

**GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MEETING
March 21, 2025
Greater Richmond Convention Center
Administrative Offices
401 N. 3rd Street, Richmond, VA 23219
10:00 a.m.**

Ms. Nancy Thomas, Chair, called the Greater Richmond Convention Center Authority Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was established. Chair welcomed Anne Curtis Saunders with McGuireWoods as she was filling in for Brennen Keene as legal counsel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Authority reviewed the annual meeting minutes of January 17. A motion was made by Mr. John Budesky, which motion was seconded by Mr. John Vithoulkas. **The Board approved the motion by the following vote:**

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Finance

Mr. Brandon Hinton, chair of the Finance Committee, reported that for the first eight months of FY 2025, hotel tax remittances exceeded budget by \$1,896,189 or 8.38% and were greater than prior year's collections by \$1,244,994 or 5.35%. Jurisdiction results compared to prior year collections are as follows: Chesterfield 0.1%, Hanover 9.8%, Henrico 1.1% and Richmond 16.3%. Mr. Hinton commended Ms. Baicy and her team for their conservative budget.

Mr. Hinton reported that Fitch has completed their internal review and reaffirmed the current "AA-" rating on the Authority's Series 2015 Bonds with a Stable Outlook. Fitch recognized that our revenues are sound and noted that we are well positioned financially.

Legal

Ms. Anne Curtis Saunders 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, shared with the Authority the GRCC Core Values for Success that have been established for his team. S.E.R.V.E. stands for Success, Excellence, Relationships, Value and Engagement.

Mr. Harris reported that the Teen Summit will be held this weekend with approximately 1,000 youth expected. GalaxyCon will be held next weekend with the group picking up an additional day. Various building projects were discussed such as the escalator renovation and panel upgrade, office furniture and the parking garage elevator enhancements.

Building performance for January was 15 events vs. a budget of 13. Attendance was 24,865 with net operational revenue up and indirect expenses under budget for the month, despite the water issue that occurred in January.

For February, 13 events were held vs. a budget of 18. The Richmond International Auto Show decided not to hold their event in Richmond this year or next. Some events have moved to other months as well, which resulted in a lower number of events for the month. Attendance was 22,000 down and revenues were short for the month but still maintained a positive variance for the month. The building hosted an American Red Cross blood drive at the end of February. The Authority inquired about the four vacancies in staff and Mr. Harris reported that the openings are for housekeeping positions as well as an Operations Manager and Event Manager.

Aramark

Mr. Blaine Scalard, General Manager, Aramark, reported that January was a challenging month, partially due to the Richmond water issue. One large event cancelled and one postponed and was much smaller than originally expected and a few smaller events also cancelled in January. Sales were \$126,000, which was \$76,000 down to budget. Some repeat groups were the volleyball tournament, NCA Cheer & Dance Competition, Va Hospital & Healthcare Assoc., The Boat Show and LR Gymnastic Competition. For the month there was a loss of \$40,000 in catering sales alone and approximately \$6,000 in produce had to be tossed away. Cost of sales was up 2.3% to budget. Payroll was well over budget by 24% because of the cancellations and postponements. The Convention Center lost about \$50,000 for the month, mostly due to cancellations and lost labor dollars.

February was also a challenge with sales slightly up to budget at approximately \$181,000. Some repeat groups were the Petersburg Delta Alumnae Conference, the Mid Atlantic Cheer & Dance, Catholic Youth Conference and C&F Bank All Employee Meeting. Cost of sales was down 3.2% to budget and payroll was up 6.5% to budget mostly because of pre planning and preparing for the large AKA Conference that began in early March. Directs for the month were up 7% to budget due to purchasing and renting supplies and linens for the AKA Conference for early March. The Convention Center lost \$38,000 for the month, about \$15,000 more than budgeted. Year to date sales is up by \$17,760 and profits are up by \$75,000. Mr. Scalard reported that the next two months will be very positive.

Mr. Scalard noted that they are continuing to interview for a chef manager and the catering sales representative is leaving so they are looking for a catering salesperson as well.

Richmond Region Tourism

Ms. Katherine O'Donnell, President & CEO of Richmond Region Tourism, reported on the tourism research trends through January compiled by Blue Room Research. January was a strong month for Virginia hotels, with solid growth across all key performance metrics. The Richmond Region recorded growth in all metrics except for Occupancy, which declined by -0.1% YoY for the month. VA statewide performance outpaced the total U.S. with room demand increasing by 4.4% compared 1.7% nationally. Richmond Region hotel demand grew by 2.7% for the month, which was a touch lower than VA, but still higher than that of the U.S.

January was a fantastic month for Richmond Region short-term rentals. Even though supply grew by +11.5%, Demand surged by +16.0%. January event highlights included groups such as:

- Richmond Volleyball Club 2025 Volley by the James
- Club Champions League 2025 Virginia College Showcase
- LR Productions, LLC (Lucas Sports Inc) 2025 Gymnastics Tour
- FutsalRVA 2025 USYS Mid-Atlantic Regional Championships

Ms. O'Donnell noted that Neil Amin has mentioned that his hotels in the region broke records in February, and the Jefferson Cup using more fields at RiverCity Sportsplex was also a good indicator of a strong March. Richmond Region Tourism is monitoring a slowing economy and some uncertainty among travelers and meeting planners that are hesitant to book or sign contracts. Staff are also monitoring government business and tracking reasons for loss business. Dr. Casey noted the groundbreaking of the Petersburg casino and urged that Richmond Region Tourism, and the Convention Center, meet with them to strategize marketing efforts. Mr. Budesky noted that Hanover has recently provided a pathway for short-term rentals in the county to be officially permitted to operate.

Ms. Anne Curtis Saunders read the following closed session motion:

CLOSED SESSION
GREATER RICHMOND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
General Meeting
21 March 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 Sabrina Joy-Hogg
Second John Budesky

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

Absent During Meeting: None

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	<u>John Vithoukas</u>
Second	<u>Nancy Thomas</u>

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

Absent during session: None

Immediately following the closed session, Ms. Sabrina Joy-Hogg made a motion, seconded by John Budesky, to approve fee waiver #1 as presented in the closed session. The Board approved the motion by the following vote:

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

Mr. John Vithoukas made a motion, seconded by Nancy Thomas, to approve fee waiver #2 as presented in the closed session. The Board approved the motion by the following vote:

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

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next meeting date is scheduled for Friday, May 16, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.