



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
DBA Discover Newport  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tues. March 21, 2023  
Seamen's Church Institute  
18 Market Square  
Newport, RI  
12PM**

The meeting was called to order at 12:05pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Keith Chouinard, Peter Connerton, Keri Cronin, Patrick Fitzgerald, Gillian Friedman Fox, Matt Gray, Ann Hof, Rocky Kempenaar, TR McGrath, Tom McNiff, Andrew Moore, Sean O'Connor, Missy Varao

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Karen Binder, Charlie Holder, John Nunes  
BOARD MEMBER ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED:

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

MEMBER(S) OF THE PUBLIC: N/A

GUESTS: Renee Jones – Tiverton Economic Development Commission  
Carroll Webb, Chef Matt Reilly, and Erin Kenney – Rogers H.S. Culinary Dept.  
Dale Venturini, President and Sarah Hutchinson, Intern - RI Hospitality Association

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Chairman T.R. McGrath introduced Ann Souder, Executive Director at Seamen's Church Institute of Newport. Ann gave a brief history of the organization and landmark building which is the only original structure still in use for its original purposes on Market Square for the last 104 years.  
Renee Jones from the Tiverton Economic Development Commission updated the board on news and future upcoming events in her town.  
Today's lunch was prepared by the Rogers H.S. Culinary Department students. Currently, there are 120 students in the program. Chef Matt Reilly spoke about the program, Carroll Webb – Hospitality/Tourism and Erin Kenny— Front of House instructors explained their roles in preparing their students to work in this field. The restaurant at the school is open to the public from 10:30am - 12pm on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

**II. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:**

The previous meeting minutes for January 17<sup>th</sup> were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Matt Gray and seconded by Rocky Kempenaar. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

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

For December bed taxes, the City of Newport was down -17% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +21% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was -up +28% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of February was up +24% as compared to budget, with total revenue down -4% as compared to budget. Total expenses are under budget by -24%. 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 Gillian Friedman Fox and seconded by Matt Gray. The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW:**

Dale Venturini, President of Rhode Island Hospitality Association gave a presentation to the board about the various legislative bills being debated at the state house that could affect the hospitality industry. The purpose of her briefing was educational, and no position was taken to support or oppose any specific bills. Board members had a chance to ask Dale questions to gain a fuller understanding of the potential outcome of many of the bills introduced.

**V. STAFF/REGIONAL UPDATES:**

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

- Tim brought the board up to date on upcoming projects and events which the Sale Department is currently working on.
- The town of Warren has filled their open seat as follows: Keri Cronin, Warren representative is replacing the seat vacated by Bob Rulli. Erin is a 3rd term council member, owner of *DISH*, women's clothing store on Water St. and actively involved with Discover Warren.
- The following board members gave brief updates about their respective townships: Sean O'Connor–Newport, Ann Hof – Barrington, Keri Cronin – Warren, Matt Gray – Portsmouth, Peter Connerton – Middletown, Andrew Moore – Little Compton, Tom McNiff – Jamestown. Discussion followed.

**VI. GOVERNANCE:**

Evan Smith informed the board that RI State, Rep. Lauren Carson presented a bill on March 17<sup>th</sup> to amend the bylaws as approved by our board regarding Title 42 Chapter 105. 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. It now must go through the RI Senate for approval.

- VII. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn was made by Peter Connerton and seconded by Patrick Fitzgerald. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:13pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be held:**

**May 16, 2023**

**TBA**