



**Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau
DBA Discover Newport
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, January 16, 2018
Newport Marriott
25 America's Cup Ave.
Newport, RI
12:00pm**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by Chairman Brewer Rowe

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Karen Binder, Marco Camacho, Kristine Cox, Katie Dickson, John Edick, Matt Gineo, Christine Klase, Duncan Maio, T R McGrath, Brad Read, Paul Rodrigues, Brewer Rowe, Frank Sallee, Nancy Parker Wilson, Elizabeth Woodhouse, Ryan Yalanis,

*Kathleen Seguin - via telecom (unable to cast votes)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE:

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE: Matt Plumb

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Evan Smith, Cathy Morrison, Anna Duffy

NOTE: Our host, Ryan Yalanis, Director of Sales at the Marriott welcomed to board to the Main Sail Restaurant.

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for November 2017 were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Marco Camacho and seconded by Kristine Cox. The motion passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT: There were no comments from the public.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

- a. The finance committee met on 1/10. The treasurer's report for December 2017 was presented by Matt Gineo. For October bed taxes, the City of Newport was up +9% as compared to budget, Newport County (excluding City of Newport) was up +9% as compared to budget, and Bristol County was up +26 % as compared to budget. Private revenue for the month of December was down -4% as compared to budget, with total revenue up +7% compared to budget. Total expenses were underbudget by 3%. For YTD, total bed taxes are up +3% as compared to budget, total revenue is up +2% to budget, and total expenses are underbudget by 5%. Matt then reviewed the revenue and expenses for October. Discussion followed. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report for December 2017 was made by TR McGrath and seconded by Rusty Sallee. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Change of Fiscal Year - Evan discussed the potential of changing our fiscal year from April 1st to begin on July 1st as all 9 municipalities and the State of RI does. A motion to amend By-law (6.1) to reflect the FY date change taking effect on 7/1/18 was made by Frank Sallee and seconded by Paul Rodrigues. The motion passed unanimously. The new by-law language will be file with the State. The staff is presently working on a planned for budget beginning April 1st and an interim budget to reflect the 3-month gap.

IV. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

- Evan congratulated the board on an exceptional 2017 for our industry partners. Travel experts are predicting solid numbers for tourism and travel in 2018.
- The newly formed Newport Tourism Marketing Management District assessment was implemented on 1/1/18. Evan reviewed the creation of by-laws, board officer elections, appointment of (2) seats by the City and (7) seats from lodging property (over 20 rooms) representatives. These board members will make all decisions on how the collected funds are spent to promote tourism in the district.
- Airbnb dilemma - Evan briefed the board on the current challenges our organization faces from Airbnb. In 2016, when Airbnb & the State signed a taxation agreement the legislature developed a new formula on how that tax revenue would be distributed. The tourism districts were not included in the new formula. This has created a significant problem for Discover Newport since we cannot include these lodging properties in our marketing programs, as we derive no income from them. Evan encouraged the board to give thought and consideration to asking our elected officials about potentially submitting new legislation to have the tax revenue generated by hosting platforms like Airbnb utilize the original formula of tax distribution which includes the tourism districts. The board discussed the issue but took no action at this time.

V. STAFF REPORTS: none given in the interest of time

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

- Community updates for 2018 were given by board appointees for all nine towns.
- Burger Bender contest and the Newport Winter Festival dates are February 16-25.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:30pm

**The next Board Meeting will be held
Tuesday, February 20, 2018
Gateway Center
23 America's Cup Ave.
Newport, RI
12pm**