



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, October 20, 2020
Zoom Virtual
12pm**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:04pm by Chairman Brewer Rowe

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Geremie Callaghan, Keith Chouinard, Matt Gineo, T.R. McGrath, Jeanne Marie Napolitano, Brewer Rowe, Brad Read, Elizabeth Buckley, Tom McNiff, Nancy Parker Wilson, Pamela Baldwin, John Eddick, Karen Binder, Rocky Kempenaar

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Bob Rulli,

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: Andrew Moore, Rick Lombardi, Christine Klase

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

STAFF EXCUSED:

Member of the Public: Ryan Bellmore, Jeanne Perrotti

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for September were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes with the correction of adding Pamela Baldwin as attending was made by Matt Gineo and seconded by Geremie Callaghan. The motion passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: No comments from the public

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

- For July bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +245% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +217% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +158% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of August was up 178% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +233% as compared to budget. Total expenses were down -14% as compared to budget.

- Chairman Rowe noted that even though we are in a strong cash position, the cash reserves will get us through the lean times coming down the road.

A motion to approve the treasurers report was made by Jeanne Marie Napolitano and seconded by T.R. McGrath. The motion passed unanimously.

- Alyson Adkins presented the draft audited financial statements along with the draft management and discussion analysis, which will be incorporated into the audited financial statements. Alyson informed the Board that Sansiveri, Kimball & Co presented the draft financial statements to the finance committee on October 14th and we received an unmodified opinion, which is in essence, a 'clean opinion'. A motion to approve the draft audited financial statements with the management and discussion analysis was made by Jeanne Marie Napolitano and seconded by Karen Binder. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. STAFFS UPDATE:

- Kathryn Farrington, VP of Marketing, updated the Board as follows:
 - Newport Restaurant Week (NRW) will commence this fall November 6th - 15th, 2020 Remix. There is no participation fee this year, however restaurants must take the RI Hospitality pledge. Restaurants can offer whatever deals they choose, BOGO, Prei-fixe menus, Gift card deals, half price raw bar and more. To date, 55 restaurants have signed up offering 60 deals.
 - We received a 'Take it Outside' grant from Commerce RI for single use warming blankets, which will be handed out to restaurants offering outside dining. The campaign will be launched as 'Dining under Wraps'.
 - Creating a new promotional video featuring the sales team destination videos for several meeting planners to promote their meetings in 2021 here in Newport.
 - We are working with the other districts for a local tourism campaign that will run mid-November thru January. This will be funded through a grant from the RI Foundation.
 - We have hosted several media over the past several months thanks to the generosity of our new hotel properties.
- Tim Walsh, VP of Sales, update the Board as follows:
 - The end of 2020 and beginning of 2021 will still be slow for the meeting market.
 - 2nd quarter of 2021 (4th quarter in our fiscal year), we will see the return of regional meetings. This has always been our bread and butter; we are now competing with the bigger destinations who will be going after this segment.
 - By the end of 2021, we expect to see the return of bigger conferences.
 - The sales department welcomed the return of two employees in September, Alex Hurd and Patricia Smurro. They have returned three days per week.
 - The sales team will host a virtual client event in November.
 - The sales team will be hosting virtual site inspections to keep in front of our clients.
 - We are looking at attending two in-person trade shows at the end of our fiscal year.
 - We do not expect the motorcoach market to return to the Fall of 2021.

V. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Evan updated the Board on the following:

- The Board should have received the link for the TV commercial that Restore Greater Newport created.
- Our destination was one of the few destinations that had a good summer for tourism. On a national level, tourism suffered greatly.
- Historically, Fall has always been strong for us. However, this year we will not have any events, cruise ships, bus tours, international travelers, and smaller weddings. Our cash reserves will serve us during the lean winter to come.
- Continuing to work on 2 projects:

- We are in the final stages of signing a lease with Long Wharf. The lease would be effective December 1st and we expect to be completely moved in by January 1st.
- Continue to work on surveying other destinations with visitor centers. This will help us develop our plans on how we shape visitor services in the future.
- We bid goodbye to three Board members today, John Edick, our treasurer, Matt Gineo, and our chair, Brewer Rowe. We thank them all for their service and they behind some very big shoes to fill.
 - Matt and Brewer represent the City of Newport, and as such, their seats will be filled by the Newport City Council. The requirement for those seats is you must leave in the City of Newport and work in one of the seven hospitality sectors. Resumes for these two seats should be sent to City Hall.
 - John represents the member at large seat on our Board. The requirement for that seat is you must work in one of the seven hospitality sectors. Resumes for this seat should be sent to Evan.
- Elections for four new officers will be held at the November meeting. If you would like to serve as an officer or nominate someone, please send an email to Evan.

VI. REGIONAL UPDATES:

- Warren- received “Take It Outside” initiative funding in the amount of \$75,000. Several of our restaurants are already taking advantage of our being able to provide tent rentals and portable heaters. The following restaurants have benefited from these funds; Chomp, the Wharf Tavern, Square Peg, La Pinata, Richardson’s Kitchen & Bar; and Cigar World East. Also, the annual Warren Walkabout is being recast as “Warren Walkabout-Six Sundays-Six Feet Apart” beginning this Sunday (10/25).
- Newport/Middleton-received “Take It Outside” initiative funding in the amount of \$50,000. Several of our restaurants are already taking advantage of our being able to provide tent rentals and portable heaters.
- Jamestown-received “Take It Outside” initiative funding in the amount of \$40,000. Several of our restaurants are already taking advantage of our being able to provide tent rentals and portable heaters and we are working on a portable kegerator.
- Portsmouth-is working on the “Take It Outside” grant. The town has also hosted various outdoor events, which all have been very successful.
- Barrington-received “Take It Outside” initiative funding in the amount of \$85,000 (\$30,000 for the Town and \$55,000 for the schools). Several of our restaurants are already taking advantage of our being able to provide tent rentals and portable heaters. The schools will use it conduct outdoor lessons and activities.
- Bristol-audio cut out. Will email update to the Board.

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

**The next Board Meeting will be held:
Zoom
Tuesday November 20, 2020
12pm**