



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Hampton Inn & Suites
317 West Main Road.
Middletown, RI
12PM**

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

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE: Pamela Baldwin, Stephan Brigidi, Meredith Brower, Keith Chouinard, Peter Connerton, Keri Cronin, Gillian Friedman Fox, Matt Gray, Ann Hoff, Rocky Kempenaar, John Nunes, T.R. McGrath, Sean O'Connor, Marla Romash, Missy Varao

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Patrick Fitzgerald, Charlie Holder, Andrew Moore

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED: N/A

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: Brewer Rowe – COO and Tournament Director - International Tennis Hall of Fame

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

WELCOME: Rocky Kempenaar, President/Owner of Kempenaar Real Estates, Inc. welcomed the board to the Hampton Inn & Suites location in Middletown. He offered board members and staff a tour of the newly renovated rooms at the conclusion of the meeting. He spoke about the development history of his Middletown properties and many updates and renovations to the hotels since Howard Johnson opened for business in 1969. He reviewed the hotel's guest amenities including connecting rooms, restaurant, free parking and WIFI, fitness center, indoor pool and conference rooms.

- I. **PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** November 19, 2024, meeting minutes were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Gillian Friedman Fox and seconded by Rocky Kempenaar. The motion passed unanimously.
- II. **TREASURER REPORT:**
Pamela Baldwin presented the treasurer's report: For October bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +23% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was flat as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +7% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of December was +17% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +16% as compared to budget. Total expenses were over budget by 3%. Year-to-date bed taxes were up +9% as compared to budget, with total revenue also up +9% to budget. Total expenses were over budget by 3%. Discussion followed. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Keith Chouinard and seconded by Peter Connerton. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. **INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – SECOND 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. After consideration and discussion, the board will table this until a later date.

IV. SALES & MARKETING UPDATES:

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

- The Visitors Center will be open during Winter Festival 2/14-2/23. Beginning in March the Visitor Center will be open Friday thru Sunday.
- The monthly marketing Meeting will be at 11am tomorrow at Rosecliff.
- Our robust Winter advertising schedule has launched to feature Burger Bender, Spring, and prelude to Summer. We are advertising now during the shoulder season focusing on midweek reservations.
- Newport Burger Bender promotion returns February 14-25th with Newport and Bristol County participating restaurants vying for “Best Burger” contest awards in three categories: beef, non-beef and plant-based creations by the chefs featuring some of the most delicious, and creative combination burgers.
- The 37th Annual Newport Winter Festival is February 14th – 25th which coincides with MA/RI school vacation week. There are numerous events for all including live music, magic, foodie contests and kid-centric activities. www.newportwinterfestival.com
- Kathryn Farrington and board member Pamela Baldwin will be representing Discover Newport at the Holiday Travel Show 1/23 – 1/26 in Dublin. Anna Duffy will be representing Discover Newport 1/24-1/25 with staff from Commerce RI and South County Tourism at the NY Travel and Adventure Show in NYC.
- Discover Newport will receive the award for best social media/Instagram account from RI Hospitality at their awards dinner on 1/25, all thanks to our Digital Media Manager, Julie Grant’s hard work and talent. President and CEO Evan Smith will receive with the Chairman’s Award for 35 years at Discover Newport.

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

- PCMA New York Chapter – Professional Convention Management Association – Feb 27, 2025
- NECVB Reps – Northeast Convention & Visitors Bureau Reps – NY Client Luncheon – Feb 28, 2025
- Meet York – New York Society of Association Executives Tradeshow and Client Event – Feb 28, 2025
- A new lodging property, Island House – Newport is opening at 37 Memorial Blvd on March 17th.
- Discover New England ‘s annual meeting will be held at the Newport Harbor Island Resort, April 7-9. Their closing reception will be April 8th at Rosecliff.

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

Stephan Brigidi – Bristol, Keri Cronin – Warren, Gillian Friedman Fox – Newport, Peter Connerton – Middletown, Sean O’Connor – Newport, Meredith Brower – Tiverton. Discussion followed.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: 1:06pm

VII. ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by and seconded by. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:33pm.

The next Board Meeting will be on:

**March 18, 2025
Newport Vineyards
909 E. Main Road
Middletown, RI
12pm**