

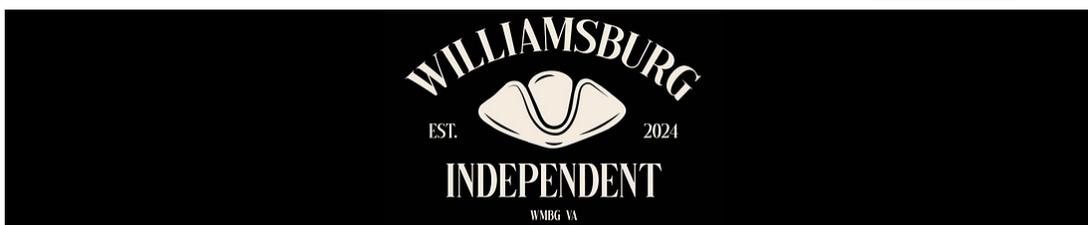
Schott, Heather

From: Bellamy, Mark
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 9:58 AM
To: Schott, Heather
Subject: FW: Is Coke the G.O.A.T. for Williamsburg sports venue? Or is Pepsi Next?

Friday

From: Williamsburg Independent <williamsburgindependent@substack.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 12, 2026 8:26 AM
To: Bellamy, Mark <bellamy@yorkcounty.gov>
Subject: Is Coke the G.O.A.T. for Williamsburg sports venue? Or is Pepsi Next?

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Is Coke the G.O.A.T. for Williamsburg sports venue? Or is Pepsi Next?

“Pouring Rights” competition heats up for regionally-funded Greater Williamsburg Sports and Entertainment center

WILLIAMSBURG INDEPENDENT

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The Historic Triangle Recreational Facilities Authority met February 11, 2026, to receive updates on the Greater Williamsburg Sports and Entertainment Center ahead of its August opening. The meeting included a closed session to discuss exclusive beverage agreements that could generate significant revenue for the facility. These types of agreements face criticism from health advocates for commercializing public spaces and promoting sugary drinks to children. (AI generated image)

The Board of Directors of the Historic Triangle Recreational Facilities Authority met Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2026, to receive updates about the construction and future operations of the Greater Williamsburg Sports and Entertainment Center, the \$80 million, 200,000-square-foot indoor complex expected to open by August. The meeting agenda included a closed session to discuss pouring rights for the venue—exclusive contractual agreements with beverage manufacturers (typically Coca-Cola or PepsiCo) that grant a company sole rights to sell and market products across the facility’s vending machines, dining areas, and athletic venues.

In exchange for exclusivity, beverage companies provide significant financial benefits including upfront payments, annual sponsorship fees, and sales-based commissions, while contracts typically require institutions to display company

branding and use vendor-provided equipment. While these agreements generate funding for scholarships and operations, they face criticism for commercializing public spaces and promoting consumption of unhealthy food and drinks.

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Pouring Rights: Coke vs. Pepsi

The amount of visitors expected to visit the sports complex represents substantial beverage sales potential. Given the competitive beverage market, HTRFA is likely well-positioned to negotiate favorable terms for pouring rights.

Two Virginia universities demonstrate how Coca-Cola and PepsiCo compete for exclusive pouring rights using contrasting strategies—insights that may inform HTRFA’s negotiations for its sports complex. Coca-Cola’s ten-year deal with George Mason University emphasizes guaranteed revenue, offering over \$600,000 annually in fixed fees regardless of sales—nearly \$7 million total. Meanwhile, PepsiCo’s agreement with Old Dominion University features lower guarantees (\$204,000 annually) but substantial per-case rebates and vending commissions that reward high consumption.

While beverage agreements at universities can reach millions of dollars, Williamsburg-James City County Schools’ more modest contract with Coca-Cola illustrates how these partnerships operate across different types of public institutions at varying scales. The contract specifies that only diet, zero-sugar, or water-based options are provided, including Diet Coke, Sprite Zero, Dasani, Smartwater, reduced-calorie Powerade, Minute Maid juices, and Gold Peak teas. The district’s FY26 budget projects \$17,500 in vending revenue through Child Nutrition Services, supporting the district’s meal programs.

Public health concerns

Public health advocates warn that the proliferation of pouring rights contracts compromise community health by marketing products linked to obesity and diabetes. For example, the issue of youth targeting is particularly concerning to many in the community, who feel that schools and recreational facilities

shouldn't become advertising platforms for unhealthy beverages due to financial pressures. Studies indicate that beverage marketing has become central to many camps, tournaments, and sporting events where kids associate brands with athletic success.

The beverage industry frames pouring rights as practical partnerships funding programs stretched budgets cannot support while reducing taxpayer burden. Companies emphasize voluntary marketing standards, healthier product options, and support for scholarships and sustainability. Critics of the beverage industry argue that voluntary industry guidelines contain loopholes allowing companies to claim they're not directly focusing marketing on youth.



Pepsi Next was released by the company in 2012 but pulled by 2015. In terms of soda, Coca-Cola may be the G.O.A.T (greatest of all time) but has long used polar bears in their advertising, prompting claims of using marketing aimed at children. (AI generated image)

Other issue addressed at the meeting included:

Facility construction update

Recent milestones include completed maple gym flooring with epoxy flooring scheduled to finish by late February. Turf roll insulation began in January, with full turf system installation ongoing throughout February. The first equipment shipment recently arrived at port and is expected on-site shortly. Parking lot asphalt paving is scheduled for March. Other reported progress included:

- Sports Courts (PEMB): 85% complete—maple floor installed with floor protection in place for turf installation; interior storefronts being installed in breakout spaces
- HUB Space: 75% complete—storefronts being installed at future gym; casework installed throughout building; front desk and longboards installed
- Site Work: 70% complete—site fencing removed; concrete work in plaza area ongoing (weather permitting)

Operations update

The Board received receive presentations regarding the facility’s operational progress, including recruiting new events:

- **Total breakdown:** 50 sports events and 30 non-sport events
 - **2026:** 22 events scheduled—13 non-sport (8 definite, 1 tentative, 4 prospects) and 9 sports (6 definite, 2 tentative, 1 prospect)
 - **2027:** 38 events planned—26 sports events and 12 non-sport events (peak activity year)
 - **2028:** 19 events scheduled—14 sports and 5 non-sport
 - **2029:** 1 confirmed sports event
 - **Prospective events include:**
 - iShine Car Show
 - Triple Crown Sports
 - NIKE Volleyball Camps (fundamental skills camp)
 - LOVB Volleyball Tournament (2027/2028)
 - VA CatFest 2027
 - BurgQuest 2027
-

Proposed facility use rates for local community

A tiered pricing structure was proposed for community access, including local residents, park and rec departments, schools, and municipalities:

Drop-In & Open Play

- Youth ages 0–11: \$3 residents, \$6 non-residents
- Junior ages 12–17: \$4 residents, \$7 non-residents
- Adults 18+: \$5 residents, \$8 non-residents
- Punch cards: \$40 for 10 visits or \$60 for 20 visits

Adventure Gym

- Toddlers ages 0–5: \$5 for 2-hour play sessions
- Youth/Junior ages 6–17: \$12 for unlimited play (non-residents add \$5)
- Monthly unlimited: \$40 residents, \$60 non-residents
- Annual unlimited: \$440 residents, \$660 non-residents

Sports & Meeting Spaces

- Basketball courts: \$75/hour (full gym of 12 courts: \$10,000/day)
- Volleyball courts: \$40/hour
- Turf: \$295/hour for one-third field, \$1,050/hour for full turf
- Flex rooms: FREE
- Breakout rooms: \$500/half day
- Conference rooms: \$600/half day
- Banquet hall: \$2,500/half day

Parks & Recreation Structure

- Recreational Sports Programs:
- Courts: FREE (Monday–Thursday, 4pm–close)
- Basic meeting spaces: FREE during active seasons
- Premier spaces: 50% off standard rates
- AAU/Affiliate Programs:
- Courts: \$20/resident per season
- Turf: \$150/hour
- Local Schools:
- Courts: \$50/hour
- Turf: \$200/hours

- Municipalities:
 - Courts: \$25/hour
 - Turf: \$150/hour
 - Premier spaces: Two single-day events (Friday–Sunday) and four single-day events (Monday–Thursday) at specified terms
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The writer used AI tools and these sources:

- [HTRFA.org](https://www.htrfa.org)
 - [Old Dominion University - Beverage Pouring Rights Contract - PepsiCo](#)
 - [George Mason University - Beverage Pouring Rights Contract - Coca Cola](#)
 - [WJCC School Board meeting - August 8, 2025](#)
 - [WJCC Adopted FY26 Budget](#)
 - [“Pouring Rights: A Toolkit for Advocates” - Center for Science in the Public Interest - June 13, 2022](#)
 - [“Marketing of sugar-sweetened beverages to youth through U.S. university pouring rights contracts” - *Preventive Medicine Reports* - February 2022](#)
 - [“Youth Sports Complex Scores Millions In Pepsi ‘Pouring Rights’ Deal” - *Forbes* - August 22, 2013](#)
 - [“80 Percent of Public Schools Have Contracts With Coke or Pepsi” - *Mother Jones* - August 15, 2012](#)
 - [“Big Gulps For Little Leagues: Should Coca-Cola Feel Guilty For Funding Youth Sports?” - Center for Health Journalism - March 7, 2012](#)
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