



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Sardella's Restaurant
30 Memorial Blvd.
Newport, RI
3PM**

The meeting was called to order at 3:08pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Stephan Brigidi, Meredith Brower, Keith Chouinard, Peter Connerton, Keri Cronin, Patrick Fitzgerald, Gillian Friedman Fox, Matt Gray, Charlie Holder, TR McGrath, Andrew Moore, Sean O'Connor, Marla Romash

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Ann Hof, Rocky Kempenaar, John Nunes, Missy Varao
BOARD MEMBER ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED: N/A
MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: N/A

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

WELCOME: Patrick Fitzgerald, Managing Partner of Sardella's, welcomed the board and spoke on the 45-year history of the restaurant and many changes over the years. He introduced Marlen Oliveira, Events Manager since January of this year. She reviewed details on room capacities, menu options for hosting a variety of events including rehearsal dinners, corporate events, bridal showers, anniversaries and birthday gatherings.

- I. **PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** The September 17th meeting minutes were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes with edits was made by Sean O'Connor and seconded by Peter Connerton. The motion passed unanimously.

- II. **TREASURER'S REPORT:**
The treasurer's report for was presented by Alyson Adkins: For August bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +17% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up+12% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +7% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of October was up +7% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +15% as compared to budget. Total expenses were under budget by -4%. Year-to-date bed taxes were up +10% as compared to budget, with total revenue also up+10% 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 Keri Cronin. The motion passed unanimously.

III. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - FIRST READING:

Bristol board rep Stephan Brigidi is seeking support to have our board adopt a land acknowledgement as a gesture of respect paying tribute to our local indigenous tribes and their contributions as stewards of RI lands and waters for more than 10,000 years. A draft statement was circulated. Discussion followed. Evan Smith will follow up with the State to seek guidance. Updates to follow at the January 2025 board meeting.

IV. PRESIDENTS REPORT

- a.) Evan reviewed for the board two reports from The RI Department of Revenue: March 2024 RI 1% local hotel tax report and RI monthly Meal and Beverage Report YTD.
- b.) Evan then informed the Board that the Climate Resilience Offsets organization asked for endorsement for their fundraising efforts, which are for infrastructure improvements in Newport and other areas. They would like to have a support link/banner ad on our website. Discussion followed. Evan will send the board further information, request tabled.

V. SALES & MARKETING UPDATES:

Kathryn Farrington, V.P. of Marketing brought the board up to date on the following:

- The Visitors Center had a very busy Summer and Fall season.
- Our always popular 2025 desk calendars have arrived from the printer.
- We've had an influx of international media visits this year.
- We work with the following media agencies: MMGY, Zimmerman/Commerce RI and Brand USA
- Newport Restaurant Week ran last week with over 60 participating restaurants. The feedback from participating restaurants throughout our nine coastal communities has been very positive.
- The "*Day In Series*" which the marketing department is filming in all our 9 towns and may be viewed on the Municipalities section of the Discover Newport website. Filming begins in Tiverton tomorrow. <https://www.discovernewport.org/blog/post/>
- Julie Grant, Digital Marketing Manager is currently working on our "12 Days of Christmas Give-Away" for the holiday season.

Tim Walsh, V.P. of Sales brought the board up to date on the following:

- Tim noted the different markets the sales department is pursuing; Trade Shows: Susan -IMEX Las Vegas corporate travel, Alex – FICP -Financial & Insurance Planners, Tim and Alex – Helms Brisco tour operators -3rd party planners, Pam – NTA -Motor Coach, client events, Meeting planner trade show – Pamela - Client SMART \Meetings trade shows on-on-one appointments, networking.
- Discover New England is planning its annual meeting in April 2025.

VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMUNITY UPDATES: The following board members gave brief updates:

Stephan Brigidi – Bristol, Keri Cronin – Warren, Gillian Friedman Fox – Newport, Peter Connerton – Middletown, Ann Hof – Barrington, Patrick Fitzgerald – Newport, Sean O'Connor – Newport, John Nunes – Middletown, Meredith Brower – Tiverton. Discussion followed.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by and seconded by. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:21 pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be on:
January 21, 2025
TBD**