



ATTACHMENT A

Newport and Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting
September 16, 2025
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Newport and Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau board of directors was convened at 12:04 p.m. on September 16, 2025. The meeting was held at the Preservation Society of Newport County. A quorum was present.

Board Members Present:

CHAIR Keith Chouinard, Chief Operating Officer, The Newport Experience
(Represents: Hotels – Less than 100 Rooms)

TREASURER Matt Gray, President, Ragged Island Brewing Co. *(Appointed by: Town of Portsmouth)*

SECRETARY Stephan Brigidi, President, Bristol Workshops *(Appointed by: Town of Bristol)*

Joanna Arrighie, Director of Hotel Sales, Newport Marriott *(Represents: Hotels – More than 100 rooms)*

Rebecca Bertrand, Executive Director, Newport Historical Society *(Appointed by: City of Newport)*

Meredith Brower, Owner/Operator, Firefly Mandalas and Meredith Brower Photography
(Appointed by: Town of Tiverton)

Peter Connerton, Middletown Town Council Liaison *(Appointed by: Town of Middletown)*

Keri Cronin, Owner, DISH/Warren Town Council Liaison *(Appointed by: Town of Warren)*

Patrick Fitzgerald, Owner, Sardella's Italian Restaurant *(Represents: Restaurants)*
(Appointed by: City of Newport)

Ann Hof, Director of Membership & Special Events, Rhode Island Marine Trades Association
(Appointed by: Town of Barrington)

Kajsa Kempenaar, Vice President, Kempenaar Real Estates, Inc. *(Appointed by: Town of Middletown)*

John Nunes, Owner, Newport Vineyards *(Represents: Attractions)*

Sean O'Connor, Executive Director, The Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation, Inc. and Co-Owner,
Newport OUT *(Appointed by: City of Newport)*

Marla Romash, Owner, Our Table *(Appointed by: Town of Jamestown)*

Staff Members Present:

Victoria Cimino, President and CEO

Alyson Adkins, Vice President of Finance & Human Resources

Pamela Blauvelt, National Account Executive

Susan Carlson, National Account Executive

Clara Crawford, Marketing Coordinator

Anna Duffy, Senior Executive Assistant

Cassandra Earle, Communications Director

Claudia Evora, Sales Logistics Administrator

Kathryn Farrington, Vice President of Marketing

Julie Grant, Senior Digital Marketing Manager

Alex Hurd, Director of Sales

Natalie Manning, Creative Director
Tim Walsh, Vice President of Sales

I. Call to Order

- Keith Chouinard called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.
 - Chouinard initiated Roll Call

II. Public Comment

- No public comments were presented

III. Luxury Traveler Insights: Trends and Motivations – Katie Briscoe, CEO, MMGY

- Luxury For All: Democratization & Demographic Shifts
 - Over a third of travelers now identify as luxury consumers, signaling a willingness to invest in premium vacation experiences
- Innovation and Convenience: The Engine of Modern Luxury
 - AI/tech elevates, but 68% of U.S. travelers say hotel concierges are more knowledgeable than online sources
- Behavioral Shifts: New Patterns in Premium Travel
 - Spending on experience-based luxury continues to accelerate; premium air travel continues to be a nonnegotiable luxury
- Purpose-Driven Journeys: Driving Luxury's Revolution
 - Gen Z and Millennials seek unique experiences rooted in self-expression
- Brand Expectations: Loyalty, Identity & Emotional ROI
 - Luxury travelers expect brands to anticipate, not react

IV. News and Notes

- Updates included:
 - Stephan Brigidi
 - PorchFest was a success; discussed unveiling of Bristol Middle Passage sculpture
 - Peter Connerton
 - Middletown Town Council meeting to feature Town Center development
 - Keri Cronin
 - The Town of Warren will hold a National Women's Small Business Month event on October 9
 - Marla Romash
 - Complemented the marketing communications team on its social media coverage throughout the summer season

V. Minutes

- Chouinard requested a motion to approve June 17, 2025, meeting minutes
 - Joanna Arrighie motioned
 - Romash provided a second
 - All were in favor

VI. Chair Report

- Welcome New Directors
 - Kajsa Kempenaar, Vice President, Kempenaar Real Estates, Inc.
 - Middletown appointee
 - Kevin O'Leary, Director of Marketing, Preservation Society of Newport County
 - Middletown appointee
- Noted the creation of the Tourism Improvement District Committee
 - Arrighie will serve as chair

VII. Treasurer's Report

- Matt Gray shared June, July, and August 2025 financials
 - June 2025
 - June 2025 revenues were ~ \$329K – under budget by ~ \$7K
 - Hotel tax receipts (§ 44-18-36.1-April) totaled ~ \$291K, under budget by ~ \$24K
 - Private source revenue was ~ \$38K, over budget by ~ \$17K
 - Due to timing of trade show industry participation
 - June 2025 expenses were ~ \$561K, over budget ~ \$70K
 - Marketing expenses were ~ \$201K, under budget by ~ \$19k
 - Due to timing of advertising
 - Sales activities were ~ \$188K, over budget by ~ \$34K
 - Additional trade shows were added
 - Visitor Center expenses were ~ \$17K, over budget by ~ \$2K
 - Administrative expenses were \$135K, over budget by ~ \$54K
 - Legal fees were ~ \$17K-general corporate/ethic commission review
 - Accrued \$30K for settlement with F Donlan
 - Allocated costs were ~ \$20K, under budget by ~ \$1K
 - June unbudgeted-investment return, net was ~ \$43K gain
 - FY25 Activity
 - Fiscal 2025 revenues were ~ \$5.8M- over budget by \$345K
 - Hotel tax receipts (§ 44-18-36.1) totaled ~ \$5.5M, over budget by ~ \$333K
 - Private source revenue was \$295K, over budget by ~ \$12K
 - Fiscal 2025 expenses were ~ \$5.9M - over budget by ~ \$166K
 - Marketing expenses were ~ \$3.1M, over budget by ~ \$79k
 - Revenues have outperformed budget and dollars were shifted to increase broadcast advertising
 - Sales activities were ~ \$1.5M, over budget by ~ \$24K
 - Visitor Center expenses were \$117K, under budget by ~ \$4K
 - Administrative expenses were ~ \$908K, over budget by \$63K
 - Allocated expenses were ~ \$257K, over budget by \$3K
 - Fiscal 2025 unbudgeted-gain \$1.1M
 - Investment return, net was ~ \$176K gain
 - Donation from the Tourism Improvement District (TID) under Newport Tourism Marketing Management Authority ~ \$900K

- July 2025
 - July 2025 revenues were ~ \$528K – over budget by ~ \$59K
 - Hotel tax receipts (§ 44-18-36.1-May) totaled ~ \$454K, over budget by ~ \$40K
 - Private source revenue was ~ \$19K, over budget by ~ \$600
 - Tourism improvement district revenue was~ \$55K, over budget by ~ \$18K
 - July 2025 expenses were ~ \$400K, over budget by ~ \$6K
 - Marketing & Communications expenses were ~ \$24K, over budget by ~ \$2k
 - Sales activities were ~ \$17K, under budget by ~ \$1K
 - Product Development & Community/Government Relations expenses were ~ \$54K, over budget by \$5K
 - Sponsorships-Newport Film, Tennis Hall of Fame, International Boat Show, East Bay Chamber of Commerce, & Gold Star Sailing deposit
 - Visitor Center expenses were ~ \$7K, over budget by ~ \$7K
 - New brochure racks that we anticipated to be a FY 25 expense did not arrive until after 6/30 and are a FY 26 expense
 - Administrative expenses were \$36K, under budget by ~ \$3K
 - Allocated costs were ~ \$20K, under budget by ~ \$1K
 - Personnel Costs were ~ \$217K, under budget by ~ \$2K
 - Tourism improvement district expenses were ~ \$24K, under budget by ~ \$1K
 - July unbudgeted-investment return, net was ~ \$6K gain
- August 2025
 - August 2025 revenues were ~ \$869K – over budget by ~ \$70K
 - Hotel tax receipts (§ 44-18-36.1-June) totaled ~ \$786K, over budget by ~ \$52K
 - Private source revenue was ~ \$21K, over budget by ~ \$4K
 - Tourism improvement district revenue was~ \$62K, over budget by ~ \$15K
 - August 2025 expenses were ~ \$406K, over budget by ~ \$9K
 - Marketing & Communications expenses were ~ \$28K, over budget by ~ \$100
 - Sales activities were ~ \$61K, over budget by ~ \$13K
 - Trade shows – over budget by ~ \$7K, enhanced Connect Marketplace trade show participation
 - Advertising – over budget by ~ \$6K due to timing
 - Product Development & Community/Government Relations expenses were ~ \$52K, over budget by \$15K
 - Visitor Center expenses were ~ \$2K, over budget by ~ \$2K
 - Due to timing of printed collateral
 - Administrative expenses were \$80K, under budget by ~ \$21K
 - Due to timing of Ad ROI/Economic Impact payments
 - Allocated costs were ~ \$21K, over budget by ~ \$200
 - Personnel costs were ~ \$148K, under budget by ~ \$1K
 - Tourism improvement district expenses were ~ \$13K, over budget by ~ \$400
 - August unbudgeted, was ~ \$60K gain
 - Investment return, net was ~ \$41K gain
 - Gain on sale of the Rav 4 was ~\$19K

- FY26 YTD
 - Fiscal 2026 YTD revenues were ~ \$1.4M- over budget by \$129K
 - Hotel tax receipts (§ 44-18-36.1) totaled ~ \$1.2M, over budget by ~ \$92K
 - Private source revenue was \$40K, over budget by ~ \$4K
 - Tourism improvement district revenue was~ \$117K, over budget by ~ \$32K
 - Fiscal 2026 YTD expenses were ~ \$805K- over budget by ~ \$15K
 - Marketing & Communications expenses were ~ \$51K, over budget by ~ \$2k
 - Sales activities were ~ \$79K, over budget by ~ \$12K
 - Product Development & Community/Government Relations expenses were ~ \$106K, over budget by \$20K
 - Visitor Center expenses were \$9K, over budget by ~ \$9K
 - Administrative expenses were ~ \$116K, under budget by \$24K
 - Allocated costs were ~ \$41K, under budget by \$1K
 - Personnel costs were ~ \$365K, under budget by ~ \$3K
 - Tourism improvement district expenses were ~ \$37K, under budget by ~ \$1K
 - Fiscal year 2026 YTD unbudgeted, was ~ \$66K
 - Investment return, net was ~ \$47K gain
 - Gain on sale of the Rav 4 was ~\$19K
- Cash on Hand and Investments
 - Discover Newport has ~ \$2.65M in Bank Newport for operations and ~\$900K for the TID
 - Accounts payable liability and accrued expenses on August 31 were \$221K, leaving ~ \$1.6M cash on hand for operations
 - Discover Newport has ~ \$2.3M in investments with Charles Schwab, \$1.1M for operations & \$1.1M board designated expenditures
- Hotel Tax - June activity
 - June hotel tax revenue increased by ~\$52k or 7% year-over-year
 - ~ \$786k in 2025 versus ~ \$734K in 2024
- Tourism Improvement District Assessment – July activity
 - Assessment revenue increased by ~\$7K or 13% year-over-year
 - ~\$60K in 2025 versus \$53K in 2024
- FYTD Hotel Tax
 - 97% of hotel tax revenue is derived from Newport & Middletown
 - 3% is derived from the other 7 towns
- Chouinard requested a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report
 - Brigidi motioned
 - Patrick Fitzgerald provided a second
 - All were in favor

VIII. President and CEO Report

- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
 - July STR Report (measures hotel performance)
 - Occupancy
 - 2025 = 80.3%
 - 2024 = 79.4%
 - 1% increase YOY

- Average Daily Rate (ADR)
 - 2025 = \$388
 - 2024 = \$387
 - 0.26% decrease YOY
- Demand/Rooms Sold
 - 2025 = 89,169
 - 2024 = 89,520
 - 0.39% decrease YOY
- Revenue
 - 2025 = \$35.8M
 - 2024 = \$35M
 - 2.3% increase YOY
- Marketing/Public Relations/Sales Program
 - Marketing
 - Target Markets: Hartford, Boston, NYC, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Providence
 - Target Demographics: Female, 35-60 years old, Household income \$250K+
 - June Advertising (\$42K Budget)
 - Comcast: On demand streaming
 - September Advertising
 - Shoulder season advertising began earlier this year
 - Comcast, WGBH, Connecticut Public Television
 - On demand streaming linear television, email, and digital display
 - Top Social Posts
 - Sakonnet Garden
 - July: The Classic Coast
 - Gilded Age
 - Newport Car Museum
 - Influencer Marketing
 - June – August Familiarization (FAM) Tours
 - Mawra Osman @TheCityLists
 - KateWeiser @BucketListBoston
 - AlainaPinto @AlainaPinto
 - @CurlsAndCuisines
 - Resulted in:
 - Seven posts
 - 317K+ views
 - 19K+ interactions
 - Public Relations – June Earned Media
 - Global Impressions: 903M
 - Placements: 19
 - Coverage includes:
 - *Travel + Leisure*
 - *Vogue*
 - *Town & Country*
 - June Journalist FAMs
 - Majo Guzman, *Haper's Bazaar Mexico*
 - Omar Moreno, *E! Universal*
 - Alejandra Guzman, *MOI*
 - Tamara Santillan, *Elle Mexico*

- Public Relations – July Earned Media
 - Global Impressions: 270M
 - Placements: 25
 - Coverage includes:
 - *Afar*
 - *Washington Post*
 - msn
- July Journalist FAMs
 - Jacob Wycoff, CBS Boston
 - Meagan Kolkmann, CBS Boston
- Public Relations – August Earned Media
 - Global Impressions: 181M
 - Placements: 56
 - Coverage:
 - TODAY
 - *The Knot*
 - *Conde Nast*
- August Journalist FAMs
 - Kevin West, *Travel + Leisure*
 - Rachel Chang, Freelance
 - Alexia Dellner, Pure Wow
- Upcoming Journalist FAMs
 - Lily Alt, *Good Housekeeping*
 - Catherine Parker, msn and *USA Today*
 - JoAnn Greco, *AAA Mid-Atlantic*
 - Geoff Hill, *The Irish News*
 - Simon Copeland, *The Sun* (UK)
- Sales: June – August Performance
 - Trade Shows and Events
 - CVENT Connect
 - Boston Client Event
 - IPW
 - Financial & Insurance Conference Professionals Education Summit
 - Meeting Planner Luncheon
 - Washington, D.C. CVB Reps Summer Client Event
 - CSI DMC Client Event
 - CONNECT Marketplace
 - Meetings & Incentives Worldwide
 - Retreat Resources Northeast Roadshow
 - Site Inspections
 - Discover New England Brazilian FAM Tour
 - Olympic International Tour Group
 - National Motor Freight Traffic Associates
 - New England Council on Crime & Delinquency
 - MCIC Vermont
 - Boston Consulting Group
 - Veeva Systems
 - Paylocity – Prestige
 - University of Kentucky – Analytic Summit
 - Intoxilyzer Group – Meeting Connections
 - New England Laborers Labor Management Corp.
 - Retreat Resources

- June booked/new business leads
 - Booked business: 9 pieces of business; 1,999 room nights
 - Leads: 30 leads issued, representing ~6,900 room nights
- July booked/new business leads
 - Booked business: 25 pieces of business; 2,153 room nights
 - Leads: 36 leads issued, representing ~7,600 room nights
- August booked/new business leads
 - Booked business: 13 pieces of business; 1,575 room nights
 - Leads: 28 leads issued, representing ~4,600 room nights
- Tourism Improvement District (TID) Update
 - Cimino provided background on the creation of the Voluntary TID
 - The former TID board is now a standing committee under Discover Newport
 - Core responsibilities
 - Review annual budgets
 - Set sales and marketing priorities
 - Recommend and collaborate on promotional initiatives
 - Consistent meeting schedule
 - Six times a year
 - Strategic alignment
 - Fully integrated with Discover Newport's marketing efforts
- Strategic Planning Update
 - Coraggio Group has begun strategic planning work; board immersion sessions take place the week of September 22
- Ad Effectiveness/Return on Investment (ROI) Study Update
 - Longwoods has begun work on determining Discover Newport's advertising effectiveness
 - Marketing team has provided creative, media flight schedules, and buy details
- Resident Sentiment Study Update
 - Listening Sessions:
 - Bristol (October 9 @ 11 a.m.)
 - Jamestown (October 9 @ 6:30 p.m.)
 - Newport (October 10 @ 11 a.m.)

IX. Old Business

- Brigidi shared thoughts on funds appropriated to the Warwick Providence Convention and Visitors Bureau; discussion followed

X. New Business

- None presented

XI. Adjournment

- Chouinard requested a motion to adjourn
 - Romash motioned
 - Connerton provided a second
 - All were in favor
- Meeting adjourned
- The next meeting will take place on November 18, 2025