

**NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2006**

**MEETING MINUTES:**

**The meeting was called to order at 8:05 a.m.**

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:**

**Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt, Treasurer Mark Stenning, Gregory Fater, Lisa Gross, Rocky Kempenaar, Donna Olney Kohler, Karen Oakley, Len Panaggio, Pieter Roos, Susan Samson, Laurie Stroll, Harlan Tyler and Katie Wilkinson**

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED WERE:**

**Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano and Brian Moore**

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT WERE:**

**STAFF PRESENT WERE:**

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

## **I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:**

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

## **II. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

**The treasurer's report was read by Mark Stenning. City Tax was down 16.95% and Regional Tax was up 26.50% for a combined growth of -8.58%. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Katie Wilkinson and seconded by Donna Olney Kohler. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **III. STAFF REPORTS:**

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

## **A. CONVENTION & TOURISM:**

**Kathryn presented for Martha who was downstairs with her staff getting ready for the Governor's Luncheon today at the State House. Today Martha will be kicking off her new Ambassador Program. Flyers on the program were passed out to board members. Today awards will be given out at the luncheon to ambassadors who have brought meetings to Newport County. At 10:30 a.m. today in Newport there will be a press conference announcing the line up of the JVC Jazz and the Dunkin Donut Folk Festivals. Martha arrived at the end of Kathryn's presentation and gave each board member a starfish pin, the symbol for the Ambassadors Program.**

## **B. MARKETING:**

**This past weekend Newport County took part in Tour Rhode Island. This is a statewide initiative that was spear headed by Bob Billington about three years ago. The chairperson was Gov. Carcieri and his wife. Donna Olney Kohler stated for the record that Jamestown would like to do more to move forward than just the visit to Watson Farm. The new 2006 Visitor Information Maps are at the center. The map sponsors are RIPTA, The International Tennis Hall of Fame and Newport Grand. An ad has been taken out in Budget Travel, in conjunction with an email blast at the end of the month, for Girlfriend's Getaway. This is marketing's busy season and they have had a flurry of travel journalists. Next week is the Newport Spring Boat Show. Their sponsor is ABC 6 and they are bringing in their**

culinary celebrity, “Mr. Food”, who with Chef Robert Dougherty will demonstrate meals to cook on a boat.

### **C. OPERATIONS:**

Cathy Morrison met with the Facilities Committee and they did a “walk through” of about a third of the building. There are several projects coming together at this time. The Visitors Center is installing wireless internet connection for their traveling visitors. It should be done by the end of May. Anchor Bend Glass is giving the Visitors Center a beautiful piece of art that will look like it is suspended in mid air above the first floor information circle. The city of Newport and the Visitors Center are sharing the cost for paving the entrance way from the parking lot to the building. There are new stone planters. Bids are coming in for planting. The flowers should be planted by Memorial Day. The parking garage is now managed by Moy Works. There are also new outside display windows being installed by Memorial Day. The backlit panels have been repositioned downstairs. Cathy asked the Facilities Committee to come in again because she would like to discuss redoing the second floor bathrooms that are twenty years old.

### **D. PRESIDENT’S REPORT:**

Evan told board members that today’s luncheon, that Martha and her staff have been working so hard on, is hosted in the Governor’s

chambers at the Rhode Island State House and is very impressive. There are over fifty Rhode Island meeting planners coming to the luncheon today and over fifteen Newport County exhibitors. Four people will be honored and recognized today with our new starfish award for bringing meetings to Newport County. Evan explained that we recognize these people so that others will see the importance of bringing meetings to this area. The World Heritage Conference was held in Newport. There was a real spirit of cooperation among the non profits at the conference. Pieter Roos was one of the key members of that alliance. To get Newport inscribed as a World Heritage site would give the city an edge with the international marketing community. This coming Thursday, Friday and Saturday the New England Governors Conference is being held in Newport. The NCCVB has been working with the governor's office on tours for the governors and their spouses. The Providence/Newport Ferry starts May 15th. Next Tuesday, May 16th, is the second demolition of the Jamestown Bridge. Next week is National Tourism Week. The Tourism Luncheon is Monday, May 15th at the Rhode Island Convention Center. Evan congratulated Donna Olney Kohler on her appointment to Executive Director of the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce. Next Tuesday, May 16th, is the Marketing Meeting at 11:00 a.m. at the Newport Yachting Center. Evan gave all board members a copy of Robert's Rules of Order.

#### **IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

## **A. SALES AND MARKETING:**

**Lisa Gross reported that the Sales and Marketing Committee met on May 1st. The committee reviewed two different database collection management software programs that other CVB's use. Additional research is needed. They also began discussion on research of trends in travel and demographics to use in creating a ten year plan for the center. They previewed the Program of Work for this year and the wedding brochure.**

## **B. FACILITIES:**

**Len Panaggio and Charles Vaillancourt toured a portion of the building. They discussed a couple of improvements that could be made regarding safety. They look forward to a continued tour before they begin some projects. They were impressed with all that takes place at the Visitors Center.**

## **C. FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES:**

**Evan received a letter from John Rodman of the Preservation Society of Newport County regarding the CVB commission. In the letter Mr. Rodman stated that they will be making a counter offer.**

## **D. BY-LAWS COMMITTEE:**

**Len Panaggio reported that the By-Laws were finalized and copies had been sent to board members for approval. Len made a motion that the By-Laws be accepted. It was seconded by Laurie Stroll and passed unanimously. Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt thanked the By-Laws Committee for their hard work and the time spent working on the by-laws. Their next task is to work on legislation regarding staggered terms on the board.**

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Several letters have been received with additional requests for marketing support grants. The letters will be referred to the Finance Committee for their recommendations.**

#### **VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Harlan Tyler made a motion to open the Executive Session. It was seconded by Pieter Roos and passed unanimously.**

#### **VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:58 a.m.**