

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) and Committees met in Public Session on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 via phone. The meeting was also broadcasted to the public on YouTube.

Members Present: Mr. Joseph B. Wilkinson Jr., Chairman  
Mr. Bob Krueger, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Bill Gross, Secretary/Treasurer  
Commissioner Mark Williams  
Dr. Buster Evans  
Mr. Dale Atkins  
Ms. Joy Burch-Meeks

Members Absent: Mr. Trip Tollison  
Mr. Glen Willard

Key Staff Present: Michael Scott, Director of Historic Resources  
Andrea Marroquin, Museum Curator  
Noel Jensen, Chief Operations Officer  
Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources  
Alexa Orndoff, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel  
Jones Hooks, Executive Director  
Marjorie Johnson, Chief Accounting Officer  
Nancy Kring Rowan, Event Operations Manager  
Michelle Webb, Executive Assistant

Mr. Krueger chaired the meeting, as Mr. Wilkinson participated via phone. Various members of the public, staff, and press listed online.

There were four public comments, which were read into the record by name and topic as follows:

1. Steve Smith – Golf Master Plan
2. Skip Adamson – Appraisal of 5 Hayes Ave
3. Mindy Egan – Noteworthy Improvements to the Island
4. Michael Parker - Amphitheater

## **I. Historic Preservation/Conservation Committee**

A. Michael Scott, Director of Historic Preservation and Andrea Marroquin, Museum Curator gave the presentation on Faith Chapel's Bourne Memorial Tiffany Windows. Celebrating the centennial anniversary of the windows, the Historic Preservation Department gave a presentation on the history of the windows to the Board and outline the activities available. The windows were commissioned in memory of the former head of the Jekyll Island Club, Frederick Gilbert Bourne. He and several other club members were friends of Tiffany, who visited the island several times and even came out of retirement to oversee portions of the windows' progress. Mr. Scott noted that the island had been very lucky the piece has survived, due to the dangers of island storms. With the financial support of the Friends of Historic Jekyll Island, the Authority was able to consult with Neal Vogel, a stained-glass conservator and expert, to update them on the status and needs of the windows. Ms. Marroquin concluded that the department was now in the process of

evaluating the next steps for the Tiffany window repair and restoration project. Mr. Scott continued by stating that they were working on celebration events and activities for the window centennial.

There were no public comments.

## **II. Finance Committee**

A. Mr. Bill Gross, Finance Committee Chair, summarized the March financials. Revenues for the month \$104,000 more than budgeted. Year to date revenues reflect a favorable \$1.4 million variance and an unfavorable \$1.7 million variance from prior year to date revenue. Parking fees and the Convention Center had the largest variance from budget. The campground continues to perform better than budgeted. McCormick's Grill closed permanently on March 1<sup>st</sup> and was therefore less than budgeted. Expenses for the month were \$315,000 less than budgeted. The largest expense variances were from Human Resources due to vacant positions and contracts for the Convention Center, due to furloughs and the management fee being deferred. Net operating cash income was \$454,500, which was \$419,000 better than budgeted. Net year to date operating cash was \$3.7 million better than budgeted. March traffic was 45,760 more than March of 2020. Revenues for the hotels were \$1.9 million better than March 2020. Occupancy rate was 70.4%, up from 46.6%. Year to date revenue for 2021 was \$691,000 less than 2020 year to date.

Mr. Hooks commented retail sales had experienced record consecutive days sales during the months of March and April. He also reminded the Board that the budget had been reduced due to the impacts of COVID-19, and the revenues reported were higher than anticipated. Mr. Gross commented that while convention business was still decreased, leisure travel had increased.

B. Noel Jensen, Chief Operations Officer, presented a funding request for equipment replacement in the water/wastewater plant and lift station from Water/Wastewater Reserves. Mr. Jensen explained that during a recent scheduled survey of operations it was determined that replacement of equipment including pumps, the bar screen at the water plant, and other associated parts were needed. Additionally, funding was needed for the Environmental Protection Division (EDP) required 10% of water meter replacements, which were underfunded in 2020 due to COVID. He also noted that the lifespan of this equipment was past its life expectancy. As noted in both the Capacity Study, and internal inspections, capital improvements for Water/Wastewater were needed. Therefore, the Water/Wastewater Department requested a capital expenditure not to exceed \$300,000 for the requested equipment.

The motion to approve was made by Mr. Krueger and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion was unanimously approved with no objections.

C. Mr. Jensen and Colette Edmisten, Assistant Aviation Program Manager for Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Intermodal, then discussed a Federal Aviation Administrative (FAA) funding correction for the airport fuel farm. Mr. Jensen began by explaining that between 2018 and 2020, a 1,000-gallon fuel tank for the airport was purchased and built with \$252,404.17 of funding received from GDOT and the FAA. However, in a recent FAA audit, it was determined that the GDOT did not correctly qualify the tank farm project for the funding, as it was neither safety nor maintenance related.

Therefore, the Authority and two other airports in Georgia were requested to return the funds.

He then introduced Colette Edmisten of the GDOT to explain the issue further. Ms. Edmisten stated that 2018 funding from both the state and federal government was administered by GDOT for funding the project. However, in 2020 the FAA supplied new guidance to GDOT that clarified projects needed to fall under safety or maintenance improvements. As a result, the revenue generating fuel project on Jekyll (which had already been completed) no longer qualified for the previously awarded funding. Therefore, the JIA was required to return the money.

Mr. Hooks questioned if other airport improvements which had been funded by GDOT would need to be paid back. Ms. Edmisten confirmed this would not be the case, as all other projects had been vetted appropriately as safety improvements. Mr. Hooks then asked if GDOT would consider using this funding for another project. Ms. Edmisten confirmed that if the Jekyll airport had 10 based aircraft, they would reach the FAA standard of "basic". At that point, GDOT would be able to either reimburse 90% of the expenditure, or they could issue funds toward the construction of the new airport terminal. The fuel tank funds could be considered the Authority's local contribution, potentially resulting in the new terminal being built for free.

The motion to repay \$179,372.35 to GDOT intermodal was made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Dr. Evans. The motion was unanimously approved with no objections.

Mr. Krueger requested clarification about the future funds from GDOT. Mr. Hooks stated that the money for the fuel farm were being returned, as requested. However, there was a commitment for the \$179,372.35 to be granted for Jekyll for use at the airport in the future.

There were no public comments.

### **III. Human Resources Committee**

A. Jenna Johnson, Director of Human Resources, spoke about the retirement of Gary Brunson, Golf Course Maintenance. Ms. Johnson introduced the presentation for the retirement of Gary Brunson after 13 years of service in Golf Course Maintenance. Mr. Aaron Saunders, Director of Golf Operations, praised Mr. Brunson for his attention to detail and efforts to get the golf course back open after Hurricanes Matthew and Irma. He stated Mr. Brunson would be greatly missed.

There were no public comments.

### **IV. Marketing Committee**

A. Alexa Orndoff, Director of Marketing and Communications continued by giving the report from Marketing Department. Ms. Orndoff began by reviewing the previous shift from a quarterly Island Guide to an annual Island Guide in January of 2020. Due to costs, delays, and COVID the current Island Guides was only a map for visitors. Now, a newly available annual Island Guide will contain descriptions of businesses, information about programming, and experiences available on the island. These guides will be distributed to lodging facilities, the marina, airport, kiosks, and welcome centers around the region.

She then gave an update on the Turtle Crawl. The event will be held virtually on May 1<sup>st</sup>. There were 755 participants register this year, 100 of which had confirmed their intent to race on Jekyll Island. Donations for the Turtle Center increased 141% as compared to 2019. An estimated \$15,000 in funds were raised for the GSTC.

Lastly Ms. Orndoff announced that the Summer Waves Waterpark would be opening May 14<sup>th</sup> this year and included a new attraction, the Man O'War. The Man O'War included two tube slides and two body slides, opening to the public on May 28<sup>th</sup>.

There was no public comment.

## **VI. Committee of the Whole**

A. Melissa Cruthirds, General Counsel, presented the assignment of lease for Jekyll Beverage Center. Ms. Cruthirds explained that Andy Taylor, the owner of Jekyll Beverage since its opening in 2016, wished to sell. Glover Package of Jekyll LLC, owned and operated by brothers Michael and Miller Glover, were the proposed new owners. The Glovers had completed the application process and the lease was presented for Board approval. She reminded the Board that the Authority was currently in litigation with Mr. Taylor regarding Jekyll Beverage. As a result, the new proposed lease has updated and clarified clauses restricting the Authority's issuance of off-premises consumption licenses for beer and wine to other entities in the Beach Village and immediate area surrounding beach village. Exceptions to the restrictions include licenses already issued, room service, catering, special events licenses, and for licenses issued for no more than three days during a festival. All other portions of the lease agreement remain unchanged.

The Glovers were introduced to the Board. They thanked the Board for their consideration of the lease assignment and looked forward to running a business on the island.

The motion to approve the assignment of lease was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion was unanimously approved with no objections.

B. Ms. Cruthirds then presented the Request for Proposal #361 for code revision. Ms. Cruthirds stated two bids had been received. The two bids were evaluated, and the committee recommended award to GMC. The GMC proposal anticipated the project to be completed in December 2021 at a price of \$88,520. Staff requested additional funding, a total of not to exceed \$125,000. This additional funding was needed to bring in subject matter experts for the wide range of revisions.

Mr. Gross asked when the last general overview had been completed; Ms. Cruthirds responded in 2012.

The motion to approve RFP and funding was made by Mr. Atkins and seconded by Mr. Gross. The motion was approved unanimously with no objections.

C. Ms. Cruthirds continued by introducing Invitation for Proposals #1 for available infill lot for residential construction at 5 Hayes Avenue. The 5 Hayes property had been previously discussed with the Board as the Authority had been able to obtain the distressed property before it went up for a tax sale. The Authority then demolished the home due to the condition of the structure. The Authority had recently had an appraisal completed, to

facilitate proposals by potential lessees. The Authority hoped proposals would further the goal of revitalization in that neighborhood and selection was designed to show a preference to a single-family home. The JIA was encouraging proposals from individuals. Mr. Hooks stated the IFP was written to select the best proposal for the neighborhood and island.

Mr. Krueger confirmed with Mr. Hooks that final selection would require Board approval. Commissioner Williams asked if a developer or a home builder could also submit bids and Mr. Hooks confirmed they were not excluded. Mr. Gross inquired if there were architectural or design guidelines included in the IFP. Ms. Cruthirds stated that interested parties were directed to the Jekyll Island Authority Design Guidelines and a concept design with numerous specifications were required with submissions.

The motion to approve was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Atkins. There were no objections.

D. Mr. Jensen then spoke to Request for Proposal #360 for the new Public Safety Complex. Mr. Jensen stated the 13 bidders were reviews and ranked. The top five bids were invited to present their proposals in person and the review committee recommended Jericho Design Group with a bid of \$152,500. The price was middling amongst the other proposals and the company had great references. In fact, their references included the project management team which was instrumental in the construction of the Jekyll Convention Center. Georgia State Patrol staff was also involved in the selection. Jericho Design Group will complete a facility needs assessment, schematic drawings, and final construction documents. Staff requested an additional amount no to exceed of \$7,500 to conduct preliminary geotechnical testing.

Mr. Hooks stated the requested geotechnical work would need to be done, regardless of the bid selected. He also clarified that this RFP was only the first step, construction funding would still be required. Mr. Jensen concluded by saying drawings were anticipated by the end of the year.

The motion to approve the request was made by Ms. Burch-Meeks and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion unanimously approved with no objections.

E. Mr. Hooks introduced the first reading for Ordinance #O-2021-2, Rental of Certain Vehicles. Mr. Hooks stated the Board's history of regulating and, if needed, prohibiting certain modes of transport such as motorized scooter kiosks. The proposed ordinance addresses a safety concern about electric bikes (e-bikes) with speeds up to 25 mph. Safety concerns with sharing pathways with pedestrians, families, and traditional bikes were the impetus for the proposed ordinance. Ms. Cruthirds summarized the ordinance would limit the rental and use of e-bikes on Jekyll Island. E-Bike rentals and E-bike tours would be prohibited.

Commissioner Williams asked Ms. Cruthirds if individuals would be allowed to use their personal e-bikes on Jekyll island. She responded yes; this ordinance was focused on limiting the commercial rental of e-bikes. Next, Mr. Krueger clarified this was a first reading, and no action was needed. Mr. Gross then asked if electric skateboards were addressed, and Ms. Cruthirds stated they were already prohibited. Commissioner Williams asked about Segways. Mr. Hooks answered that technically, Segways were not motorized. However, Segways were already controlled, and rentals only allowed by a tour operator who provides safety training before use.

F. Ms. Marjorie Johnson then presented the Request for Proposal #363 for Jekyll Island permitting, licensing, and lease/contract management software. This is a request to procure software to automate and help manage permitting, licensing, leasing, and contracts. This would not only allow for greater efficiency, but also for improved features such as customer self-service online.

The motion to approve RFP #363 was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Dr. Evans. It was unanimously approved with no objections.

G. Mr. Hooks and Ms. Marjorie Johnson proposed Resolution #R-2021-5 for a Campground Bond Project. Mr. Hooks was happy to announce that House Bill #81 for bond funding included money for the Jekyll Island Campground. Request for funding of this project began in 2018. The formal resolution presented by Ms. Johnson accepted the \$2,950,000 of bond funds and outlined the allowable usages, taxability, sales date, and restrictions.

Commissioner Williams and Mr. Hooks then discussed occupancy rates at various state campgrounds across Georgia. Mr. Gross mentioned he was impressed by Jekyll's occupancy rates above 60% and Mr. Hooks outlined the limitations of occupancy past 80% due to space.

The motion to adopt the resolution was made by Commissioner Williams and seconded by Ms. Burch-Meeks. The motion unanimously approved with no objections.

H. Noel Jensen followed by presenting the Consideration of Award for Request for Quotation #342 – Jekyll Island Sewer Cleaning and Mapping. Four bids were received for the RFQ. After committee review, staff recommended to award the project to Roberts Civil Engineering with the bid of \$369,000 pending contract completion and legal review.

This RFQ was the redo of a previous request that was reworked to clarify the services and technology required. The new system will clean and map the whole Jekyll Island Water/Wastewater system, provide an analysis from a professional engineer rating the condition of each section, and provide the ability for staff to use an iPad to pinpoint and view the conditions of the pipes without digging. This request also addressed some needed for improvements highlighted in the Carrying Capacity Study.

The motion to approve the award of RFP was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Ms. Burch-Meeks. The motion was unanimously approved with no objections.

I. Mr. Hooks then introduced the Request for Proposal #364 for Jekyll Island Amphitheater. While the amphitheater was approximately 50 years old, its revival had been discussed since 2011. In 2012 a structural engineering study was completed, but a hurricane caused further damage requiring removal of the staging structure. While this project had long been included in the long-range capital plan, there was a need for additional lodging to accommodate a venue of this size. Mr. Hooks felt the time was right to explore proposals for the Amphitheater space with the new Courtyard/Residence Inn opening in June and a stronger economy. There were no financial commitments required from the Authority at this time, and proposals would be accepted on a rolling basis for review and consideration.

Mr. Gross clarified the capacity of the facility. Mr. Hooks stated it was 1,700 with the possibility to expand to about 2,000 seats. Mr. Krueger asked Mr. Hooks when the amphitheater was last in use and staff estimated it was in 2004 or 2005.

The motion to approve RFP #364 was made by Dr. Evans and seconded by Commissioner Williams. The motion was unanimously approved with no objections.

J. Mr. Hooks then gave the Executive Director's Report. Mr. Hooks began by focusing on the Shrimp and Grits Festival for 2021. He noted several difficulties facing the festival this year including COVID-19 sensitive bus transportation, struggling restaurants, financial stress, and lack of time for planning. As a result, the availability of restaurants to complete, as well as the short-staffed local restaurant's ability to facilitate festival goers pointed toward a lackluster guest experience if the festival were to be held.

Ms. Orndoff followed by reiterating the issues with restaurants and added that many of the festival's previous sponsors had reduced funding for events due to COVID-19 related losses. As a result, many of the sponsors either backed out of the festival or could not commit at this time. Nancy Kring Rowan, Event Operations Manager, then continued that while some sponsors were unable to join this year, they confirmed a strong desire to participate in 2022. The next Shrimp and Grits festival will also mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event. Mr. Hooks additionally pointed out, Jekyll hotel partners were okay with canceling the 2021 festival, since the wedding and leisure demands were so strong for the fall.

In conclusion, staff hoped to forego the festival for 2021 rather than attempting to hold it at a lower standard and asked the Board for their input. Mr. Krueger and Ms. Burch-Meeks agreed with the staff assessment and plan of action. There was no other discussion or concerns from the Board.

Mr. Hooks announced that Fourth of July fireworks would be held on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Mr. Hooks discussed a letter distributed to the Board from himself to Colonel Daniel Hibner, Savannah District Commander for the Army Corps of Engineers. The letter outlined concerns regarding dredging during the summer, which is also turtle nesting season. The letter dated April 9<sup>th</sup> and a previous letter on March 24 outlined concern for turtles and other endangered species which could be injured in the dredging process. As the Georgia Sea Turtle Center is located on Jekyll, there was also concern regarding the lack of remuneration for the potential influx in injured sea turtles. There was a digital meeting with staff and the Corps. Mr. Ben Carswell, Director of Conservation discussed the impacts of dredging on marine wildlife, key stakeholders, and issues with federal policy.

Mr. Gross asked if there were previously documented cases from the region of sea turtles being injured during previous dredging projects. Mr. Carswell answer there were. Typically turtle injuries from dredging were either fatal or so severe they were legally considered fatal (until, in the remote possibility, a turtle could be rehabilitated and released back to the wild). Mr. Carswell mentioned there was currently a Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle at the Center injured by the current dredging project at King's Bay. The expense for a turtle dredging injury was estimated to cost about \$5,000. However, the non-financial cost to the turtle and the staff were significant. Mr. Hooks stated that unless the Board wished to take a specific action, he would keep them informed.

Mr. Hooks next stated the Board the Georgia Trauma Commission grant of \$1,575.86 had been received. Mr. Krueger verified there was no action needed, due to the acceptance of the funds at a previous meeting.

The Master Plan update was moving forward with the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute.

Finally, Mr. Hooks announced that his Executive Assistant, Michelle Webb, would be leaving the Authority and moving with her family to Maine in June. He noted that she would be sorely missed.

K. As the Chairman's Comments, Mr. Krueger stated that he was proud of all the progress being made and the efforts of staff. Mr. Wilkinson thanked Mr. Krueger for acting as Chair and apologized for his absence due to family medical issues.

During public comment, Ms. Beverly Hopkins thanked the administration for their work limiting e-bikes. She also encouraged the Board to further examine golf cart usage on the island to ensure safety on the roads. In conclusion, she asked that the Board consider both the visitor and the resident experience for the island.

Mr. Jim Sherry discussed the Golf Master Plan and golf on Jekyll Island. He asked the Board to carefully consider newer data before making any changes or adopting a plan.

Mr. Steve Smith stated he was opposed to the Vincent Group Golf Master Plan. He submitted a petition against the proposed Golf Master Plan to the Board.

The Board members took a five-minute break following the Committee of the Whole before the Board Meeting.

The Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JIA) Board Meeting  
April 20, 2021

The roll was called, and all members were present except Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Willard, and Ms. Burch-Meeks. There was a quorum.

1. Mr. Atkins moved to accept the minutes of the March 16, 2021 Board meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. There was no discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. The funding request for equipment replacement in the Water/Wastewater Plant and lift station, a recommendation of the Finance Committee, was approved by unanimous consent.

3. The funding request for Georgia Department of Transportation Intermodal for the airport fuel farm reimbursement correction of Federal Aviation Administration funds recommendation of the Finance Committee, was approved by unanimous consent.

4. The assignment of lease for Jekyll Beverage Center recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, carried by unanimous consent.

5. Request for Proposal #361 for Code Revision, consideration of award and funding,



and a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was approved by unanimous consent.

6. Invitation for Proposals #1 for the available infill lot for residential construction at 5 Hayes Avenue, a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was approved by unanimous consent.

7. Request for Proposal #360 for the Public Safety Complex consideration of award and funding approval, a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was approved by unanimous consent.

8. Request for Proposals #363 for Jekyll Island permitting, licensing, and lease/contract management software, a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was approved by unanimous consent.

9. Resolution #R-2021-5 for the Campground Bond Project, a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was adopted by unanimous consent.

10. The award for Request for Quotation #342 for Jekyll Island sewer cleaning and mapping, a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was approved by unanimous consent.

11. Request for Proposal #364 for Jekyll Island Amphitheater, a recommendation of the Committee of the Whole, was approved by unanimous consent.

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gross and seconded by Mr. Willard. There was no objection, and the meeting adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

A break of fifteen minutes was announced by Mr. Krueger before the start of the Golf Master Plan Work Session.