



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau  
DBA Discover Newport  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Tuesday, March 18, 2025  
Newport Vineyards  
909 E. Main Road  
Middletown, RI  
12PM**

The meeting was called to order at 12:09pm by T.R. McGrath, Board Chair

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

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Missy Varao, Andrew Moore

BOARD MEMBER ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED: N/A

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: N/A

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

WELCOME: John Nunes, Sr. Partner/Owner, Vintner and Brewmaster welcomed the board to Newport Vineyards. He gave a history of the business which he and his brother Paul began in 1995. The current vineyard property has undergone renovations over the years with 100 acres of farmland and expansions including the 30,000 sq. ft. building with three commercial kitchens, two restaurants and a gift shop. They have perfected their portfolio of wines and craft beer and are now one of Newport County's most sought-after venues for weddings, corporate events and various functions year-round.

- I. **PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** January 21st meeting minutes were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes with edits was made by Peter Connerton and seconded by Gillian Friedman Fox. The motion passed unanimously.
- II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** N/A
- III. **FINANCE REPORT:**  
The treasurer's report was presented by Pamela Baldwin: For December bed taxes, the City of Newport was down -20% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was down -7% as compared to budget,

and Bristol County was down -11% as compared to budget. Total private revenue for the month of December was +2% as compared to budget, with total revenue down -14% as compared to budget. Total expenses were over budget by 29%. Year-to-date bed taxes were up +9% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +8% to budget. Total expenses were over budget by 3%. Discussion followed. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Stephan Brigidi and seconded by Rocky Kempenaar. The motion passed unanimously. Board Chairman TR McGrath thanked Pamela Baldwin for her tenure as Treasurer and for serving as interim CEO.

**IV. INTRODUCTION OF NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO:**

Board Chairman TR McGrath introduced Victoria Cimino our incoming President and CEO as of March 17. She thanked staff for the warm welcome she received and will reach out to each board member to set up individual meetings within the next few weeks.

Jamestown rep. Marla Romash has invited the board to her restaurant: Our Table, 13 Narragansett Ave. for a meet and greet with Vicki on Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:30pm.

**V. SALES & MARKETING UPDATES:**

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

- The Visitor's Center is open Friday through Sunday beginning March.
- Brick Alley Pub is the winner of the Burger Bender promotion which ran from 2/14 - 2/26!
- Kathryn informed the board of the cruise ship scheduled this Summer/Fall in Newport. Discussion followed.
- The March Marketing Meeting will be held at 11am on 3/23 at Newport Craft Brewing & Distilling Co. The April Marketing Meeting will be held at 11am on 4/23 at Newport Pickleball Club
- Cassandra Earle, Communications Director reported on the following: media familiarization tours and our agency MMGY We have joined Tourism Cares, a nonprofit organization that inspires the travel industry to create positive social, environmental, and economic impact for communities around the globe. It offers events, tools, resources, and programs to advance sustainability and meaningful travel within the industry.
- Tim Walsh, V.P. of Sales brought the board up to date on the following:
  - Destination International CEO forum is next week in Savannah, GA. Don Welsh, President and CEO of Destinations International, the global trade association for convention and visitors bureaus and tourism boards will be honoring Evan Smith with an award.
  - The DNE closing event at Rosecliff was well received by all attendees.
  - Canadian travel plans are changing daily.

**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, Sean O'Connor – Newport, Meredith Brower – Tiverton. Discussion followed.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Peter Connerton and seconded by Charlie Holder. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:48pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be on:  
May 20, 2025  
Newport Marriott  
25 America's Cup Ave.  
Newport, RI**