



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors
BureauDBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors
Meeting
Gurneys Resort &
Marina
1 Goat Island
Newport, RI
Tues., Nov 16, 2021
12pm**

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Geremie Callaghan, Jennifer Chapin, Keith Chouinard, Christine Francis, Matt Gray, Ann Hof, T.R. McGrath, Tom McNiff, John Nunes, Sean O'Connor, Bob Rulli

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Karen Binder, Charlie Holder, Rocky Kempenaar, Dennis Turano

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: Missy Varao, Andrew Moore

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Evan Smith, Tim Walsh, Alyson Adkins, Anna Duffy

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: N/A

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** by Chairman T.R. McGrath at 12:04pm
- II. **PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:**
The previous meeting minutes for October 19, 2021, were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Bob Rulli. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**
The treasurer's report for October was presented by Geremie Callaghan:
 - For August bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +63% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +56% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +87% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of October was up +318% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +65% as compared to budget. Total expenses were overbudget by +7% as compared to budget.

- Evan explained to the board the multiple reasons why these figures trended so high. Conservative budgeting during the development phase of the budget nine months ago and record setting room rate inflation occurring from May through October 2021 were the two primary reasons these figures trended so high.

A motion to approve the financial review was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Sean O'Connor. The motion passed unanimously.

- Approval of audit –Sansiveri, Kimball & Co., L.L.P. accounting firm's findings from our audit were: unmodified/clean opinion with no material deficiencies. We are required by the R.I. State charter to have a fiscal audit done annually. Public funds - full transparency and stewardship by the board. Copies are sent to the Governor, the RI Speaker of the House, our nine towns and are posted on our website. Discussion followed. A motion to accept the findings of the audit was made by Geremie Callaghan and seconded by Tom McNiff. The motion passed unanimously.
- Staff worked with the Finance committee to develop a revised budget to account for and allocate the additional funds generated by soaring room rate inflation. Evan and Geremie walked the board through the primary areas where the additional funds would be injected into the budget revision: increase in both leisure and convention advertising, video and film production costs, sponsorships and grants and adding two full time employees. Discussion followed.

A motion to approve the amended FY2022 budget was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Geremie Callaghan. The motion was unanimously approved.

IV. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:**

- Evan thanked Pamela Baldwin for hosting the meeting today at Gurney's Newport Resort and Marina. Pamela gave the board an overview of this hotel property.
- Our newly appointed board members are Ann Hof from Barrington and Matt Gray from Portsmouth.
- This is our last board meeting for 2021 as we do not meet in December. Our next board meeting will be on January 18, 2022.
- Evan reported on expected funding from the federal government coming to the state of RI from the EDA grant and the American Rescue Plan. There is no documentation with breakdown of plan to date.
- It has been one year since we moved out of the Gateway Center to Long Wharf Mall.
- Keith Chouinard of the Governance committee asked for a motion to appoint John Nunes from Newport Vineyards as the new attractions rep. Bob Rulli made a motion, Matt Grey seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. **STAFF/REGIONAL UPDATE:**

Tim Walsh, VP of Sales, updated the Board on upcoming events and news in the Sales department:

- Staff are doing site inspections with companies/organizations looking to find a location to host conferences in 2022 and beyond.
- A support person will be hired in the Sales Dept. to assist sales staff.

Sean O'Connor:

- Informed the board that bicycle rentals now available at Bike Newport on Broadway.
Hocus Pocus filming continues in Washington Square bringing curious fans to town to see the Sets and possibly spot a movie star.
- The Newport Playhouse Holiday performances will be at the Wyndham this year due to a flooding issue on Connell Highway.
- **Tom McNiff: Jamestown**
Simpatico Restaurant in Jamestown has sold.
The Jamestown Bridge toll booths on the bridge will be coming down soon now that tolls are automated. Drivers without an EZ Pass are invoiced from camera footage of their license plate.
A new wine and bookstore opened in town named Curiosity & Co.
- **Bob Rulli: Warren**
The Six Sunday Strolls featuring music, art, shopping, and food in Warren continues for the next two Sundays – Nov 21 & 28 from 12pm and 4pm.
Bob discussed the Storefront Improvement Program and Take It Outside Initiative from the state.
- **Matt Gray: Portsmouth**
Redevelopment of the Senior Center and school safety votes have passed.
A second coffee, Island Coffee Shop has opened.
Housing is improving in the community and on Island Park.
The Aquidneck Club House is undergoing renovation.
- **Tom McNiff: Jamestown**
December 4th the Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Holiday Stroll and Award for Best Holiday Décor.
Curiosity & Co. Is a new book and wine store.
- **Christine Francis: Tiverton**
The Four Corners shopping area will be staying open until 7pm on Fridays in December for holiday shopping convenience.
Short-term rental debate is still going on in Tiverton.
The Tree lighting in town will take place at the Pardon Grey Preserve on Dec. 21st.
- **Jennifer Chapin**
Newport Tree Lighting on Bowens Wharf will be December 4th at 4:30pm
Illuminated Boat Parade in Newport Harbor is November 26th at 6pm
- **Ann Hof: Barrington**
Phil Hervey has been appointed the new Town Manager in Barrington.
The Bike Path bridge construction continues.
New restaurant has opened named Thrive Tribe opened on Maple Ave.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Bob Rulli seconded by Keith Chouinard. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:14pm.

**The next Board
meeting will be held:
Tues. Jan. 18, 2022
TBD
12pm**