



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday February 23, 2021
Zoom Virtual
12pm**

The meeting was called to order at 12:01pm 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, Rocky Kempenaar, Bob Rulli, Christine Klase, Andrew Moore, Elizabeth Buckley, Sean O'Connor, Jennifer Chapin, Missy Varao, Dennis Turano

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Karen Binder

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: Ryan Belmore from What's Up Newp

I. PUBLIC COMMENT: N/a

II. NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

The Town of Middletown has filled their open seats as follow:

- i. Dennis Turano, Town Council representative is replacing the seat vacated by Rick Lombardi, term expiring 9/30/22. Dennis also owns short term rental property.

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 Dennis Turano abstaining.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

- For November bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +15% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +21% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +21% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of January was up 527% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +52% as compared to budget. Total expenses were up +1% as compared to budget.

A motion to approve the treasurers report was made by Charlie Holder and seconded by Andrew Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Evan updated the Board on the following:

- We welcomed the Board to visit us at our new offices. We are 99% out of the Gateway Center. As of now, the Gateway Center still remains empty. Save the Bay is in conversation with the City to rent the first floor for their Aquarium, which is currently located at First Beach. The 2nd floor is available to rent as office space, which does not have to be to a travel & tourism company. We are trying to assist the City in renting the second floor of the Gateway Center.
- As previously mentioned to the Board, we have been exploring options for Visitor Services. After much research and monitoring the latest COVID forecasts, we have decided to open a pop-up Visitor Center on the first floor of the Long Wharf Mall from May-December 2021.
- Keeping our eye out on any new requirement that will affect meetings, weddings, special events, and any large gathering. These types of events may be required to hire a 'Covid officer' in order to have host said event. Something that started with good intentions, has snowballed to legal compliance and insurance issues. This is a complex issue on what exactly would the 'Covid officer' be responsible for, the training involved, liability issues, will guest be required to be tested, etc.
- The State Legislative is back in session. Some bills that have been submitted that affect our industry are as follows:
 - Brewing/winery sales limit
 - Short term rental tax structure
 - Tourism funding models (multiple bills)
 - Not all bills get enough steam to make it to the floor to be voted on. We will keep you posted on all bills that affect our industry.

V. STAFF/REGIONAL UPDATE:

- Kathryn Farrington, VP of Marketing, updated the Board as follows:
 - Spring Newport Restaurant Week, April 9-18, 2021, again waiving the participation fee. Restaurants can provide their own offerings.
 - Partnership with Newport Dine Out for a restaurant delivery service. There is no fee for restaurants to participate.
 - The second annual RI Hotel week, will be April 17-30, 2021, lodging properties to offer packages. We will help our lodging properties to develop packages with restaurants and attractions.
- Tim Walsh, VP of Sales, updated the Board as follows:
 - Gave an overview on the Sales department for the new Board members.
 - We have been receiving requests for proposals and have had new bookings from these proposals.
 - We will be hosting a virtual client event in March where we will be making chowder.
- Thomas McNiff, Jamestown:
 - Finalizing contract for Fireworks on July 3rd

VII. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Brad Read and seconded by Keith Chouinard. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:56pm

The next Board Meeting will be held:

Zoom

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

12pm