



Cumberland County

Board of Trustees Cross Insurance Arena

Cross Insurance Arena,
Portland, Maine

Meeting Minutes - Final

Meeting Location: Hall of Fame Lounge

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

9:00 AM

Cross Insurance Arena
Hall of Fame Lounge
1 Civic Center Square
Portland Maine

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Trustees met for their scheduled meeting in the Hall of Fame Lounge at the Cross Insurance Arena in Portland, the meeting was called to Order by County Manager Jim Gailey at 9:09am.

ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Trustee Frank Clark, Trustee Lori Norman, Trustee Sam Surprise, Trustee John Jamieson, Trustee Jon Crimmins and Trustee Steve Woods

Excused: 1 - Trustee Susan Witonis

NonVoter: 1 - Commissioner Tom Tyler

Additional Guests:

Michael Loconte, Oak View Group
Mark Eddy, Oak View Group
Peter Doyle, Oak View Group
Adam Goldberg, Maine Mariner's Hockey
James Gailey, County Manager
Katharine Cahoon, Cumberland County

2. [BT 25-002](#) Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2025 Board of Trustees

County Manager Gailey explained that Commissioner Susan Witonis's term had ended and former CIA Trustee, Tom Tyler, was now serving as County Commissioner in place of Susan Witonis. Subsequently, his spot was vacant and in the process of being filled. County Manager Gailey shared that the current State Statute for the Cross Insurance Arena Board of Trustees districts was being amended to match the Commissioner districts as reflected in the CIA Bylaws. Board member terms will be finalized after the statute amendment passes. County Manager Gailey asked for a nominee for the 2025 Chair, and Trustee Steve Woods volunteered.

A motion was made by Trustee Woods, seconded by Trustee Jamieson, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item for the nomination of Steve Woods as Chair be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Jamieson and Trustee Crimmins

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

Abstain: 1 - Trustee Woods

County Manager Gailey asked for a nominee for the 2025 Vice Chair, and Trustee John Jamieson volunteered.

A motion was made by Trustee Jamieson, seconded by Trustee Woods, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item for the nomination of John Jamieson as Vice Chair be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Crimmins and Trustee Woods

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

Abstain: 1 - Trustee Jamieson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. [BT 25-001](#) Approval of the minutes, September 16, 2024, meeting of the Board of Cross Insurance Arena Trustees

A motion was made by Trustee Norman, seconded by Trustee Surprise, that this CIA Trustees' Agenda Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS

3. [BT 25-003](#) Update from Maine Mariners

Adam Goldberg, Chief Executive Officer of Maine Mariners Hockey, stated that there were two Mariner Games left. Despite the fact that there were no playoffs, the hockey itself was very good. There were 10 sellout games this season. Regarding renewals, they started in February and have been very positive. Regarding sales growth, they have officially separated from Comcast and are adding two sales employees. Owner Dexter Paine has partnered with local businesses to outsource services including Bangor Payroll for payroll, Eaton Peabody for legal, and KMA for human resources. They are working with the Bruins to build their roster for next year as a one year option as a Bruin affiliate. They are also working with Herbert Construction to construct a community ice rink and reviewing potential rink sites. The Paine family has formed a 501c3 foundation for the Maine Mariners which will be funded with proceeds from the sale of jerseys. There will be some small changes to the arena,

non sponsored tarps will be taken down next season as a result of sponsorship requirements. He noted that the transition from Comcast was challenging but they received operational support from Comcast for six months during the transition.

Trustee Crimmins asked about the stability of ECHL given the number of teams dissolved. CEO Goldberg agreed that there were a couple of teams that had experienced some financial difficulty but the league is doing well overall. Trustee Jamieson asked if they expected a sellout for the remaining two games? CEO Goldberg explained that it's likely since the last game is on Sunday. It's a home game and it is a fan appreciation game.

Trustee Jamieson asked why the growth in ticket sales over the past season. CEO Goldberg explained that their Sales Team has focused on growing relationships. He added that there some fans were distrustful given that the Pirates Team was pulled away. Trustee Jamieson congratulated CEO Goldberg for his hard work. Chair Woods asked about the pricing of the tickets. CEO Goldberg explained that adjustments will be made to single ticket sales, some group sales, and noted that there is a demand for Ice Lounge Suites. Trustee Surprise asked about Westbrook, specifically RockRow, as a location for an ice rink facility. CEO Goldberg said that site was a potential location. He and Dexter toured some training facilities in Ohio and Michigan recently. Ice rink facilities are very important for training. They can also be used by the community for non ice related sports such as pickleball and summer camps. General Manager Mike Loconte asked about the public's response to the new bench flip system? CEO Goldberg replied that the bench setup looks much better and is very professional. It's easier to access for staff, for maintenance and medical staff. He also noted that the new glass panels look great. Chair Woods thanked CEO Goldberg for his update and hard work. Chair Woods also recognized GM Loconte for all of the improvements to the arena facilities and operations. CEO Goldberg agreed with Chair Woods, GM Loconte has done an excellent job. The arena is well run and very clean.

This CIA Trustees' Agenda Item was RECEIVED AND FILED.

4. [BT 25-004](#)

Approval of Financial Reports July 2024 - February 2025

GM Loconte gave an overview of financial reports from July 2024 through February 2025. For the month of February they budgeted for 10 events and had 12. They had \$280k in event income, \$79k more than budgeted. For ancillaries, they generated \$72k for the month, \$3,600 more than budgeted. Expenses were \$286k, and had budgeted \$272k and were \$13k behind. Events included Portland on Tap, Harlem Globe Trotters, three Maine Mariner games, and basketball games.

GM Loconte gave an overview of the Year To Date on page 157. They budgeted

for 61 events and had 65 year to date. They had \$1.5 million in event income, \$175k more than budgeted. For ancillaries, they generated \$550k year to date, \$31k more than budgeted. Expenses were \$1.963 million, and had budgeted \$1.981 million, a small variance. Events included Jurassic Quest, Book of Mormon, various music shows, Nitro Circus, Disney on Ice, Ice Racing, Cirque du Soleil, and various sports events. GM Loconte stated that net income was \$175k, a \$220k variance and the projected loss. Trustee Jamieson shared that he had attended the championship basketball game with his family and it was the loudest and most exciting event that they had attended. He encouraged GM Loconte to push more advertising about events.

A motion was made by Trustee Crimmins, seconded by Trustee Surprise, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Jamieson, Trustee Crimmins and Trustee Woods

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

5. [BT 25-005](#) Approval of Events Report August 2024 - February 2025

GM Loconte summarized the events, 12 events, two more than were budgeted. He referred to page 216 of the meeting packet. Ancillary income for the month was \$154k and operating income was \$208k. He reiterated the information that was discussed in the previous agenda item.

A motion was made by Trustee Clark, seconded by Trustee Crimmins, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Jamieson, Trustee Crimmins and Trustee Woods

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

6. [BT 25-006](#) Recommendation of the 2025/2026 Cross Insurance Arena Operating, Capital and Trustee budgets.

GM Loconte gave a slideshow presentation of the operating budget as outlined on page 230 of the agenda packet. He shared that the Book of Mormon was the biggest event they had in Portland, two of the three shows sold out and preconstruction for the set was close to \$90,000. He thanked Assistant General Manager Peter Doyle for his oversight. GM Loconte shared that the MaineHealth conference was an unexpected event that was very successful. Over 600 people attended and MaineHealth has already booked the same conference for next year. Trustee Jamieson asked if GM Loconte expected the Book of Mormon to

return, GM Loconte said that they might and it had created a new opportunity with a new vendor. Chair Woods commented that the sales visually capture the event's success. They could build on the success and market to larger companies, GM Loconte agreed adding that the arena could serve multiple purposes. GM Loconte reviewed other shows and their attendance; he highlighted the potential shows that might return to perform.

GM Loconte went over projected revenue for 2026. It increased by \$174k operating income and expects it to be a positive year. His efforts will be focused on managing costs. Trustee Surprise asked if the arena hosted wrestling events? GM Loconte stated that the event does come to Maine but typically goes to Bangor. GM Loconte noted that a big factor in the budget are increasing operating costs that continue to climb every year since the pandemic. Factors impacting the operating costs included higher wages to retain staff, increasing vendor costs, and escalating utility rates. There is an inflation effect on the cost of goods sold. Cost of goods sold used to be 70% but it has reduced to 40%. The staff COLA is important to keep and retain staff because it contributes to a successful arena. Chair Woods asked how the Union costs impact the budget. GM Loconte explained that it's a three year contract and 15% increase to stay competitive and retain staff. GM Loconte said that he is maintaining relationships with other local venues and there is a delicate balance to avoid monopolizing shows. One of the shows did not return due to Ticketmaster fees. Additionally, having an equally consistent promotional package estimate to other shows so they're not undervaluing other promoters. His objective is to appeal to various promoters, big and small. Commissioner Tyler asked about Ticketmaster and its impact on shows. GM Loconte said that Ticketmaster does draw bigger talent but they do not affect the shows, they affect the ticketbuyers. He noted that as a result of a lawsuit starting May 12 Ticketmaster is required to disclose all fees and prices upfront. GM Loconte stated that there is success with ticket pricing for first time shows and being able to reduce Ticketmaster fees.

GM Loconte continued and reviewed page 230 of the agenda packet. He noted that there was a deficit of \$370k because Jurassic Quest and Hot Wheels will not return as they are taking a break. Staff are looking for shows to make up for the loss. He noted that the post pandemic surge has stabilized. He stated that there is a projected 24-25 positive net income of \$34k. Trustee Clark asked if they had considered opening the area to livestream events? GM Loconte stated that yes, there is potential for profit sharing in live stream.

Trustee Crimmins asked how they are addressing the Portland Minimum wage increase. GM Loconte stated that there were large wage increases

over the past four years, and those were passed onto the shows as a staffing fee increase to offset the cost.

County Manager Gailey presented the capital budget and noted that county reserves would fund some of the projects. He estimated that there was a low of \$220k and a high of \$400k. Items to be considered were proposed by GM Loconte and County Manager Gailey approved the final estimated costs. The total costs for projects will be finalized before going to the Board of Commissioners for approval. County Manager Gailey reviewed the CIA Trustees budget costs and noticed that the rapidly increasing cost of insurance is the biggest impact. He noted that the insurance ranges from \$95k to \$135k, and \$29k were paid in premiums. He said that the final budget was \$265k. Chair Woods asked if County Manager Gailey would outline the process. County Manager Gailey explained that the Operating Budget is based on shows that create revenue to offset operations. The County's general fund funds bonds, covers the Trustee Budget, and buffers for capital costs. General admission covers the gap in the operations and Trustees now have oversight. Non County employees are overseen by the Arena but the County is responsible for the costs. Commissioner Tyler stated that if they accept the budget or not, the Trustees have final say on the CIA Trustee Budget. County Manager Gailey commented that the fiscal year is not over and there is still time to be in the black. Commissioner Tyler asked if the budget was in the black. GM Loconte estimated that it was \$44k in the black while his goal was \$12k in the black. Finance Director Mark Eddy remarked that being in the black was one of his goals, and that the projected budget was 18 months until the end of the fiscal year.

Trustee Surprise asked what the County Commissioner's response was. Commissioner Tyler confirmed that the board was pleased with the results. Trustee Surprise recalled that 10 years ago, Trustee meetings were very intense. He said that attorneys were involved and the arena was always losing money. He appreciated GM Loconte's transparency and positive results. GM Loconte thanked the Board of Trustees for their support and for enabling his team to accomplish its mission.

A motion was made by Trustee Jamieson, seconded by Trustee Crimmins, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Jamieson, Trustee Crimmins and Trustee Woods

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

MEMBER UPDATES

Finance Director Mark Eddy noted that in 2027 it will be the 50th year of the Cross Insurance

Arena.

7. [BT 25-007](#) Executive Session 1 MRSA 405 (6)(D) Discussion of ongoing negotiations with OVG 360 and Powerplay LLC.

Time Into Executive Session: 10:40am

A motion was made by Trustee Jamieson, seconded by Trustee Clark, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item be APPROVED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Jamieson,
Trustee Crimmins and Trustee Woods

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

Time Out of Executive Session: 11:21 am

A motion was made by Trustee Jamieson, seconded by Trustee Crimmins, that the CIA Trustees' Agenda Item be CONCLUDED. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Trustee Clark, Trustee Norman, Trustee Surprise, Trustee Jamieson,
Trustee Crimmins and Trustee Woods

No: 0

Excused: 1 - Trustee Witonis

NEXT MEETING:

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 am by Trustee Crimmins, seconded by Trustee Jamieson.