



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
DBA Discover Newport  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, March 19, 2024  
Hotel Viking  
One Bellevue Ave.  
Newport, RI  
12PM**

The meeting was called to order at 12:02pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Stephan Brigidi, Meredith Brower, Peter Connerton, Keri Cronin, Patrick Fitzgerald, Gillian Friedman Fox, Matt Gray, Charlie Holder, Rocky Kempenaar, Marla Romash, TR McGrath, Andrew Moore, John Nunes, Sean O'Connor, Marla Romash, Missy Varao

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Ann Hof

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED: N/A

MEMBER(S) OF THE PUBLIC: Savana Dunning – Newport Daily News

GUESTS: Bob Goldberg, Esq., and Rep. Lauren Carson (D) RI District 75.

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

**I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:**

The previous meeting minutes for January 23, 2024, were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes with edits was made by Rocky Kempenaar and seconded by Peter Connerton.

**II. 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 +9% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +3% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of February was up +11% as compared to budget, with total revenue down -8% as compared to budget. Total expenses were over budget by +8%. Year-to-date bed taxes were down -6% as compared to budget, with total revenue also down -6% to budget. Total expenses were under budget by 4%. Discussion followed. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Matt Gray. The motion passed unanimously.

**III. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:**

A summary document of all the hospitality related bills introduced in the state general assembly was distributed to all board members. Evan reviewed some of the bills which he thought potentially could have the most

significant impacts (positive & negative) on our industry. Three of the bills Evan highlighted were a proposed increase in the Newport cruise ship tax, a proposed new “attraction tax” and a proposed 2.5% increase in the local lodging tax for Newport only. The current local lodging tax is 1% statewide. Evan explained the political process about how bills get hearings in the house and senate. House Rep Lauren Carson (Newport) attended the board meeting and commented on a few of the bills she introduced. Evan asked the board if anyone wanted to make a motion to support or oppose any bills reviewed. No motions were brought forward.

- IV. SALES & MARKETING UPDATES:** None given in the interest of time.
  
- V. BOARD MEMBER UPDATES:** The following board members gave brief updates: Stephan Brigidi – Bristol, Keri Cronin – Warren, Gillian Friedman Fox – Newport, Matt Gray – Portsmouth, Peter Connerton – Middletown, Charlie Holder – Newport, Rocky Kempenaar – Middletown, John Nunes – Middletown, Marla Romash – Jamestown, Meredith Brower – Tiverton. Discussion followed.
  
- VI. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sean O’Connor and seconded by Peter Connerton. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:24 pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be on:  
May 21, 2024**