patrons for the All-Star festivities throughout the week.

Gretchen Gilmore states preparations have begun for bids on Phase Two of the exterior concrete project at BMO Center and confirms the pending completion of the generator project. Gretchen Gilmore refers to the recommendation letter and proposal regarding the Arena Cooling Tower Replacement project, utilizing the Omnia program for bidding compliance. Craig Thomas states he has requested Attorney Tim Rollins consult with Omnia and the City of Rockford to clarify the program's bidding compliance. Craig Thomas recommends that the board approve the contract with follow-up regarding a better understanding of how the bidding program works.

MOTION: To approve the Alpha Controls/Omni Partners cooling tower project proposal dated January 13, 2026, made by Rudy Valdez, second by Miles Nielsen. Motion passes unanimously.

Doug Johnson reviews how talent is welcomed to the building while also promoting the Rockford area with gifts from local vendors and also updates the board on the efforts to improve the booking of private events. A brief discussion takes place regarding the effects of the current economy on lower bookings and attendance throughout the country. Doug Johnson explains the partnership with our top promoters and why it is in our best interest, occasionally, to cover expenses in order to maintain relationships for continued bookings.

COUNSEL'S REPORT – Attorney Tim Rollins

No report at this time.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Craig Thomas states he will be reaching out to Todd Cagnoni with the City regarding board concerns that downtown restaurants and businesses may not be fully aware of the upcoming AHL events.

Craig Thomas refers to the new RAVE Committees sheet and asks for approval of the previously discussed updates.

MOTION: To approve the establishment of the RAVE Committees made by Bobbie Holzwarth, second by Rudy Valdez. Motion passes unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT – The Authority Board adjourned at 1:00 P.M.

MOTION: To adjourn made by John Phelps, second by Bobbie Holzwarth. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jackie Powers, Authority Board Secretary/ FOIA Officer