



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
DBA Discover Newport  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tues. May 16, 2023  
Norman Bird Sanctuary  
583 Third Beach Road  
Middletown, RI  
12PM**

The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: N/A

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED: N/A

MEMBER(S) OF THE PUBLIC: N/A

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

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Chairman T.R. McGrath introduced our host Kaity Ryan, Executive Director of the Norman Bird Sanctuary. She gave the board a brief history of the non-profit environmental education center which has over 300-acres including walking trails, many events, and activities available for all ages to enjoy and is open 363 days a year. Kaity offered the board a tour of the restored historical Paradise Farmhouse which has 6 bedrooms and provides overnight accommodation for guests participating in multi-day programs and conferences at the Sanctuary.

**II. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:**

The previous meeting minutes for March 21<sup>st</sup> were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Sean O'Connor and seconded by Tom McNiff. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

The treasurer's report for April was presented by Pamela Baldwin: For February bed taxes, the City of Newport was down -19% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was down -1% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was down -12% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of April was up +71% as compared to budget, with total revenue down -6 as compared to budget. Total expenses are flat as compared to the budget. Year-to-date bed taxes were down by -1% as compared to budget, with total revenue flat to budget. Discussion followed. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by John Nunes and seconded by Matt Gray. The motion passed unanimously.

Pamela reminded the Board that a vote to approve the 2024 budget must be taken at the June 20th meeting. FY begins on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Alyson will be sending out the FY2024 budget later in the week for the Board's review, please send questions in advance to TR, Pamela, Evan, or Alyson.

**IV. NEWPORT TOURISM MARKETING MANAGEMENT DISTRICT UPDATE:**

Evan Smith asked the board for a vote to appoint Derek Shelly, GM of the Hotel Viking to the 9-member NTMMA board filling the seat vacated by Mary Desrosiers after her relocation to South Carolina. Discussion followed. Keith Chouinard made a motion to approve Derek's appointment to the board which was seconded by Sean O'Connor. The motion passed unanimously.

**V. STAFF/REGIONAL UPDATES:**

- Tim Walsh, V.P. of Sales brought the board up to date on the following: Discover New England annual summit was held in Boston (3/29-3/31). Eighteen attendee tour operators from Europe came to Newport (4/1-4/3) before leaving the U.S. and were hosted by our sales department with very promising future potential.
- Kathryn Farrington, V.P. of Marketing brought the board up to date on the following: the 2023 Destination Guides have been delivered from our printer, the marketing meeting May 24<sup>th</sup> at the Colony house. Steven Feinberg, Executive Director of RI Film and TV Office will be the speaker. The "Ocean Race" events are taking place now at Ft. Adams. This is a major marquee event in sailing. The Discover Newport blog has the most current information. The boats are departing on 5/21 for the Netherlands. The Newport cruise ship schedule for 2023 is posted on our website.
- The following board members gave brief updates about their respective townships: Karen Binder – Bristol, Sean O'Connor– Newport, Jillian Friedman Fox (Newport), Ann Hof – Barrington, Keri Cronin – Warren, Matt Gray – Portsmouth, Patrick Fitzgerald – Newport, Peter Connerton – Middletown, Andrew Moore – Little Compton, Tom McNiff – Jamestown, John Nunes – Middletown, Keith Chouinard – Portsmouth, Charlie Holder – Newport, Rocky Kempenaar – Middletown, Missy Varao – Newport. Discussion followed.

**VI. PRESIDENTS REPORT:**

Evan Smith updated the board on bills under consideration by the RI state legislature in June. There are currently multiple bills affecting (STR's) short-term rental property. Discussion followed.

The Bellevue Trolley - RIPTA Route 67 bus will be sponsored again this year by Discover Newport offering free rides from May 26-October 31<sup>st</sup>. Riders may park at the Transportation Center for \$5/day if they ride the #67 trolley.

Evan introduced our new board member Meredith Brower, representing the Town of Tiverton. She is replacing the seat vacated by Christine Francis. Meredith is the Director of the Tiverton Farmers Market, a professional photographer, graphic designer, and eco-artist.

- VII. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn was made by Peter Connerton and seconded by Rocky Kempenaar. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:15pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be held:  
Innovate Newport  
513 Broadway  
Newport, RI  
June 20, 2023  
TBA**