



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors
BureauDBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors
Meeting
Howard Johnson
321 W. Main Rd
Middletown, RI
Tues., Sept 21, 2021
12pm**

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Karen Binder, Geremie Callaghan, Jennifer Chapin, Keith Chouinard, Christine Francis, Charlie Holder, Rocky Kempenaar, T.R. McGrath, Tom McNiff, Sean O'Connor, Brad Read, Bob Rulli, Dennis Turano, Missy Varao, Nancy Parker Wilson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE:

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: Andrew Moore

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Evan Smith, Kathryn Farrington, Tim Walsh, Anna Duffy

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: Kajsa Kempenaar, Kempenaar Real Estate, Savannah Dunning, Newport Daily News

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** by Chairman T.R. McGrath at 12:01pm
- II. **PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:**
The previous meeting minutes for June 2021 were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Rocky Kempenaar and seconded by Jennifer Chapin. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**
The treasurer's report for August was presented by Geremie Callaghan:
 - For May bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +140% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +26% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +150% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of August was up 20% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +91% as compared to budget. Evan commented that these margins are so high due to the conservative budget set for this Covid year. Total expenses were underbudget by -36% as compared to budget.

- Geremie discussed increasing the reserve to \$1 million. Currently, the reserve is ~ \$371K and ~ \$397K in capital improvements. We are recommending closing the capital improvement account as it is felt with the move to 44 Long Wharf, it is no longer needed and to move those funds to the reserve account. The additional funds would come from the operating accounts. Management and the finance committee believe considering Covid, three months of operating reserves is the minimum number of reserves needed and was recommended by Sansiveri, Kimball & Co.LLP our auditors. This money will be moved to an investment account in the future. Discussion followed.

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

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT Evan updated the Board on the following:

- Evan thanked Rocky Kempenaar for hosting the meeting today at Howard Johnson by Wyndham. Rocky gave the board a brief history of his family business which began in 1958 and has evolved from one into four hotels: Howard Johnson by Wyndham, Residence Inn, Homewood Suites, Hampton Inns and Suites on the Middletown property. He described what the properties offer to groups and travelers and the various amenities offered to travelers. Rocky offered a tour of the venue to board members at the end of the meeting.
- Christine Francis the new Tiverton appointee was introduced by Evan.
- This is the last board meeting for Brad Read from Sail Newport and Nancy Parker Wilson from Greenvale Vineyards. Evan thanked them for their 6 years of service and many contributions to our organization. We are waiting for Barrington and Portsmouth to appoint new people to fill vacant seats. Evan will start the process of seeking nominations for the vacant "attractions" board seat.

V. STAFF/REGIONAL UPDATE:

- **Kathryn Farrington, VP of Marketing**, updated the Board on news and events in the Marketing department:
 - Our digital travel guide views are way up.
 - Newport Restaurant Week will be Nov. 5-11 and next April 1-10. Participation will be free, and coupon based. The annual Health Marketplace is not scheduled. Our popular Burger Bender contest will run from February 18-27, 2022.
- **Tim Walsh, VP of Sales**, updated the Board on upcoming events and news in the Sales department:
 - Several site inspections are ongoing by staff with companies/organizations looking to secure a location to host conferences in 2022 and 2023.
 - Pam Blauvelt was brought back on staff in the Sales department as a Destination Expert on August 16th. She will also be managing motor coach business.
 - David Tutera celebrity and event planner spoke at Castle Hill Inn to a group of over 75 event and wedding planners from all over the country. This was part of a three-day workshop, "The David Tutera Experience" for industry professionals.
- Sean O'Connor: spoke about the bridge realignment bike path.
- Tom McNiff: Jamestown
 - Simpatico Restaurant in Jamestown is for sale. The Jamestown Bridge tolls will be automatic very soon. Cash and credit cards will no longer be accepted. Drivers without an EZ Pass will be invoiced by RIPTA from camera footage of their license plate.

- Bob Rulli: Warren
 - A boutique hotel with 30-40 rooms is going in front of the old American Tourister building.
- Christine Francis: Tiverton
 - The Longplex complex is adding two new indoor ice-skating rinks.
 - Tiverton is planning to enforce stricter Airbnb requirements.
 - The casino has changed its name to Bally's of Tiverton
- Charlie Holder: Newport
 - Updated the board on the Audrain Newport Concours and Motor Week 9/30-10/3. Perry Mill Wharf plans, the Amory Sailing Hall of Fame, skatepark, and proposed Carousel demolition.
- Dennis Turano: Middletown
 - Updated the board on the Navy Lodge development. New track at Gaudet School, new tennis courts and new trails on Paradise Avenue.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Brad Read and seconded by Nancy Parker Wilson. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:15pm.

**The next Board
meeting will be held:
Tues. Oct. 19th
ITHOF
194 Bellevue Ave
Newport
12pm**