



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, September 15, 2020
Zoom Virtual
12pm**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm by Chairman Brewer Rowe

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Geremie Callaghan, Keith Chouinard, Matt Gineo, T.R. McGrath, Andrew Moore, Jeanne Marie Napolitano, Brewer Rowe, Rocky Kempenaar, Rick Lombardi, Andrew Moore, Brad Read, Elizabeth Buckley, Tom McNiff, Christine Klase, Nancy Parker Wilson, Pamela Baldwin

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Bob Rulli, Karen Binder,

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: John Edick

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Evan Smith, Kathryn Farrington, Tim Walsh, Alyson Adkins

STAFF EXCUSED:

Member of the Public: Ryan Bellmore

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for May were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Matt Gineo and seconded by Jeanne Marie Napolitano. The motion passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: No comments from the public

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for August was presented by Matt Gineo:

- For June bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +254% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +518% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +296% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of August was up 169% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +314% as compared to budget. Total expenses were down -21% as compared to budget.

A motion to approve the treasurers report was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Brewer Rowe. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- Evan updated the Board as follows:
 - Evan reminded the Board that he sent them the Longwoods International report for September. He highlighted information in the report that 50% of people are comfortable with travel.
 - Discover Newport received a request from the RI Airport Corporation (RIAC) in their support in expanding their runway in Middletown, RI. Rick Lombardi shared the Town of Middletown's prospective, which is that there is an issue with imminent domain piece that RIAC is seeking. While the town council has not meet on this issue yet, it does not look favorable. At this point, Discover Newport will follow the towns lead.
 - Evan updated the Board that we have been look at new administrative offices as a cost saving measure over the past 3 months. We have narrowed it down to two finalists and our waiting for lease from the front runner. Evan will update the Board when a final selection has been made and a lease has been signed. Our hope is to be in new office space by 1/21.
 - Evan updated the Board on the Visitor Center. He reminded the Board that while we have not budgeted funding for FY21, he is researching on where do we go in FY 22 and beyond with Visitor Services. 38% of destinations do not even have a Visitor Center. Post Covid, ~ 50% have closed, and of those that closed, 100% our funding by the lodging tax. Evan is working with Destination International, our national organization, to develop a survey to send out to all the DMO's on what Visitor Center's will look like post Covid. We want to find best practice/right level of investment. Look for more to come in the future on this important topic as we look to revamp Visitor Services post Covid.
 - We have two members who's last meeting will be in October, both who represent Newport, Brewer Rowe, our Chair, and Matt Gineo, our Treasurer. Both have been invaluable to our Organization and have some big shoes to fill. Evan will be working with the City of Newport to find two new members to replace them. Also, at the October meeting, we will need to elect all new officers. If anyone is interested in servicing as Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, or Treasurer, please let Evan know.
 - The Newport Tourism Marketing Management District (TMD) has one open seat as Caron Rivera from Mill Street Inn resigned. As a reminder, Discover Newport appoints 7 of the 9 seats. We called from applications twice, and received one application, which has been forwarded to you. The application is from Andy Ross from the Brenton Hotel, who is more than qualified. Chairman B. Rowe called for Nominations, R. Lombardi nominated Andy Ross to the TMD, seconded by B. Read. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Staff Update:

- Kathryn Farrington updated the Board on Newport Restaurant Week (NRW). The Restaurant Committee met and decided that they would like to run NRW this fall. NRW will be held 11/6-11/15.

Discover Newport will waive the normal participation fee due to Covid-19, therefore it will be free to all who wish to participate.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 12:58pm

**The next Board Meeting will be held:
TBA
Tuesday October 20, 2020
12pm**