



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2021
Zoom Virtual
12pm**

The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Geremie Callaghan, Keith Chouinard, T.R. McGrath, Charlie Holder, Brad Read, Tom McNiff, Pamela Baldwin, Karen Binder, Rocky Kempenaar, Bob Rulli, Christine Klase, Andrew Moore, Elizabeth Buckley, Sean O'Connor, Jennifer Chapin, Missy Varao

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: N/a

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: Nancy Parker Wilson

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

STAFF EXCUSED: N/a

Member of the Public: None

I. PUBLIC COMMENT: N/a

II. NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

- a. The City of Newport has filled their three open seats as follows:
 - i. Charlie Holder, from Midtown Oyster Bar /City Council representative is replacing Mayor Jean Marie Napolitano seat, term expiring 9/30/22
 - ii. Sean O'Connor, from Newport Out.com, filling open seat, term expiring 9/30/22
 - iii. Jennifer Chapin, from Fort Adams, filling open seat, term expiring 9/30/22
- b. The Governance Chair, Keith Chouinard, presented their nomination, Dr. Melissa Vareo, from Salve Regina University, to the Board to fill the open Member of the Public seat, term expiring 9/30/24. Keith and Governance Committee had three strong candidates, conducted interviews of each and after careful consideration, chose Dr. Vareo. Keith made a motion to accept Dr. Vareo to fill the Member of the Public seat, seconded by Rocky Kempenaar. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for November were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Rocky Kempenaar. The motion passed unanimously, with Sean O'Connor, Jennifer Chapin and Missy Vareo abstaining.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for December was presented by Geremie Callaghan:

- For October bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +40% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +30% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +17% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of December was up 4019% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +178% as compared to budget. Total expenses were up +104% as compared to budget.

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

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Evan updated the Board on the following:

- PPP loan applications opened today. Discover Newport qualifies to apply under this round of funding. Alyson will be applying today on behalf of the company for the maximum amount we qualify for, which is ~ \$357,000. This will be used for payroll costs to ensure that the loan will be forgivable.
- The move to our new office at 44 Long Wharf Mall has been completed. We have 8 employees at our new location, and one employee is remote in SC.
- Update on the forecast for the remaining of FY21. While we had a strong first half of the year and exceeded our budget, we expect the second half of the year to be closer, if not under, our budget for bed taxes. With the vaccine rolling out, we expect calendar Q3 & Q4 to improve. Leisure travel is expected to return to pre-COVID in 2022, while Business travel is not expected to return to 2023/2024.
- We are looking at 10 different options for Visitor Services, more to come on these in the future. One of the options is to partner with Save the Bay and have a small presence at the Visitor Center. Save the Bay is in discussions with the City of Newport and the possibility for an aquarium in the Visitor Center location.

V. STAFFS UPDATE:

- Kathryn Farrington, VP of Marketing, updated the Board as follows:
 - We have received the HART Tourism Board grant for ~ \$249,000 to be used for direct paid advertising between the time periods of November 1-December 31, 2020. This was extended on December 29 until the end of February. This grant was used for the following advertising campaigns:
 - Newport Restaurant Week-November
 - Holiday Campaign-December
 - Winter Campaign-December-February
 - We will be issuing a press release on the newly elected Board members.
 - We will be creating a spring Newport Restaurant Week, April 9-18, 2021, again waiving the participation fee. Restaurants can provide their own offerings.
- Tim Walsh, VP of Sales, updated the Board as follows:
 - Calendar Q3 & Q4 we are hoping to see a pick-up in the small meetings market.
 - The sales team is staying in front of meeting planners, reminding them of how great our destination is. Competition will be fierce, with everyone fighting for what has been traditionally our bread and butter.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Bob Rulli and seconded by Christine Klause. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:55pm

The next Board Meeting will be held:

Zoom

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

12pm