

**NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2005**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting began at 12:04 p.m. Chairwoman Councilperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and asked the new board members to introduce themselves.

IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Chairwoman Councilperson Jeanne-Marie Napolitano, Donna Kohler, Len Panaggio, Susan Samson, Mark Stenning, Councilperson Charles Vaillancourt and Katie Wilkinson

STAFF PRESENT WERE:

Evan Smith, Cathy Morrison, Debbie Gatta, Martha Sheridan, Kathryn Farrington, and Mary Ann Kelly

GUESTS PRESENT:

Jeff Miller

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

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

II. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Evan Smith read the treasurer's report. City Tax was down 0.80% and Regional Tax was up 2.51% for a combined growth of -0.01%. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Councilperson Charles Vaillancourt and seconded by Mark Stenning. The motion passed unanimously.

III. STAFF REPORTS:

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

A. CONVENTION & TOURISM:

Martha Sheridan, Vice President Sales, introduced herself and explained that her area of responsibility is to manage all of the direct sales efforts that the bureau undertakes whether it's for groups on the leisure side, meetings, conventions, or individual travelers. Her department works mostly out of state promoting Newport County as a meeting destination to groups and leisure travelers. The way that they measure their efforts in sales is very numerical. They set goals, bench mark and try to attain those goals by booking overnight guests in hotel rooms. Two other ways to analyze the effectiveness of the sales team is by two different online surveys. One is a post survey for meeting planners that have recently held their event in Newport County. The second survey is a lead survey. This survey is sent to anyone who has utilized our services to disseminate a lead for their particular meeting or conference. These two surveys help us determine if our sales managers are doing an effective job.

To generate more winter business, the sales department has developed a promotion where they are offering some added value for meeting planners if they meet between November 15th and April 15th at one of the participating hotels. They will receive a free welcome reception for up to 100 people at the hotel plus an upgraded guest room and an amenities package.

Martha invited existing and new board members to attend a luncheon on November 15, 2005, at the Capital Grille in Boston. Her sales

department will be hosting this event in partnership with Amtrak. Pre qualified meeting planners will be invited to attend. Newport County based businesses will also be invited to join them and exhibit at a pre-luncheon function. Transportation will be provided for any board member who would like to attend.

B. MARKETING:

Kathryn Farrington, Director of Marketing and Community Partnerships, introduced herself and discussed her area of responsibility. Kathryn mentioned that she is in the process of hiring a new Advertising and Special Projects Manager. Besides herself, there are two other people in her department. Anne Marie McLaughlin is the Communications Manager and Jan Hagerstrom is in charge of Web Development and Research. She gave an overview of the marketing department and the advertising involved. Kathryn explained the media review that Anne Marie McLaughlin compiles each month. It lists the different media articles about Newport County and the equivalent cost in advertising dollars if these spaces were purchased as ads. Kathryn passed around some of the most recent articles written by both domestic and international writers about Newport County.

The marketing department hosts many media FAMS and is grateful to Newport County industries which offer complimentary hotels,

restaurants and attractions. Next week the marketing department is hosting approximately 15 writers from NATJA (North American Travel Journalist Association). These travel and life style journalists will be coming into Newport for an editor's retreat on November 26-29th.

The marketing department receives many requests from location scouts looking for movie locations. Next Monday and Tuesday the TV series, Brotherhood, will be filming at the Seaview Motel in Middletown and at the Hill Mart. The marketing department also receives many requests from photographers looking for locations for photo shoots.

The Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau's new DVD and video will be out in November. Perspectives of Middletown has been chosen to produce the DVD and video, which will showcase all of Newport County. Our web site will also be having a new look. It will be more efficient, clearer and our advertisers will have more space.

The next Marketing Meeting will be October 12th at Oceancliff.

C. OPERATIONS:

Cathy Morrison, Vice President Operations, introduced herself and explained her area of responsibility. The Visitors Bureau welcomes over a million visitors each year. Cathy has a staff of between 15 and

20 people. This time of year she starts to lose the college students who worked just for the summer. September and October will be very busy this year due to the cruise ships and bus tours that arrive on a daily basis. It is especially difficult this year because of renovations to the restrooms. The women's restroom is doubling in size, the men's restroom is being renovated and the bus station is getting a total facelift. Cathy has been working very closely with RIPTA and Ned Draper from the city of Newport on this project.

The new mural wall has been completed in the Visitors Bureau. They are also in the process of updating their room availability board to a digital board.

This past year the NCCVB hosted the first conference of managers of convention and visitors bureaus from throughout New England. Cathy was elected the chairperson of the New England Visitors Centers Association.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Evan read a letter from Anita Rafael thanking the staff at the NCCVB (both upstairs and downstairs) for their help and hard work with the Secret Garden Tour.

Chairwoman Councilperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano asked board

members to review the list of candidates for the last five seats on the board. Board members may add names to the list of applicants. They must be residents of Newport County.

Councilperson Charles Vaillancourt made a motion to reappoint Councilperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano as chairwoman of the board. It was seconded by Mark Stenning and passed unanimously.

Board members received an article regarding the demolition of the Jamestown Bridge in their folders. Jeanne Marie and Evan Smith met with Ed Parker and he told them he would notify them of any bridge closures during the demolition.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business discussed.

VI. ADJOURNAMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mark Stenning and seconded by Len Panaggio. It passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.