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**The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees
Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 20, 2023 · 9:00 a.m. EDT**

**The University of Rhode Island
Room 207 – Avedisian Hall
7 Greenhouse Road, Kingston, RI 02881**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Finance and Facilities Committee Chair Vahid Ownjazayeri welcomed members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Finance and Facilities Committee and asked for a roll call. Noting that a quorum of members of the Finance and Facilities Committee was present, the meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

The URI Board of Trustees Finance and Facilities Committee members in attendance:

- Vahid Ownjazayeri, Committee Chair (remote)
- Armand Sabitoni, Committee Vice Chair (in person)
- Joseph Formicola (remote)
- Cortney Nicolato (remote)
- President Marc Parlange (ex officio, non-voting) (in person)
- Melissa Sutherland (non-voting) (remote)

The URI Board of Trustees Finance and Facilities Committee member not in attendance:

- Michael Fascitelli

"The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit."

Members of the President's Leadership Council in attendance:

- Alyssa Boss, General Counsel (remote)
- Abby Benson, Interim Vice President, Administration and Finance (remote)
- Barbara Wolfe, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost (remote)

The URI staff members in attendance:

- Chelsea Berry, Interim Senior Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff (remote)
- Karl Calvo, Assistant Vice President, Facilities (remote)
- Ryan Carrillo, Director, Planning and Real Estate Development (remote)
- Michelle Curreri, Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- Daniel Moos, Assistant to the Vice President for Administration and Finance (in person)
- Lynn Owens, Associate Secretary, Board of Trustees (in person)
- John Poehlmann, Assistant Vice President for Financial Strategy and Planning (remote)

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri acknowledged that the University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional homeland of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. He welcomed new Committee member Joseph Formicola and new Committee Liaison Abby Benson.

1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

a. Minutes of the April 17, 2023 Meeting of the Finance and Facilities Committee [Enclosure 1.a.](#)

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri called for a motion that the Finance and Facilities Committee approve the minutes of the April 17, 2023, Finance and Facilities Committee meeting.

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees approve the minutes of the April 17, 2023, meeting of the Finance and Facilities Committee.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Joseph Formicola, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Armand Sabitoni.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. FY24 Budget [Enclosure 2a](#)

Abby Benson, Interim Vice President for Administration, and John Poehlmann, Assistant Vice President for Financial Strategy and Planning, provided an overview of the FY24 Budget. The presentation can be found [here](#). Interim Vice President Benson thanked Governor McKee for his support of the University and all Board members for their continued efforts that led to the success of the FY24 budget. She noted the increase to the University's FY24 budget over the Governor's recommended budget with respect to operations, renovations to Athletics facilities, and a new water treatment plant. Assistant Vice President Poehlmann provided details on this additional funding from the state of Rhode Island. Interim Vice President Benson also noted that the funding for stormwater management appears low, but is, in fact, a multi-year project and is expected to be funded in the coming years. Karl Calvo, Assistant Vice President, Facilities, concurred with this expectation.

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri asked for an update on the water treatment plant. Assistant Vice President Calvo provided detail on the temporary filtration system, noting that the work is completed as a design-build project and, with the approval of the state, as a sole source project due to timing considerations and the need for direct familiarity with the University. Committee Chair Ownjazayeri said that he thought multiple bids might have been possible within the time frame noted. Interim Vice President Benson noted that the project fell below the \$5M threshold for Board approval but acknowledged that the Committee would receive continued updates. She also noted that the permanent project is expected to be a model for other institutions dealing with the issue of PFAS in water supplies. Assistant Vice President Calvo noted that the Requests for Information (RFI) for the permanent project is at the State Purchasing Office, with a Request for Proposals (RFP) or design-build services to be issued later.

b. Strategic Investment Initiative [Enclosure 2.b](#)

Interim Vice President Benson and Assistant Vice President John Poehlmann provided an overview of the University's Strategic Investment Initiative. The presentation can be found [here](#). Interim Vice President Benson described the initiative and its intent, noting that a new incentive-based budget model is in development and that this initiative is intended as a bridge to that new budget. She also noted that the initiative is supported by discretionary, one-time funds. Submissions for this initiative included 56 concept papers, 42 of which were chosen to move forward into the business-case phase. Investment in this initiative is estimated to be \$2 Million, starting in FY24. Committee members overall expressed approval with this initiative and its progress. Committee member Nicolato asked if a dashboard could be developed to assist Board members to identify areas for which they could provide support. Committee Chair Ownjazayeri asked if the savings found through these initiatives could be reinvested in the project to make it self-sustaining. Interim Vice President Benson noted that the initiative is a bridge to a new incentive-based budget model, which would effectively create self-sustaining initiatives. Committee Chair Ownjazayeri clarified to Committee members that the initiative is important as an engagement tool and is not intended to be an effort to reduce state investment. Interim Vice President Benson noted

that most of the efforts are focused on revenue generating activities, with a smaller number focused on cost-cutting since the University already has very lean operations.

c. Approvals under the Delegation of Authority Relating to Land and Property [Enclosure 2.c](#)

Interim Vice President Benson and Ryan Carrillo, Director of Planning and Real Estate Development, provided an overview of activities under this delegation of authority. The information can be found [here](#). Director Carrillo noted a single delegated item since the last update relative to the University's agreement with Dunkin' locations in the Memorial Union and the Center for Biotechnology and Life Sciences (CBLS). He noted that the University has a revenue sharing arrangement with Dunkin'.

d. Providence Campus Update

Interim Vice President Benson and Director Carrillo provided an update regarding the status of the University's Providence campus. Interim Vice President Benson noted that the University is committed to a presence in Providence and the requirement to exit the Shepherd Building requires near-term changes. The School of Education will be relocating to the Kingston campus. Other smaller groups will be re-housed in alternate locations in Providence to be determined soon. Director Carrillo noted that the University needs roughly 9,000 square feet of space in Providence at this time. Interim Vice President Benson noted that the focus is on the needs of students, graduate and undergraduate, though the population there has recently diminished.

3. ACTION ITEMS

a. Review of the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan FY2025-2029, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure 3.a.](#)

Interim Vice President Benson, Assistant Vice President Calvo and Director Carrillo provided an overview of the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY2025-2029. Director Carrillo discussed the changes to the CIP since the last submission, noting in particular:

- Health and Counseling Center (on hold, prioritization of housing)
- Memorial Union (on hold, prioritization of housing)
- Student Success Center (removed, reevaluate funding opportunities)
- Narragansett Bay Campus (NBC) Phase 2 (total project budget reduced to \$129M to reflect the approved State Budget and the voter approved General Obligation Bond)
- Athletics Complex Renewal (increased total budget funding by \$800K to reflect administration of private fundraising match requirement in anticipated FY24 State Budget)
- PFAS (funding request moved from RICAP to Federal to reflect the anticipated FY24 State Budget)
- NBC Phase 1 renewal (Ocean Robotics Laboratory completion moved to 2025; marine operations and hazmat schedule TBD pending availability of funding)

- Brookside II renamed “New Undergraduate Housing”

Committee Vice Chair Armand Sabitoni asked how the CIP list is generated and edited over time. Director Carrillo explained the process, which includes submission of a proposal, review by the Facilities Committee, the President’s Executive Council, and then presentation to (and approval by) this Committee and the Board of Trustees. He noted that the new undergraduate housing project has a Kushner and is in process. Interim Vice President Benson noted that the University is operating under a twenty-year old master plan and that the CIP is a project-based list. There are efforts to start a new master plan, and the President has made this effort a priority. Committee Chair Ownjazayeri asked about the scope and scale of changes to the CIP through the vetting process. Director Carrillo noted that there is, in fact, very little “melt” between versions because the initial vetting process ensures that projects on the list already arrive with broad institutional support.

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri called for a motion that the Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan for FY2025-2029, as recommended and presented in Enclosure 3.a.

On a motion duly made by Committee Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Cortney Nicolato it was

VOTED:	THAT	The Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve the University of Rhode Island Capital Improvement Plan for FY2025-2029, as recommended and presented in Enclosure 3.a.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Joseph Formicola, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Armand Sabitoni.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

b. Review of Amendments to the Finance and Facilities Committee Charter, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure 3.b.](#)

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri discussed the recommended amendments to the Finance and Facilities Committee Charter. Committee Vice Chair Sabitoni asked about the origins of the suggested changes. Committee member Nicolato noted that all Board Committees are reviewing their charges to ensure correct scope and to reduce any overlap. Committee Vice Chair Sabitoni asked specifically about the changes relative to IT oversight. Board Secretary Curreri noted that the Finance and Facilities Committee was, per the charter, still involved in discussing IT operations.

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri called for a motion that the Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve amendments to the Committee Charter as recommended and presented in Enclosure 3.b.

On a motion duly made by Cortney Nicolato and seconded by Armand Sabitoni, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve amendments to the Committee Charter as recommended and presented in Enclosure 3.b.
VOTE:		4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
YEAS:		Joseph Formicola, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Armand Sabitoni.
NAYS:		0
ABSTAINS:		0

c. Review of Amendments to the Finance and Facilities Committee Calendar, and recommendation for approval to the URI Board of Trustees. [Enclosure 3.c.](#)

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri discussed the proposed amendments to the Finance and Facilities Committee Calendar. He called for a motion that the Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve amendments to the Committee Calendar as recommended and presented in Enclosure 3.c.

On a motion duly made by Armand Sabitoni and seconded by Vahid Ownjazayeri, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The Finance and Facilities Committee of the URI Board of Trustees recommend that the Board of Trustees approve amendments to the Committee Calendar as recommended and presented in Enclosure 3.c.
VOTE:		4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
YEAS:		Joseph Formicola, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Armand Sabitoni.
NAYS:		0
ABSTAINS:		0

4. ADJOURN

Committee Chair Ownjazayeri thanked members of the Committee and called for a motion that the Finance and Facilities Committee adjourn the meeting of June 20, 2023.

On a motion duly made by Joseph Formicola and seconded by Cortney Nicolato, it was

VOTED:	THAT	The Finance and Facilities Committee adjourn the meeting of June 20, 2023.
	VOTE:	4 members voted in the affirmative and 0 members voted in the negative.
	YEAS:	Joseph Formicola, Cortney Nicolato, Vahid Ownjazayeri, Armand Sabitoni.
	NAYS:	0
	ABSTAINS:	0

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next meetings of The University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees Finance and Facilities Committee is tentatively scheduled for September 2023.