



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, November 17, 2020
Zoom Virtual
12pm**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm by Evan Smith, President & CEO

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Geremie Callaghan, Keith Chouinard, T.R. McGrath, Jeanne Marie Napolitano, Brad Read, Tom McNiff, Nancy Parker Wilson, Pamela Baldwin, Karen Binder, Rocky Kempenaar, Bob Rulli, Rick Lombardi, Christine Klase, Andrew Moore

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: N/a

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: Elizabeth Buckley

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

STAFF EXCUSED: N/a

Member of the Public: None

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for October were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by TR McGrath and seconded by Geremie Callaghan. The motion passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: N/a

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for October was presented by Alyson Adkins:

- For August bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +189% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +161% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +152% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of August was up 197% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +180% as compared to budget. Total expenses were down -17% as compared to budget.

A motion to approve the treasurers report was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by T.R. McGrath. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Evan updated the Board on the following:

- While we had a strong summer and fall compared to the national landscape, we expect that to fall off as we head into winter. As of now, one hotel is closed, the Ramada Inn, which is due to renovations, not Covid-19. When they reopen, it will be under a new brand. While no other hotels project to close at this time, many hotels have indicated that they will have less inventory available to help reduce staffing expenses. There will be also limited attractions open during the winter months.
- We signed a five-year lease at 44 Long Wharf Mall. We expect to start the move mid-December and hope to be up and running by the 1st of the year.
- Evan turned the floor over to T.R. McGrath, Chair of Governance, for an update on the open seat of Member at Large. Governance has received three resumes for consideration, all our strong candidates. The resumes will be forwarded to the Board for review. If any Board member has anything to share with Governance about any of the candidates, please let Governance know. Governance will be conducting interviews of the three candidates and will have a recommendation for the January board meeting. The floor was turned back to Evan. Evan informed the board that the governance committee is looking for members to serve. Interested board members should let Evan or T.R know.
- Evan took back the floor and presented the slate of candidates for Officers to serve a 2-year term to expire on 9/30/22. The slate is as follows:
 - Chair-T.R. McGrath
 - Vice Chair-Keith Chouinard
 - Treasurer-Geremie Callahan
 - Secretary-Karen Binder

A motion to approve the slate of candidates of officers as presented was made by Rick Lombardi and seconded by Nancy Parker Wilson. The motion passed unanimously.

- Evan presented the candidate for the open seat on the Newport Tourism Marketing Management Authority. (Discover Newport controls seven of the nine board seats. The City of Newport controls the other two.) The candidate is Ms. Randi Milewski, General Manager at Hammetts Wharf Hotel. No other candidates applied for the open seat. A motion to appoint Randi Milewski to the Newport Tourism Marketing Management Authority board was made by Bob Rulli and seconded by Jeanne Marie Napolitano. The motion passed unanimously.
- Evan informed the board that the finance committee is looking for members to serve. Interested board members should let Evan or Geremie Callaghan know.
- The 2021 meeting schedule was sent out to everyone. We will meet the third Tuesday of the month, except for February and April, where we will meet the fourth Tuesday as to avoid school vacation weeks. There are no meetings in July, August, and December

V. STAFFS UPDATE:

- Kathryn Farrington, VP of Marketing, updated the Board as follows:
 - 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'. The blankets will be given out now through the Spring. To date, we have received \$30,000 of the \$60,000 grant. We expect to receive the remaining \$30,000 this month.
 - We have applied for the HARt Tourism Board grant for ~ \$289,000 to be used for direct paid advertising between the time periods of November 1-December 31, 2020.
 - We will also be applying for a Hart Engagement, service, and Resiliency activity grant for \$350,000 for an outdoor skating rink.
 - Upcoming holiday events:
 - PSNC light show will kick off this Saturday, November 21st at the Breakers
 - Christmas in Newport is happening this year, but on a smaller scale

VI. REGIONAL UPDATES:

- Warren- Meals tax is up over 2019, which they believe is due to moving quickly on giving out outside licenses. The annual Warren Walkabout was expanded to six Sundays. This will transition to a decoration contest for winter.
- Newport-DOT came to discuss strategy on outside dining (many restaurants use the streets for tables). Jeanne Marie Napolitano expects to be appointed major, and as such, will be stepping off the board. She will be appointing Charlie Holder from Midtown Restaurant to fulfill her remaining term.
- Middleton-A new Whiskey & Cigar bar is opening soon. Rick Lombardi informed the board that he will be stepping off the board and this is his last meeting. The Town Council will be appointing someone to fulfill his remaining term.
- Jamestown-Waiting on lights and heaters they ordered to distribute to restaurants.
- Portsmouth-Car Museum and Greenvale Vineyards have hosted many outside events. Transitioning to inside events, working on capacity issues.
- Bristol-Linden not to open for Christmas. Restaurants have had a good season, with larger restaurants faring better than smaller ones. Roger William University has done a good job with their students during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Tiverton-A new café has open in Four Corners-Groundswell Café and is doing brisk business. The Cheese Wheel, another Four Corners business, is expanding. Clarks Tree Farm is not opening for tree cutting this year due to a dry season. They will be opening their Christmas shop.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Jeanne Marie Napolitano and seconded by Rick Lombardi. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:10pm

The next Board Meeting will be held:

Zoom

Tuesday January 19, 2021

12pm