

**NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2005**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting began at 8:10 a.m.

IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Gail Alofsin, J. Clement Cicilline, Councilperson Jeanne-Marie Napolitano, Richard Sardella, Mark Stenning, Charles Vaillancourt, and Jerry Harrington.

STAFF PRESENT WERE:

Evan Smith, Cathy Morrison, Kathryn Farrington, Debbie Gatta and Marie Puerini

GUESTS PRESENT:

Bruce Long, and Chris Behan

I. ELECTIONS:

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. by Jerry Harrington, Treasurer. Mr. Harrington asked for nominations for chairperson to replace Rep. Paul Crowley. Mark Stenning nominated Jeanne Marie Napolitano for interim chairperson. Gail Alofsin seconded the nomination, and it was passed unanimously.

II. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

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

III. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Jerry Harrington read the treasurer's report. City Tax was up 4.28% and Regional Tax was up 6.80% for a combined growth of 4.89%. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Mark Stenning and seconded by Councilperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. STAFF REPORTS:

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

IVa. CONVENTION & TOURISM by MARTHA SHERIDAN

Martha presented her Winter Promotion, with 6 Hotels participating, the Connecticut River Valley Education Day, usually held in Connecticut, involving the Viking and the Hyatt, the MPI New York Chapter Wine Event, and the Boston Sales Mission, starting with a pre-blitz Phonathon at Salve Regina on February 15th.

Bookings were down compared to last year and the number of room nights was up for December. As for the number of leads they have gone up and the wedding leads were up compared to last year's numbers. The main source of leads is still the internet.

Business booked for December was from numerous organizations resulting in 2376 total room nights with an economic impact of \$96,672.00

The number of Tour Operator leads was up compared to last year's numbers in December. The number of room nights was up compared to last year at this time. Travel agent leads are down compared to last year in December.

IVb. MARKETING:

Numerous meetings and activities took place in December. The NCCVB Marketing Meeting was held at the Marriott Hotel on

December 9th. 240 people attended.

Print media placements received for December was equivalent to \$50,900.00 in advertising costs.

Evan is finalizing an agreement with a Reservation Service called Webervations for our website.

Evan asked the board if a creative agency from Massachusetts could be considered for an ad project. The Board approved the concept.

There are also ads in many and varied magazines supporting our Winter Getaway. A giveaway calendar has been developed and is quite unique.

A TV segment on the CBS Morning Show was shown, advertising Newport, Sedona and other wonderful destinations.

IVc. OPERATIONS BY CATHY MORRISON

Cathy Morrison talked about the plans for the new rest rooms attached to RIPTA. The existing bathrooms will be closed completely, and port-a-johns will be put up temporarily. If there is an excess in the \$400,000.00 grant money provided for this construction, our HVAC System will be upgraded. This would greatly help our budget if it happens. RIPTA will be responsible for the exterior area, sidewalks,

etc.

PRESS INQUIRIES

: R.I. Monthly

VISITING MEDIA:

ABC 6, The Food Network, CBS Early Show

MISCELLANEOUS: PUBLICATIONS/EDITORIALS DISTRIBUTION:

Travel & Leisure, Boston Herald, Canadian Sailings, National Geographic Traveler, AAA Going Places, Mass. Hi Tech, Celebrations, Monroe County Clarion, La Jolla Today, San Diego Community Newspaper Group, Montreal Jewish Magazine, AAA Car and Travel

INFORMATION CENTER:

The total number of visitors to the Information Center for December was 16,138, up 7.59% from last December. The total number of visitors to the Information Center for the year was 955,229, up 12.32% compared to last year at this same time. The main source of visitors still comes from the New England states.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

Charles Vaillancourt was welcomed as a new member of the Board.

Evan is on the Board of the Chamber of Commerce. Meeting times are conflicting, so discussion was held regarding changing the meeting time of the NCCVB Board.

The Board voted to change meeting dates to the first Tuesday of every other month.

According to Chris Behan, new legislation may be passed pertaining to those able to serve as Board Members. Because of separation of powers, there are currently only 8 members on the Board of Directors. Legislation dictates there must be 13 on the Board. He also thinks that the appointments to the Board may have to be made by the Governor, and that this Board does not have the power to appoint to the Board, and that new legislation is needed that complies with the constitutional amendment.

Staff is working on 2005/2006 budget. Growth next year should be about 4% over this year, according to researchers.

The Finance Committee needs to review the 2005 budget asap, so it can then be reviewed and passed by the Board. A meeting time will be decided upon, and Evan will get in touch with all regarding the

date.

There will be a Finance Committee meeting in early February to discuss surplus expenditures.

The next board meeting will be held at a date to be announced.

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

Evan directed discussion regarding potential budget surplus:

Budget is 4% ahead currently. He will know if there is excess by 2/15/2005. If so, Evan outlined the way surplus could be spent

- 1. Incentive for staff**
- 2. Improvement to existing Mural wall.**
- 3. Advertising Dollars**

Highest priority, according to Evan, is to award staff for top notch performance throughout the year. His proposal is that it should be used as incentive, as their incentive compensation had been removed from the budget in 2001.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 A.M.