

GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
ANNUAL MEETING
January 17, 2025
Greater Richmond Convention Center
Administrative Offices
401 N. 3rd Street, Richmond, VA 23219
10:00 a.m.

Mr. John Vithoulikas, Chairman, called the Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority Meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A quorum was present, and it was noted that Ms. Sabrina Joy-Hogg, representing the City of Richmond, was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Authority reviewed the minutes of the November 15 meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Nancy Thomas, which motion was seconded by Dr. Joe Casey. **The Board approved the motion by the following vote:**

Ayes:	Budesky, Casey, Thomas, Vithoulikas
Nays:	None
Absent:	Joy-Hogg

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. John Budesky made a motion to nominate the following slate of officers for 2025. The motion was seconded by Ms. Nancy Thomas:

Chair – Ms. Nancy Thomas
Vice Chair- Mr. John Budesky
Secretary/Treasurer – Dr. Joe Casey

The Board approved the motion by the following vote:

Ayes:	Budesky, Casey, Thomas, Vithoulikas
Nays:	None
Absent:	Joy-Hogg

The newly elected Chair, Nancy Thomas, commented that it has been a big week with many issues, and she appreciated the hard work and collaboration by all in the region.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Finance

Mr. Brandon Hinton, chair of the Finance Committee, reported that for the first six months of FY 2025, hotel tax remittances exceeded budget by \$1,334,564 or 7.4% and were greater than prior year's collections by \$1,468,207 or 8.2%. Jurisdiction results compared to prior year collections are as follows: Chesterfield 3.7%, Hanover 10.1%, Henrico 6.0% and Richmond 15.1%.

Legal

Mr. George Martin representing McGuireWoods was in attendance for Mr. Brennen Keene and noted that there would be a closed session at the end of the agenda.

OVG

Mr. Nate Harris, General Manager of OVG, thanked the Authority for their support during the water crisis last week and also thanked those for attending the Christmas Parade Watch Party that was held in December. Mr. Harris noted several upcoming events such as Dave and Buster Volley by the James Volleyball Tournament, Richmond Boat Show, Catholic Youth Conference and College Summit, U-19 National Indoor Field Hockey Tournament and the International Erosion Control Association Conference. Mr. Harris reported various building project updates such as an upgrade to Momentus from Ungerboeck Software as well as a Dominion Energy Substation upgrade. The registration lobby escalators will be replaced which will take approximately three months for each side of the escalator. Elevator #11 at the 5th & Marshall side of the building will have parts replaced so that the elevator can once again return to service. The VIP Parking gate has been replaced and the automated parking in the garage is complete.

For November it was a great month with 17 events above the budgeted 15. Attendance was up 14,210 and included events such as AKA Conference, FAME Showcase (Cheer/Dance), VA Pest Management Association's Technical Training, Robert Winn Diversity in Clinical Trials and American Cancer Society. Net event revenue was \$234,823, exceeding budget by \$61,000. Indirect expenses were \$642,567, over budget by about \$30,000 due to some unbudgeted repairs and some RMC billing catch ups. Overall the building experienced a positive variance of \$40,000 for the month of November.

December was slightly behind with 20 events vs a budget of 27 mainly due to VCU School of Humanities deciding to move 5 graduations onto their campus. Events of highlight included the annual Valor Awards breakfast and USA Boxing Nationals. Attendance was down by 2,000 and net event revenue came in at \$229,799, just \$49,000 short of budget. Indirect expenses totaled \$574,818 for the month of December, beating budget by \$5,000. Overall financials are going well with over \$450,000 ahead of budget to date.

Due to the water outage in early January, the facility was called upon to store water for the City's water distribution operation. The building maintenance and security team stayed on top of things to make sure the operation with the National Guard was smooth and efficient. Maddie Hollyfield on staff took ownership and control of the water distribution and did an outstanding job.

Dr. Casey inquired about the upcoming Richmond Boat Show and wanted to know what impacts to the facility, if any, if someone buys a boat at the show. The Authority discussed how an item like that is taxed and Ms. Nancy Thomas commented that she believes it is taxed based on where the boat is shipped. Mr. Nate Harris will look into the tax question and report back.

Dr. Casey also commented about the recent water crisis and noted that it was nice to see images of various public safety personnel from all jurisdictions working side by side across the region during the incident. He also commended the facility for being ready to host the Commonwealth Prayer Breakfast working late into the evening prior to be ready to host the crowd without water. The event did postpone but he commended the team for being ready.

Aramark

Mr. Jack Berry, GRCCA Contract Administrator, reported on behalf of Blaine Scalard with Aramark who could not be in attendance. For November sales came in at \$317,000, about \$35,000 less than the budget. Repeat groups were Va Theatre Assn, Va Chamber of Commerce and Capital Region Airport Commission. New groups for the month included HCA Management

Conference and Alpha Kappa Alpha Conference. First time groups included Va Pest Management Assoc. & American Assoc. for Cancer Research with VCU Massey Center. The cost of sales was 20.7%, down 5.3% to budget. Payroll was 52.4%, which is up 5.3% to budget. Profit for the month of November were \$92,000, which is up \$11,000 over budget.

For December, overall, a really strong month, especially with bars and catering sales. Sales were \$391,000, which is approximately \$90,000 above budget. Some repeat groups included Va. Classical League, Va Asphalt Assn and the Valor Awards breakfast. New events were USA Boxing, which had a good mix of catering and concession sales. Cost of sales was down 7.8% to budget and payroll was down 10% to budget. Profit for the month of December was \$117,000, which is up \$82,000 to budget. Year to date sales is up by \$92,000 and profits are up by \$133,000. So far January has been very challenging due to the water-related cancellations, but Mr. Berry also noted how impressed he was with the staff being ready to carry out events with no water.

Mr. Berry presented one fee waiver request from Plan RVA for March 14, 2025 to hold their third annual PlanRVA Day. The event would be held in B15abc and is asking for a full waiver of the licensing fee of \$1,628.00. PlanRVA would be responsible for paying for any additional costs such as equipment, event staff, food & beverage and audio-visual needs. Mr. John Vitoulkas made a motion to accept the fee waiver, seconded by Mr. John Budesky.

The Board approved the motion by the following vote:

Ayes:	Budesky, Casey, Thomas, Vitoulkas
Nays:	None
Absent:	Joy-Hogg

Dr. Casey commented that as contract administrator, Mr. Berry should be able to handle these regional waiver requests as they arise.

Richmond Region Tourism

Ms. Katherine O'Donnell, President & CEO of Richmond Region Tourism, reported on the tourism research trends through December compiled by Blue Room Research. The hotel industry saw strong results in December at the national, state, and local level. Virginia outperformed national metrics in nearly every category for the month. Richmond Region hotels also performed well, but not quite as well as Virginia. Virginia hotel occupancy grew by 2.6% YoY, while US hotel Occupancy rose by just 0.6% and Richmond Region occupancy declined by 0.6%. Occupancy was the only metric to experience a decline within the Richmond Region for the month.

The US ADR grew by 3.1% and VA ADR rose 3.0%. The Richmond Region saw ADR grow by 1.4%. VA total hotel Revenue jumped 7.1% for the month, US hotel Revenue grew 4.3%, and Richmond Region Revenue rose 3.3%. Richmond Region short term rentals (Airbnb & Vrbo) had a monster month, with all metrics growing significantly. Occupancy grew 4.4%, ADR rose 9.5%, Demand jumped 16.0%, and Revenue increased 27.0% YoY. For December group/event highlights included: American Cornhole League, Virginia Asphalt Association Mid-Atlantic Asphalt Expo, Soccer Management Company RVA Turf Wars and USA Boxing 2024 National Championships.

Dr. Casey mentioned some recent data through Housing Opportunities Made Equal which shows approximately 9% of homes being bought by out-of-state companies buying 10 or more homes at a time, adding to the short-term rental market and driving up housing costs in our region.

Mr. George Martin read the following closed session motion:

CLOSED SESSION
GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
General Meeting
17 January 2025

Pursuant to Sections 2.2-3705.1(12), 2.2-3711(A)(6), and 2.2-3712 of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act (Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3700 et. seq.), I move that the Board go into closed session to consult with legal counsel and staff for the following purposes:

- (1) To discuss the potential investment of public funds where competition or bargaining may be involved; and
- (2) To discuss specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel.

Motion John Vithoukas
Second Joseph Casey

Vote	Ayes	Nays
John A. Budesky	<u> X </u>	_____
Joseph P. Casey	<u> X </u>	_____
Sabrina Joy-Hogg	_____	_____
Nancy C. Thomas	<u> X </u>	_____
John A. Vithoukas	<u> X </u>	_____

Absent During Meeting: Sabrina Joy-Hogg

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) for the Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority (the “Authority”) convened a closed session on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Board that such closed session was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed session to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed, or considered by the Authority.

The following roll call vote was taken:

Motion John Vithoukas
Second Joseph Casey

Vote:	Ayes	Nays
John A. Budesky	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Joseph P. Casey	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
Sabrina Joy-Hogg	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Nancy C. Thomas	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>
John A. Vithoukas	<u> X </u>	<u> </u>

Absent during session: Sabrina Joy-Hogg

Immediately following the closed session, Mr. John Vithoukas made a motion, seconded by Dr. Casey, to approve the proposal as presented in the closed session. **The Board approved the motion by the following vote:**

Ayes: **Budesky, Casey, Thomas, Vithoukas**
Nays: **None**
Absent: **Joy-Hogg**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting date is scheduled for Friday, March 21, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.