



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tues. January 17, 2023
Audrain Motorsport
256 Maple Ave.
Newport, RI
12PM**

The meeting was called to order at 12:10pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Keith Chouinard, Peter Connerton, Christine Francis, Gillian Friedman Fox, Matt Gray, Charlie Holder, TR McGrath, Tom McNiff, Andrew Moore, John Nunes, Missy Varao

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Karen Binder, Patrick Fitzgerald, Ann Hof, Rocky Kempenaar, Sean O'Connor

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Evan Smith, Anna Duffy, Alyson Adkins, Kathryn Farrington, Alex Hurd, Tim Walsh

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: None

I. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairman T.R. McGrath introduced Sean McDonald from Audrain Motorsport. He reviewed the furnishings of Vanderbilt Room at this location, including a Vincent Black Shadow vintage motorcycle. Several pieces have been donated or acquired at auction from the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in NYC. He went on to speak about memberships and the site being available for function rental. Along with the Audrain Museum on Bellevue Ave., there are new acquisitions including the Sailing Museum, Wally's Wieners, food and club trucks and expansion of the brewery.

II. NEW BOARD MEMBER:

The town of Middletown has filled their open seat as follows:

Peter Connerton, Middletown representative is replacing the seat vacated by Dennis Turano. Peter is a member of the Middletown Town Council and retired Chief of the Newport Fire Dept.

III. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for November 15th were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Andrew Moore and seconded by Charlie Holder. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for November was presented by Pamela Baldwin:

For October bed taxes, the City of Newport was down-6% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +12% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was down -5% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of December was up +22% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +22% as compared to budget. Total expenses are underbudget by -10%. Discussion followed. Year-to-date bed taxes were down by -1% as compared to budget, with total revenue flat to budget. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Missy Varao and seconded by Andrew Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

V. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Evan Smith updated the Board on the following:

- Evan welcomed Peter Connerton to the board.
- Evan congratulated Gillian on the birth of her daughter and welcomed her back.
- We are halfway through our fiscal year. Mid-term is looking very good. Travel for this summer is expected to be very good.
- RIDOT is making changes to ease congestion caused by the reconstruction of the Pell Bridge ramps, to improve traffic flows through the project. The \$74 million Pell Bridge Ramps Phase 2 project is rebuilding the road network connecting to the Pell Bridge to make travel into Newport easy and safe. It includes a new efficient ramp system that will reduce congestion, especially the backup of vehicles on the bridge from the Downtown Newport exit and improve the connection between Newport's North End and the downtown area.
- Evan thanked the Audrain Autosport staff for hosting our meeting today and encouraged board members to take a tour of the facility after the meeting.
- *The Ocean Race 2022-23* started two days ago in Alicante, Spain. Considered sailing's greatest round-the-world challenge. Newport, RI is the only North American stopover of the race from May 13-21.
- Tall Ships America, the national governing body of the tall ships will be in Newport celebrating the organization's 50th Anniversary at the Newport Marriott from Feb. 7-9.

VI. STAFF/REGIONAL UPDATES:

Tim Walsh, VP of Sales, updated the Board as follows:

- The Sales department has been working with motor coach and international markets anticipating both being busier this year.
- Sales staff has been branding our trade show booth by offering delicious New England chowder. It has been very successful.

Kathryn Farrington, VP of Marketing, updated the Board as follows:

- Media is coming in droves to report on our destination and events. If anyone is not receiving our E-blasts, please let us know.
- The January Marketing Meeting will be held tomorrow at 11am at Innovate Newport 513 Broadway for our industry partners.
- Francesca Donlan is attending the International Media Marketplace conference in NYC next week.
- We are co-oping a booth with South County Tourism 1/28-1/29 at the Javits Center in NYC for the *New York Times Travel and Adventure Show*.
- After a two-year hiatus, the 35th Anniversary of Winterfest runs 2/17-2/26, during February school vacation week. Offering over 150 events over 10 days including: the chili cook-off, concerts, hot drink contest and polo on the beach. During this time, Discover Newport's "Burger Bender Contest" runs with over 42 restaurants participating and 56 restaurants featuring beef and non-beef unique creations.
- The Spring Restaurant Week will run from April 14-23.
- The following board members gave brief updates about their respective townships: Christine Francis-Tiverton, Charlie Holder – Newport. Discussion followed.

VII. GOVERNANCE:

- Evan spoke briefly on our status as a public organization with not-for-profit status. Legislation requires that anytime language that relates to General Law Title 42 Chapter 105 reference in our bylaws can only be changed by the State via a bill. Discover Newport Board may change any other aspect of our bylaws, but must have a 3/4 quorum. Evan and Alyson worked with Bob Goldberg, Esq, to update our current bylaws as it has been 15 years since the last revision. We are also looking to make changes to the State law that governs us. The draft that you received for the changes has been reviewed and approved by the governance committee. The changes in the bylaws that reference State law, will only be updated after it becomes laws. Discussion followed. A motion was made by Christine Francis to amend the bylaws as presented and to request Rep. Lauren Carson present a bill for changes to Title 42 Chapter 105. The motion was seconded by Gillian Friedman Fox and passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn was made by Andrew Moore and seconded by Charlie Holder. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:07pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be held:
March 21, 2023
TBA**