

ALBANY CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY  
FY 2024 1<sup>ST</sup> QUARTER MEETING MINUTES  
Albany Capital Center, 9:00 am April 30, 2024

[https://youtube.com/live/\\_-6YWAtZVmA?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/_-6YWAtZVmA?feature=share) Full meeting audio

**Present:**

ACCA Board Chair, Michele Vennard  
ACCA Board Vice-Chair, Jahkeen Hoke  
ACCA Board Secretary, Sarah Reginelli  
ACCA Board Member, Joseph Bonilla  
ACCA Board Member, Mike Hoffman  
ACCA Board Member, Michael McLoughlin  
ACCA Board Member, Hon. John T. McDonald III RPH

**Also Present:**

Shannon Licygiewicz, ASM GM  
Robert Ryan, Harris Beach  
Jay Cloutier, Discover Albany  
Monica Kurzejeski, ACCA Executive Director  
Tom Hazinski, HVS Convention, Sports & Entertainment Consulting  
Peter Gonzalez, HVS Convention, Sports & Entertainment Consulting

**Absent:**

ACCA Board Member, Dominick Purnomo  
ACCA Board Treasurer, Steven C. Lerner

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 am by ACCA Board Chair Michele Vennard, attendance was noted and that a quorum was present.

**Approval of the Audit and Finance Committee Minutes:**

Ms. Vennard requests a motion to accept the minutes from the 3/28/2024 Audit and Finance Committee meeting.

*Mr. McDonald made the motion; Mr. Hoke seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.*

Approval of the ACCA Special Audit Board Meeting Minutes: Ms. Vennard requests a motion to accept the minutes from the 3/28/2024 Special Audit Board Meeting.

*Mr. McDonald made the motion; Mr. Bonilla seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.*

**Economic Impact Committee Report:**

Ms. Vennard began the discussion of the 2024 Q1 Economic Impact Report and the Hotel Occupancy report discussed during the ECI Meeting. Mr. Cloutier explained that the report was based on a 2018 comparison. The following items were noted: supply declined due to conversions, closures, and long-term contracts. Demand is up, but that also correlates to supply being down. Regarding the long-term contracts, Mr. McDonald asked how many rooms are being dedicated to those contracts; Mr. Cloutier reported around 130. The long-term contracts have been extended at

least to August. Ms. Vennard asked about the occupancy tax being paid with the long-term contracts. Mr. McLoughlin provided an update that the County Comptroller has visited all three locations. The county was told initially by the contract holders that there was going to be a reset every 30 days for the occupancy to continue the HOT to be paid but that is not happening. They have extended the contract for long term until the end of the year. It is unsure what comes next at the end of the contract. Up to this point NYS and NYC will be supporting the occupants while they are here. Mr. McLoughlin also indicated that after the preliminary visit there will be a scheduled follow-up with the long-term contract hotels. It is part of the process.

Ms. Vennard introduced the team from HVS Convention, Sports & Entertainment Consulting that has joined the meeting today.

Ms. Kurzejeski pointed out that on the Q1 Economic Impact report that the significant difference in the sports category between 2023 and 2024. The large difference between years is due to the ACC not being included in the 2024 NCAA bid and not including the overall financial impact of that weekend in our reporting.

Ms. Licygiewicz presented ASM's Q1 report. There were a wide variety of events held at the ACC this quarter. It is a good representation of what can be done here. As part of the breakdown of categories, while each category presented well so far; there is continued work on the conventions category between Discover Albany and ASM. It is a category that is not performing to goals. Events for 2024 are going well. ASM has booked 60-70 events this quarter alone, which is a good sign that things are going in the right direction. 2025, 2026, and 2027 event bookings are all strong. It is an encouraging sign of the future forward outlook. When reviewing the attendance records, March to March attendance was behind due to when Easter fell between the years. Events are seeing strong attendance with many seeing about a 5% increase. Ms. Licygiewicz highlighted with pictures and videos some of our more notable events; Craft Beer Conference, Wine and Dine, and The Big Toss. The Big Toss is a new event to us coming from the casino. They outgrew that location and have already booked for 2025. The primary goal is to diversify the events here at the ACC. She also highlighted our 1000<sup>th</sup> event that was held earlier this month.

Ms. Licygiewicz also reviewed the Public Relations and Marketing from the first quarter. Looking at being creative in our marketing and social media with Baker PR and the results have been positive.

ASM has joined with Mazzone on offering a better concession experience for clients with that need. ASM looked at it as an area of revenue growth. They are enhancing the experience, promoting to the event through social media and digital advertising on sight and customizing food for specific events – for example the walking tacos for the upcoming Reptile expo and protein shakes for the power lifting event. Mr. Hoke asked how the concessions work with the events. Ms. Licygiewicz explained that there were two ways. The client could pay for the set up and they would subsidize the choice if they didn't hit the mark. They thought they would try a new way where ASM will pick up the extra and make Mazzone whole. The collaboration is better, and they work with the promoters to determine the client needs to make the concessions better utilized.

**Resolution to Approve the award of the Soft Surface Finishes and Millwork bid – approve awarding a contract to AOW Construction LLC for furnishing and installing interior wall finishes and millwork.:**

Ms. Kurzejeski explained the process of the bidding period and the results of the bid that were due on April 16<sup>th</sup>. Recommended award to AOW Construction LLC. Ms. Kurzejeski also explained that the flooring bidding was out now and explained that she was looking into the possibility of recycling the current flooring through the manufacturer. Mr. McDonald asked about the process of surplus material and Mr. Ryan explained that it has sometimes been offered to other governments, but it would be deemed surplus and could be offered up at auction as well. Ms. Kurzejeski will keep the board apprised of that work.

*Mr. McDonald made the motion; Ms. Reginelli seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.*

### **HVS Market Study Update overview and board conversation:**

Mr. Hazinski started the overview with an agenda presentation that included introductions (done earlier in the meeting), scope of work, project schedule and a discussion of project goal. Mr. Hazinski commented that they've had eight contracts with the ACCA over the years spanning back to the original site location on Broadway. In 2020 there was a performance assessment to provide an overview of the performance of the facility since opening. At the end of 2021 there was an update regarding the status of the hotel market and an update on the convention industry to determine the viability of expansion of the facility. In 2024 we are providing an update on both post COVID environments. Mr. Hazinski went through the scope of services. The Convention Center Demand Analysis Process will look at comparable venues to see how performance is. Based on that analysis they can provide a recommendation with the types of spaces expansion is reasonable while looking at the ability to provide space for simultaneous events. They will provide a 10-year demand projection by event type. For the Financial Analysis Process HVS will review our financials and other facilities in the industry. They will provide 10-year operating projections in their report. The Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis will provide information on the financial impact of the facility relating to state, county, and local levels. It will be a net increase in impact. The demand will be categorized in three sections: overnight, day trip and attendees. The impact will be delineated into Net Direct, Indirect and Induced Spending categories including jobs impact. That detailed net spending by sector will then be calculated with the effective tax rate resulting in a Net Fiscal Impact.

Mr. Hazinski further explained the Hotel Feasibility Study Methodology that will include reviewing Market ADR and occupancy, any supply changes, looking at the market penetrations with a proposed hotel and comparable hotel operating data to create a forecast, proposed hotel proforma resulting in a feasibility analysis using discounted cash flows.

The project schedule for the market study update will take approximately eight weeks. They will relook at the facility and the scope in a different approach from the 2021 study.

Mr. Hazinski proceeded to ask the board members to have a discussion of project goals by first outlining some suggestions.

Mr. Hoffman – I'm a hotel guy and I'm pleased to be on the board. The ACC helps a lot of people. It's amazing how a handful of events can help hotels. If we can bring in more events and make it bigger then we should do it. There is a HOT discussion currently circulating and TID discussion. Supports the TID, but it isn't for everyone. If there is an opportunity for a hotel, I would like to see a private partner scenario for that development. If Albany is going to continue to grow, then yes. There are no guarantees, but if we grow it would be exciting.

Size follow up questions – our current size makes it more competitive with hotels. If we add space do we become more complement versus competition?

Ms. Licygiewicz noted that it might bridge the gap with hoteliers. Looking to hold larger national conventions is what we should be doing.

Mr. Hoffman noted that the benefit is going to the community then.

Ms. Vennard discussed the stakeholder meeting that was held on Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. There was a general feeling that we are not capitalizing on the assets we have, meaning the Capital Complex. We've never used all three events spaces as originally planned. The challenge of connectivity and perception of the destination are both factors.

Mr. Hoffman – My hotels aren't downtown, but my hotels do best when Albany does good, and Albany does good when the outer hotels are booked. It's a reciprocal compression that ebbs and flows.

Connectivity issues discussion continued.

Mr. McDonald related that need to make sure we aren't competing with hotels that we are helping instead of hurting. Where expansion is the next thought. The Capital Complex concept didn't get marketed fairly if upgrades occur it could be realistic. Marketing should be done as an advantage for the destination. Market as a single entity.

Ms. Reginelli focused on strengthening access to the local community providing a physical connection. Need to keep an eye on downtown development and the trajectory of downtown. Highlight the destination appeal and attractiveness and not be pessimistic.

Mr. Bonilla emphasized talking to the business owners on the impact on the business with business at the Capital Center.

Mr. Hoke talked about experiences at other locations and tying into the local places. We need to figure out the "local thing as in where do the locals go" and promote that as well.

**Meeting Adjournment:** approximately 10:30 am

Ms. Vennard calls for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. McLoughlin made the motion; Mr. Hoke seconded. The motion was carried unanimously.