

**NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2005**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting began at 12:20 p.m.

IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Chairwoman Councilperson Jeanne-Marie Napolitano, Jerry Harrington, Gail Alofsin, Don Desrosiers, Richard Sardella, Mark Stenning and Councilperson Charles Vaillancourt

STAFF PRESENT WERE:

Evan Smith, Debbie Gatta, Kathryn Farrington, Susan Pratt, Anne Marie McLaughlin and Mary Ann Kelly

GUESTS PRESENT:

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Mark Stenning and seconded by Jerry Harrington. The motion passed unanimously.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Jerry Harrington read the treasurer's report. City Tax was down 6.88% and Regional Tax was down 4.20% for a combined decrease of 6.30%. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Richard Sardella and seconded by Gail Alofsin. The motion passed unanimously.

III. STAFF REPORTS:

Each Staff Report will now reflect the figures of the previous month's activity.

A. CONVENTION & TOURISM:

Susan Pratt, Senior Sales Coordinator gave a presentation of the 10th Annual Educational Summer FAM Tour to be held in Newport on July

31st-August 2nd. U.S. Airways will be the airline partner. So far eighty-one meeting planners have applied to attend. Thirty-five will be chosen to participate. All of the events that the meeting planners will attend have been donated by the Newport hospitality industry. Hosting properties include the Newport Marriott, Hyatt Regency, Hotel Viking, Vanderbilt Hall and Newport Harbor Hotel.

Martha, Tim, and Anne are in Miami, Florida promoting Newport for the MPI World Education Conference.

The bureau's new web site – yourNewportwedding.com, which is collaboration between our sales and marketing departments, will be launched in mid August.

B. MARKETING:

Anne Marie McLaughlin, Communications Coordinator, gave a presentation on her public relations' activities. Most recently, in the middle of June, Anne Marie hosted 20 travel writers from the Northeast chapter of the Society of American Travel Writers. Four articles have already come in as a result of the June 12th and 13th event. Anne Marie also passed around many recent articles written on Newport and explained the process that takes place before these articles are written.

The Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau received 5

proposals for redoing the bureau's destination video. Perspectives of Middletown, Rhode Island will be notified that they have been awarded the contract.

The Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau received 3 proposals (from The Newport Daily News, America House, and Rhode Island Monthly) to create a meetings directory. The bureau does this directory every 2 years in partnership with the Providence/Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau. A recommendation should be made after all proposals are reviewed by both the Newport and Providence/Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureaus.

C. OPERATIONS:

RIPTA's Board of Directors has revived funding necessary to redo the bathrooms in the visitor's center. The contract has been awarded and they should start the first phase soon. Porto Johns will be used outside starting in August. The general manager of the Newport Marriott will be invited to construction meetings with RIPTA.

A new ticket system has been put in place downstairs.

MEDIA LEADS:

The Weather Channel, Taste of America, Travel Channel, The View, Boater's Digest, The Meeting Professional

MEDIA PLACEMENTS:

Men's Journal, Meetings East, Yankee, Boston Globe, New York Daily News, The Jewish Exponent

INFORMATION CENTER:

The total number of visitors to the Information Center for June was 120,351, down 5.64% from last June. The total number of visitors to the Information Center for the year was 238,820, down 16.22% compared to last year at this same time. The main source of visitors still comes from the New England states.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Three options regarding the bureau's Community Grant Criteria were presented to the board. Councilperson Jeanne-Marie Napolitano made a motion to choose Option #3. It was seconded by Richard Sardella and passed unanimously.

The state legislature passed Bill S-0193. Our new 15 member board will take place September 1st. Newport will have 3 seats; 2 of which

will come from the hospitality industry. Middletown will have 3 seats; 2 of which will come from the hospitality industry. The other 4 townships will each have 1 seat which should come from the hospitality industry. All of the seats should be residents of Newport County. These ten people will convene to select five more seats (1 hotel over 100 rooms, 1 lodging establishment under 50 rooms, 1 attraction, 1 restaurant and 1 member of the public).

Bill S-466 is a new bill that has passed the Senate and is now in the House. It is a bill which defines the creation of a new statewide Tourism Development Advisory Council. Evan felt that if passed, it would affect the future of this organization.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

At the last meeting the board approved \$11,980.00 for Community Grants leaving a balance of \$2,520.00 not distributed. Richard Sardella made a motion to give \$1,500.00 to Tall Ships 2007. It was seconded by Jerry Harrington and passed unanimously. Richard Sardella made a motion to give the Newport Performing Arts Center \$500.00. It was seconded by Gail Alofsin and passed unanimously. Councilperson Charles Vaillancourt made a motion to escrow the remaining balance of \$520.00. It was seconded by Richard Sardella and passed unanimously.

There was a call to Executive Session to discuss Evan's employment

contract. Evan was praised by board members for the excellent job he has done as interim president. Richard Sardella made a motion to offer Evan a three year contract to be prepared by Attorney Christopher Behan and given final approval prior to August 18, 2005. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Charles Vaillancourt and passed unanimously.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, September 13, 2005 at 12:00 noon.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.